



Employee Handbook

April 2026

Contents

Summary of Updates 6 April 2026	6
Summary of Updates September 2025.....	6
Section 2.15 new sub section viii Use	6
of WhatsApp	6
Summary of Updates April 2025.....	6
Summary of Updates September 2024.....	7
Summary of Updates June 2024.....	7
Summary of Updates February 2024.....	7
Summary of Updates September 2023.....	8
Welcome and Introduction.....	1
Trust Red Lines.....	4
I. KEY PRINCIPLES	7
I.1 Safeguarding.....	7
I.2 Safer Recruitment.....	8
i. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate.....	8
ii. Portability of DBS Certificates Checks.....	8
iii. Copies of DBS Checks	8
iv. Dealing with convictions.....	8
v. Leaving Employment at the Trust	8
I.3 Health and Safety.....	9
I.4 Ethical Conduct.....	9
i. Gifts and Hospitality.....	9
ii. Non-compliance	10
I.5 Whistleblowing.....	10
I.6 Modern Slavery.....	11
I.7 Good Faith and Loyalty.....	11
2. CODE OF CONDUCT	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Expectations and Standards of Conduct.....	13
2.3 Safeguarding.....	14
2.4 Managing Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.....	15
2.5 Health and Safety.....	17
2.6 Honesty and Integrity	17
2.7 Relationships and contact between Academy employees, public, parents and pupils...	17
2.8 Employees, volunteers, or governors facing criminal charges	18
2.9 Home visits	18
2.10 Dress Code	19

2.11	Personal Protective Equipment.....	20
2.12	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.....	20
2.13	Bullying & Harassment (Including Sexual Harassment)	21
2.14	Disclosure of information and Confidentiality.....	21
2.15	Use of Equipment.....	22
i.	Photographs of pupils.....	22
ii.	Computer Use - Including the use of email/Internet/instant messaging	22
iii.	Internet Use.....	22
iv.	Email.....	23
v.	Privacy.....	23
vi.	Filtering and monitoring.....	23
vii.	Phones.....	24
viii.	Use of WhatsApp.....	24
2.16	Use of AI Chatbots.....	24
2.17	Personal Mobile Phones.....	25
2.18	Social Media.....	26
2.19	Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs.....	26
i.	Dependency.....	27
ii.	Drugs.....	27
iii.	Medicines and Prescription Drugs.....	27
iv.	Smoking.....	27
v.	Alcohol.....	28
2.20	Gambling.....	28
2.21	Driving.....	28
2.22	Trust Vehicles	29
2.23	Conflict of interest	30
2.24	Personal Relationships	30
2.25	Other employment.....	30
2.26	Acceptance of gifts	30
2.27	Time Keeping and Attendance	31
2.28	Rest Breaks	31
2.29	Parking	31
2.30	Collections.....	32
2.31	Staffroom Facilities.....	32
2.32	Dealing with the Media	32
2.33	Conduct Outside Work.....	32
2.34	Trust communications standards.....	32

2.35	Parental Contact.....	33
2.36	Communication and Teamwork	33
2.37	Focus on Learning (whether in a teaching or education support professional role).....	33
2.38	Contribution to the wider aspects of Academy life	34
2.39	Breaches of the Employee Expectations and Code of Conduct.....	34
2.40	Misconduct.....	34
2.41	Gross Misconduct.....	34
2.42	Dishonesty	34
2.43	Refusal to carry out reasonable instructions.....	35
2.44	Breach of a requirement set out in this Handbook.....	35
2.45	Allegations of Misconduct and Gross Misconduct.....	35
3.	HOW WE DO THINGS.....	36
3.1	Proof of Identity	36
3.2	Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff.....	36
3.3	Medical Fitness.....	36
3.4	Personnel Records/Data Protection.....	37
3.5	Induction Programme.....	37
3.6	Probation.....	37
3.7	Travel and other Expenses	37
i.	Mileage.....	38
ii.	Other travel.....	38
iii.	Overnight accommodation.....	38
iv.	Other expenses.....	39
3.8	Adverse Weather and Traffic Disruption	39
4.	ABSENCE.....	41
4.1	Unauthorised Absence	41
4.2	Medical Appointments	41
4.3	Antenatal Care/Adoption Appointments	41
i.	Pregnancy Related Appointments	41
ii.	Adoption Appointments.....	42
4.4	Sickness Absence	42
i.	Disability and Reasonable Adjustments	42
4.5	Jury Service/Other Time Off.....	43
4.6	Compassionate/Bereavement Leave.....	43
4.7	Parental Bereavement Leave	43
i.	Notification.....	44
ii.	Parental Bereavement Pay.....	44

iii.	Other leave entitlements.....	44
iv.	Stillbirth, Miscarriage and termination.....	44
4.8	Carers Leave	45
4.9	Emergency Time Off for Dependents.....	48
4.10	Annual Leave.....	48
i.	Term time only employees.....	49
4.11	Reserve Forces.....	49
5.	FLEXIBLE WORKING AND FAMILY RELATED LEAVE	50
5.1	Flexible Working	50
5.2	Maternity Leave	50
i.	Notification.....	50
ii.	Start of Maternity Leave	51
iii.	Duration of Maternity Leave.....	51
iv.	Dismissal or Resignation.....	52
v.	Maternity Pay.....	52
vi.	Occupational Maternity Pay	52
vii.	Burgundy Book Provisions	53
viii.	Green Book Provisions	53
ix.	Returning to Work Early.....	54
x.	Returning to Work Late.....	54
xi.	Maternity Suspension (Health and Safety Reasons).....	54
5.3	Adoption Leave.....	54
i.	Notification	55
ii.	Adoption Pay.....	55
iii.	Returning to Work Following Adoption Leave.....	55
5.4	Paternity Leave.....	55
5.5	Maternity Support Allowance.....	61
5.6	Ordinary Parental Leave.....	61
5.7	Shared Parental Leave	63
5.8	Keeping in Touch Days	64
5.9	During Maternity/Adoption or Shared Parental Leave.....	64
5.10	Neonatal Care Leave and Pay.....	64
Appendix A:	Related Policies	73

Summary of Updates 6 April 2026

Item	Summary of Changes
Footer	Updated to include a version reference and revised date
4.3 Antenatal Care/Adoption Appointments	Wording updated to give clearer and more comprehensive guidance
5.4 Paternity Leave	Updated to reflect legislative changes and to give clearer and more comprehensive guidance
5.6 Ordinary Parental Leave	Updated to reflect legislative changes and to give clearer and more comprehensive guidance

Summary of Updates September 2025

Item	Summary of Changes
Footer	Updated to include a version reference and revised date
Contents List	Updated to reflect revised numbering and sections
Throughout	Updated date references for KCSIE and links to policy documents.
Section 1.2 ii	Annual cost of DBS update service updated
Section 2.15 new sub section viii Use of WhatsApp	New content summary and link added

Summary of Updates April 2025

Item	Summary of Changes
Footer	Updated to include a version reference and revised date
Contents List	Updated to reflect revised numbering and sections
Section 2.12	Section updated to reflect new DCAT Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Section 2.13	Section added to reflect new DCAT Bullying and Harassment (Including Sexual Harassment)Policy
Section 6.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & BULLYING AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATIONS	Section removed
New section added 5.10 Neonatal Care Leave and Pay	Section added to reflect new legislation which comes into effect on 6 April 2025

Appendix A Related Policies	Section updated to reference new DCAT Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and new DCAT Bullying and Harassment (Including Sexual Harassment)Policy
-----------------------------	--

Summary of Updates September 2024

Item	Summary of Changes
Footer	Updated to include a version reference and revised date
Reference and links to Keeping Children Safe in Education	Updated to 2024 and hyperlinks updated
1.2 iii	Head of HR revised to Trust Centre HR Team
12.2	Header titled revised
2.14 vi	Added reference to filtering and monitoring
2.15	Added reference to use of personal mobile phone to enable MFA
2.16 AI	Added section about use of AI
2.25 Timekeeping and Attendance	Revision to wording about request for flexibility.
3.7 Travel and Expenses	Section updated and rates revised

Summary of Updates June 2024

Item	Summary of Changes
Page 2 DCAT Address	Updated to reflect revision to DCAT registered address
4. Absence	Updated to include section 4.8 on Carers Leave
Flexible Working 5.1	Updated to reference and link to the new DCAT Flexible Working Policy
5.4 Paternity Leave	Updated to reflect legislative changes for babies due before or on 6 April 2024, or before 6 April 2024 for adoptions
Appendix A Related Policies	Updated to reference and link to the new DCAT Flexible Working Policy
Footer	VI.3 June 2024

Summary of Updates February 2024

Item	Summary of Changes
Induction 3.5	Updated to reference and link to the new DCAT Induction and Probation Policy
Probation 3.6	Updated to reference and link to the new DCAT Induction and Probation Policy

Appendix A Related Policies	Updated to reference and link to the new DCAT Induction and Probation Policy
Footer	VI.2 February 2024

Summary of Updates September 2023

Item	Summary of Changes
Footer	Updated to include a version reference and revised date
Summary of Updates	Table of updates added for ease of tracking changes and reader information
Link to DCAT HR Handbook: Key Policies and Procedures.	Hyperlinks updated
Link to DCAT Employee Handbook for Central Staff	Hyperlinks updated
Reference and links to Keeping Children Safe in Education	Updated to 2023 and hyperlinks updated
Whistleblowing 1.5	Updated to remove duplication of Policy content and focus on key points
Probation 3.6	Updated to remove link to Trust ECT Policy and revise to own schools ECT Policy

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to The Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (referred to throughout this handbook as “We” or “the Trust”). Our strength as an organisation is due to the skills and abilities of colleagues like you. We look forward to a long and successful working relationship with you and sincerely hope that your time with us is enjoyable and rewarding.

We are committed to creating a workplace where everyone is encouraged to grow and contribute to an environment of equality and development that allows all staff and children to reach their God-given potential whilst embracing our Trust values of Wisdom, Respect and Aspiration.

The handbook is applicable to all staff employed either at the DCAT Centre or at one of its academies. For all staff this handbook should be read alongside the [DCAT HR Handbook: Key Policies and Procedures](#); for those employed by DCAT centrally it should also be read alongside the [DCAT Employee Handbook for Central Staff](#).

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for everything you are doing in your role and playing your part in helping every child achieve their God-given potential.

We are at our best when we know what is expected of us. We've set out the roadmap for our collective work in our [Vision for 2025](#) which is about adding even more value for children and staff as we grow.

The purpose of this document is to help all of us be clear of Trust expectations in a range of areas. Please read them in the spirit they are intended, an intention of keeping us all safe and protected. If there are areas, you are unsure on speak to your line manager or contact the Trust HR Team HR@dcat.academy.

These policies and procedures are key. They work best when they exist within a supportive and enabling culture. Thank you for your contribution to this and for upholding the [Nolan principles](#) of public life. As part of this you are helping preserve the DCAT culture, a culture in which: we are children focused; positive relationships at every level are key; the uniqueness of our schools is important to us, and we are one Trust all working together for the common good. We all also want to model high, professional standards, attempting to achieve excellence in everything we do.

We trust this updated document is helpful.



Mark Talbot
CEO

About your employment

You are employed by the Trust to work at one of our member Academy Schools (the Academy) or to work in the Trust Centre. The Trust is managed by a Chief Executive Officer who reports to the Trust Board. As the legal employer the Board of Trustees is responsible for HR policies and procedures and terms and conditions of service.

In accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, the Board of Trustees has delegated the running of each Academy to the Local Governing Body (LGB) or Transition Board (TB) and specifically the appointment, job description, performance management and dismissal of all members of staff of the academy, excluding the Head Teacher. The Board of Trustees are responsible for the appointment, job descriptions, performance management, remuneration, approval and dismissal of the Head teachers in the academies, in consultation with the Chairs of the LGBs.

This handbook

This handbook is designed to explain the way in which we work and to set out the key procedures, rules and policies designed to ensure an efficient workplace and a safe and supportive environment for all employees. The contents of this handbook do not form part of the terms of your contract of employment unless otherwise stated. The Trust may need to alter or amend any policy or procedure contained in this handbook to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with the needs of the Trust. Any such change will be subject to prior consultation with the recognised trade unions and notified to all employees and an up-to-date copy of this handbook can be obtained from:

Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust
St. Catherine's College
Priory Road
Eastbourne
BN23 7BL

contact@dcat.academy

We do expect you to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook and failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action; in appropriate cases, up to and including dismissal.

Vision Statement:

Our **vision** for our Trust is we exist to:

Help every child achieve their God-given potential

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full
(John 10 vs 10)

Our **aims** are clear. We aim to be a Trust in which:

Developing the whole child means pupils achieve and maximise their potential

Continued development of staff is valued and improves education for young people

All schools are improving and perform above national expectations

The distinct Christian identity of each academy develops and is celebrated

Our work as a Trust is underpinned by shared **values**. They are taken from the Church of England's vision for Education and guide the work of Trust Centre team. They are:

Aspiration

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me
(Philippians 4 vs 13)

Wisdom

Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise (Proverbs 19 vs 20)

Respect

So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you (Matthew 7 vs 12)

Trust Red Lines

Our Vision: Helping every child achieve their God-given potential.

The following are expectations of each of our Academies within the Trust. They are not exhaustive but are seen as the non-negotiables that sit alongside the individual approaches our distinct Academies choose to take. They should be read in conjunction with the Scheme of Delegation and Trust Handbooks. **Each Academy must have:**

A. Vision, Culture & Ethos	B. People & Partners	C. Teaching & Learning	D. Curriculum & Assessment	E. Quality Assurance & Accountability	F. Leadership & Governance
A.1) A Christian vision and values which are underpinned by the Bible and reflect excellent Church of England education. (For any non-Church schools, they are supportive of the Trust Christian vision and values)	B.1) A known staffing profile that informs high quality CPD including ELT, new staff induction and talent pathways	C.1) Good or better teaching throughout the school. Teaching is enabled with children attending well. This is achieved by the school doing everything reasonably in their power to improve attendance. All schools follow the DCAT attendance strategy	D.1) A curriculum intent statement that articulates the Academy's approach to curriculum design. This is on the academy website and is informative to parents/carers	E.1) Systems in place to regularly review data and evaluate progress against key performance indicators set out in the academy development plan	F.1) Safeguarding is effective following policy and practice with a culture that keeps children safe at all times
A.2) An improvement culture that is fixed on high quality work at pace and performance above national averages in line with Trust aims	B.2) Regard to all staff wellbeing and workload is meaningful and supportive	C.2) Enacted systems to swiftly challenge and improve teaching performance that is below 'good'.	D2) A broad, ambitious, and progressive curriculum that meets the needs of ALL children and is evident in lessons and outcomes.	E.2) Data cycles which have been carefully structured to ensure that information is collected in line with the DCAT assessment schedule enable effective quality	F.2) An ambitious approach to school improvement with a tireless pursuit of excellence

				assurance and intervention	
A.3) A culture of keeping children safe in which leaders: know that all staff and governors have read and follow Keeping Children Safe In Education (Part 1); receive high quality training (including on how to listen to, report and record concerns and escalate according to policy).	B.3) Trust and external expertise used to inform improvement – see Peer Review handbook	C.3) A high-quality behaviour policy which is followed with strong communication at every level, supported with effective training and induction.	D.3) A common standardised assessment system that is agreed and shared with the Trust. It is used purposefully to track children’s progress across the Academy to inform support	E.3) Shared performance data which is informing open and effective dialogue between Academy and Trust leaders and informing Academy Improvement Review meetings (AIR) – see AIR handbook	F.3) A high quality, evidence-based self-evaluation informing an ambitious development plan. Both are quality assured by Trust leaders and agreed in AIR
A.4) Named and trained DSL and Deputy DSLs with one on site at all times. In exceptional circumstances if this not possible then alternative arrangements must be made and Trust informed. The school is represented at each DSL network meeting.	B.4) Consistent appraisal takes place for <u>all</u> staff. It is a high quality, supportive and developmental whilst also challenging underperformance.	C.4) Research-based practice informing training and development	D.4) Marking and assessment systems which are regularly evaluated for their merits in relation to pupil outcomes and teacher well-being	E.4) Take active and collaborative participation in Trust hub networks for leadership at all levels.	F.4) Each school has a fit for purpose budget/and or an agreed medium term financial plan to achieve this. Finances are well managed and pose no risk to the school and Trust. There is full compliance with the Trust Finance Handbook.
A.5) All visitors/volunteers signing in and wearing	B.5) A range of ways to listen to stakeholder voice	C.5) A transparent approach to observation and	D.5) Leaders are relentless in ensuring that reading is	E.5) A self-reflective approach including the use of peer review	F.5) A local governing body (or Transition Board) that is clear of

identification badges as set out in the Trust handbook	which is evaluated and informs next steps	monitoring alongside an ambitious approach to target setting	prioritised to allow children to access the full curriculum.	models informed by pupil voice, staff voice and parent/carer voice	its role and accountabilities and which offers challenge to leaders in terms of teaching and pupil outcomes
A.6) An outward facing viewpoint, playing an active part in the Trust	B.6) Leaders who ensure that the Academy is compliant with HR and H&S legislation and that Trust policies and procedures are consistently applied - see employee handbook	C.6) Purposeful learning is the day-to-day experience of pupils which can be evidenced by leaders	D.6) An evidence-based approach to change and development	E.6) Learning walks/book looks, and other methods are used to triangulate standards and the quality of education	F.6) Leaders at all levels following the Nolan principles of public life and insisting that the staff they lead do the same
			D.7) Pupils with SEND benefit from accessing an appropriately adapted, high quality and ambitious curriculum	E.7) The Trust Risk Management Policy is followed including fully engaging with the Academy Risk Assessment as part of the A.I.R process and the Trust top 10 risks and mitigations.	F.7) Compliance with all statutory and regulatory guidance with regard to all aspects of running a school (DfE, curriculum, HR, finance etc.)

I. KEY PRINCIPLES

This section sets out some of the key commitments made by the Trust to its employees – and the key commitments expected from employees in return.

I.1 Safeguarding

The Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT) has a clear vision which is helping every child achieve their God-given potential. Fundamental to this is that children within our care are safe and happy. Our Trust is committed to ensuring that we promote the highest standards of welfare, both physical and emotional for children at all of the DCAT academies. We will aim to do this by:

- Creating a culture of safer recruitment by adopting a procedure of robust interviewing, screening and checks to deter or identify people who may pose a risk to children
- Having in place clear and understood systems and processes which safeguard children
- Providing high quality and up-to-date training for staff, governors and Trustees
- Ensuring children feel empowered to recognise concerns and speak out if they are worried
- Ensuring that we work alongside our professional partners to achieve the best outcomes for all of our children
- Working in an open and honest way with our parents/carers

Each Academy has a robust safeguarding policy which is fully aligned with [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) and relevant local model policies. Policies are available on the Academy's individual website. All employees of the Trust are expected to do their part to create a healthy safeguarding culture in our schools / Trust. All colleagues must be familiar with school / Trust safeguarding policies and reporting procedures.

To ensure that the academy policy is followed:

- Every member of staff across the Trust is required to read and sign that they have understood and will follow Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1
- Every academy undertakes annual high-quality safeguarding and child protection training
- Annual high-quality safeguarding and child protection training is provided for all local governors and Trust centre-based staff
- Each academy has at least two Designated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies and a named safeguarding governor. It is a Trust red line (non-negotiable) that an academy DSL is on the school site at all times.
- All staff are responsible for safeguarding. Any concerns must be reported to the academy DSL and appropriate recording procedure followed. Should staff not feel able to raise concerns with any of the aforementioned they can contact the Headteacher, Trust DSL, Chair of the Local Governing Body, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the NSPCC helpline on 0800 028 0285 or via help@nspcc.org.uk or [Whistleblowing Advice Line NSPCC](#)
- The Trust Senior Team has two trained DSLs who are available to offer advice and guidance as well as a safeguarding trustee.

1.2 Safer Recruitment

[A copy of the full Trust Safer Recruitment Policy can be found here.](#)

The safe recruitment of staff in academies is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the Trust expects all staff to share this commitment.

i. **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate**

All staff at the Trust require an enhanced DBS Certificate and therefore a DBS Certificate must be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee.

Members of staff at the Trust must inform the **Headteacher or their Line Manager** of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place. For individuals employed to work in reception classes, or in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, they are obliged to also disclose if they are disqualified from providing relevant childcare provision. Further details about the application of these arrangements are provided in [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#).

ii. **Portability of DBS Certificates Checks**

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. There is currently £16 per annum, which is payable by the applicant.

iii. **Copies of DBS Checks**

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore, employees/applicants should bring their Certificate to the Headteacher or a member of the Trust HR Team for Trust Centre Staff, within 7 days of issue or applicants before they commence work or any project involving regulated activity.

iv. **Dealing with convictions**

The Trust operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of relevant convictions.

Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended) and also:

- the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred;
- one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances,
- decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the **Headteacher or their Line Manager**. A decision will be made following this meeting.

v. **Leaving Employment at the Trust**

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations of abuse against children and young people are raised. In cases relating to the alleged behaviour of an

employee (these behaviours are within the context of four categories of abuse (i.e. physical, sexual, emotional and neglect) an investigation, as detailed in the Trust's Disciplinary Policy, will apply.

In cases of dismissal (or resignation) due to the above alleged and/or proven behaviour, The Trust will inform the Department of Education, and the Children's Safeguarding Unit of the circumstances why the employee is leaving The Trust's employment. A referral may also be made to the TRA and in respect of teaching staff and to DBS in respect of all staff.

1.3 Health and Safety

The primary duty owed to you by the Trust is to ensure that you are safe while you are at work. Similarly, all employees, governors and visitors are obliged to carry out their duties in a safe and responsible manner that does not risk harm to either themselves, their colleagues or any other person and to assist in the creation of a safe working environment.

A detailed health and safety policy/handbook identifying the roles and responsibilities of key staff members for ensuring that the Trust meets its commitment to health and safety is available from <http://www.dcat.academy>

In addition, a poster setting out important information on health and safety is displayed in the Staff Room. If you are a member of a trade union, they may also have a school health and safety representative; details may be obtained from them.

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the Trust's activities and steps have been taken to ensure that all work can be done safely. Any employee who is concerned that any aspect of the Trust's activities poses a risk to health and safety should report this to the nearest available manager immediately. Genuine concerns about health and safety will always be treated with the utmost seriousness and be thoroughly investigated.

Employees are required to comply with all instructions rules and procedures concerning matters of health and safety. Failure to do so may amount to gross misconduct. In particular, where employees are required to wear personal protective equipment such as hard hats, protective footwear or high visibility clothing or follow instructions for fire safety and safe working with asbestos then failure to do so may be treated as gross misconduct which could result in dismissal.

1.4 Ethical Conduct

The Trust aims for the highest possible standards of ethical conduct, in consideration of the [Nolan Principles](#), in all of its activities and expects the conduct of individual employees to reflect this. Dishonesty of any kind will be treated as a serious matter, which may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct and potential dismissal with or without notice.

i. Gifts and Hospitality

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality from pupils / parents, suppliers and potential suppliers must not give the appearance that employees of the Trust or its Local Governors or Trustees may be unduly influenced in the decisions that they make in respect of pupils / parents, suppliers or in any other aspect of their work. Further information can be found in the Trust [Finance Handbook - Gifts and Hospitality Policy](#).

A Hospitality and Gift Register to record gifts and / or hospitality accepted and details of any gifts/ hospitality refused is held in each Academy and by the Trust Centre.

All gifts and hospitality given or received, must be entered in the Register kept by the Academy / Trust Centre management team.

ii. **Non-compliance**

In a case where it is believed a member of Staff, Trustees or Governors has not declared a gift or hospitality then a formal investigation should be instigated by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or member of the Trust Centre team. This may take the form of disciplinary procedure in the case of employees if misconduct is indicated.

It is also an act of potential gross misconduct to seek to influence any other person to behave in an improper way or to confer a business advantage on you or the Trust through the giving of any gift or hospitality.

1.5 Whistleblowing

A copy of the full Trust Whistleblowing Policy is available on the [Trust website](#)

The purpose of this policy is to enable serious concerns to be raised in situations where the usual channels of communication and reporting lines have either proved ineffective or are, exceptionally, inappropriate.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible, however we recognise that this may not always be practicable, especially in the first instance. It will be necessary for sufficient details to be provided so that the precise nature of the concern and its extent are made clear so that our response can be prompt and appropriate. Please address your letter to the persons to approach (see above): - (Marked 'confidential') Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust, c/o St. Catherine's College, Priory Road, Eastbourne, BN23 7BL, or email contact@dcat.academy.

Remember that to allow us to investigate and assess the situation it would be helpful to provide as much information as possible. We encourage you to put your name to allegations, as anonymous concerns are more difficult to investigate, and we want to be able to take any appropriate action to protect you and provide you with feedback.

Employees who raise a concern which is in the public interest under this policy are entitled not to be subjected to any detriment as a result. However, the employee must reasonably believe that the disclosure they are making is true.

For concerns about the safety and welfare of children in our academies, the Safeguarding Policy provides details of who to contact: The Senior Education Leader or Headteacher, the chair of the governing body or the Local Authority Designated Officer. Should staff not feel able to raise concerns they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285.

Even if your concern proves to be unfounded you will be protected against any reprisals from management, colleagues or any other employee of the Trust. Making a deliberately false allegation, however, against the Trust, your Academy, a fellow employee or any other person will be treated as an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

If you are the subject of an allegation of wrongdoing, then you will be informed of the allegation and given every opportunity to explain the situation and put your side of the story. Disciplinary action will only be taken following a full investigation in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Matters of individual concern should be raised in accordance with the [Grievance Policy](#).

1.6 Modern Slavery

DCAT is committed to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the abolition of modern slavery and human trafficking.

DCAT maintains the following policies and processes which are reviewed cyclically:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Employee Handbook
- Equality Objectives
- Due diligence processes contained within the Finance Handbook
- Finance Policy

1.7 Good Faith and Loyalty

The employment relationship is one built on trust and we all have a mutual interest in making the relationship a success. The Trust has a duty to provide reasonable support to employees and employees have a duty of good faith towards the Trust.

In practice this means not doing anything that undermines the Trust's position by acting in competition with it, providing information to competitors or undermining the Trust's standing with pupils, parents and fellow employees.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction the Trust [HR key policies and procedures](#), [Health and Safety](#), [Whistleblowing](#) and [Safeguarding Policies](#) and with the academy and Trust Vision and Values. The behaviour of employees is central to the continued success of the Trust. This section sets out what is expected of all employees in terms of their personal conduct when at work and their behaviour towards colleagues.

The Code of Conduct for all Trust employees includes, amongst other things, low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing. Employees should read this alongside the DfE's [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#). All staff are expected to comply with the [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) and recognise that it is an offence for anyone aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. This applies even if the person does not teach the child.

In addition to this policy, all staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the '[Teachers' Standards 2012](#)' and in relation to this policy, [Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct](#).

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Staff Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal – see [Trust Disciplinary Policy](#).

2.1 Introduction

This code applies to all employees of Trust. The [Trust HR Key Policies and Procedures](#) outline the delegated responsibility and levels of authority for the management of HR matters and for decision making relating to employee expectations and code of conduct.

The Trust and its academies are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in both employment and education provision. We aim to ensure all employees, within the Trust community are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

This document sets out the Trust and our Academies employee expectations and Code of Conduct and covers all employees and volunteers. Throughout the document reference to employees includes volunteers and agency staff.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

- provide information about expectations for all employees in relation to standards of conduct;
- enable employees to know and understand the conduct deemed to be acceptable within the trust; and
- to provide advice and guidance covering expectations of employees, and to promote an

understanding that breaches of conduct rules may result in disciplinary action.

In accordance with the DFE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' in force at the date of this policy, this code has been adopted by the Trust in order for all employees to be fully aware of the standards of personal and professional conduct in relation to various aspects of their role. The code will be shared and discussed during the induction of new colleagues and throughout employment to ensure that working practices and expectations are mutually understood, positively promoted and that performance against expectations is regularly monitored.

As part of their induction, every employee including supply and ad-hoc employees and volunteers working within the Trust will be asked to read, sign and date the Code of Conduct. The code is not exhaustive; if situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust, its stakeholders and partners, its academies, and its children and young people.

2.2 Expectations and Standards of Conduct

It is the expectation of the Trust that all employees will conduct themselves in a manner commensurate with the highest standards, both during working hours and in their private lives, in order to maintain public trust and confidence and be beyond reproach in the performance of their duties. Employees are also expected to behave in a fair, courteous, and supportive manner to colleagues within the Academy and the wider Trust, and to operate within the Trust/Academy's policies and procedures. Physical violence, verbal abuse and swearing are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

All employees are expected to obey the law relating to their work and general conduct. If they break the law outside of working time and the offence is one that could damage public confidence or have a direct effect on their work, the employee may be subject to disciplinary procedures. It is an expectation that employees will declare all information relevant to the trust or to their contract of employment. It is the employee's responsibility to understand relevant disclosure rules, or to seek further guidance where required.

Employees must not undermine fundamental values, including those of democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the Trust/Academy and maintain high standards in their own conduct, performance, attendance, and punctuality. Employees should ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit children and young people's vulnerability or might lead them to break the law or breach the policies and procedures of the Trust/Academy and always show respect for the rights of others.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities. The conduct of all teachers must always be in line with the Teacher's Standards and where appropriate the Leadership Standards. Where employees are members of professional bodies, they must also comply with any standards of conduct which are set by that body.

Employees are expected to provide the highest possible standard of service. Where employees are aware of any contraventions of this Code, illegality, misconduct, or breach of procedure they should notify the Headteacher or their line manager. Where the concern relates to their line manager it should be raised with the Headteacher or another senior leader. Where the concern relates to the Headteacher or Trust central team it should be raised with the Chief Executive and if the concern relates to the CEO the concern should be raised with the Chair of the Trust Board.

Where the concerns are of suspected wrongdoing, malpractice, or dangers in relation to the Trust or its member academies activities concerning matters of public interest, employees should refer to the [Whistleblowing Policy](#). Matters of a personal or more general concern are covered by the [Grievance Policy](#).

The Code does not seek to address every possible circumstance, and simply because a particular action may not be addressed within the Code, this does not condone that action by omission.

2.3 Safeguarding

Employees must safeguard children and young people's well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions, the local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures and the academy policy for Child Protection and Safeguarding. Safeguarding policies are produced at Trust level and maintained at academy level to ensure best safeguarding practice and compliance with Local Authority safeguarding procedures.

Employees must immediately report any safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people to the designated safeguarding lead. Any safeguarding disclosure made by a child, made to any staff member, must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead.

As well as reporting their concern to the DSL, employees must also personally report to the police any case where they have reason to believe an act of female genital mutilation (FGM) to be planned or to have been carried out. The academy DSL will help support you to do this if needed.

Employees must not promise confidentiality to a child or young person and always ensure that any actions they take are in the interests of a child or young person. All employees have a responsibility to take appropriate action and work with other services as needed.

All employees must be fully aware of the Academy policies and procedures relating to child protection and safeguarding and given their position of trust, must ensure that they do not put themselves in any situation where their conduct or behaviour with any child or young person could be misconstrued.

All employees must be aware that it is a criminal offence under the [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) (as amended) for anyone to engage in a sexual relationship or grooming with a child aged under 18 with whom they are in a position of trust. It is vital that employees work within appropriate professional boundaries at all times with children and young people with

whom they are in a position of trust. If employees are unsure about what action to take or how they should respond to any situation they must immediately contact the designated safeguarding lead or Headteacher.

2.4 Managing Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

The Trust encourages an open and transparent culture in which *all concerns* (including those deemed to low-level) about adults working for, or on behalf of, the Trust are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

The Trust has procedures for dealing with concerns and/or allegations against those working in or behalf of the Trust in a paid or unpaid capacity which can be found in the academy Safeguarding Policy. These procedures are consistent with the statutory guidance document, [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) and will be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the Trust has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including behaviour outside the Trust).

Any such allegations will be investigated and responded to in accordance with the procedure contained within the Safeguarding Policy.

Any concerns about an inappropriate relationship between an employee and a child or young person (irrespective of their age) and allegations of child abuse against employees will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Person (LADO) in line with LA safeguarding procedures. Such allegations will be fully investigated under the [Trust Disciplinary Policy](#), as a potential matter of gross misconduct.

As part of ensuring a culture of openness, trust and transparency, the Trust also has procedures within the Safeguarding Policy for addressing 'low-level concerns' which do not meet the threshold above This would include any concern, however small, that an adult working for, or on behalf of, the Trust may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with this code of conduct and/or associated Trust/Academy policies but which, following a LADO consultation, does not warrant a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Low-level concerns will be investigated, and the evidence collected will determine what further action may need to be taken. Records of low-level concerns will be retained on file for no less than the duration of employment.

Members of staff are in a position to identify concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children at an early stage, allowing for prompt intervention and preventing concerns from escalating. It is therefore vitally important that, if staff have any safeguarding concerns, however small, or an allegation is made about another member of staff, this is referred to the Headteacher promptly (or to the Trust DSL in respect of the Headteacher) in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer in circumstances where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which:

- could be misinterpreted;
- might appear compromising to others; and/or
- on reflection they believe they may have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

The procedure for sharing confidentially 'low-level' concerns should be clear and easy to understand and implement. The headteacher or CEO in respect of Trust centre staff, must be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, in some settings the headteacher may wish the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to be the first point of contact to whom 'low-level' concerns should be raised and to consult with the DSL and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.

All employees and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Trust or its academies safeguarding regimes and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

Whistleblowing procedures are in place for such concerns to be raised with the Trust/Academy.

Where a colleague feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- if you have a concern about the Headteacher you can contact the Trust DSL, Mark Talbot, CEO, 01273 425001 or mtalbot@dcat.academy
- the NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their Academy or Trust. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 –line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A3NH.

2.5 Health and Safety

All employees have a shared duty to help prevent injuries or accidents occurring at work by complying with the School Health and Safety Policy and all instructions relating to safety and security procedures.

Employees have a responsibility to inform the Headteacher and/or their line manager of any medical condition/illness experienced prior to or during the course of their employment, and which may impact on their overall fitness to undertake their duties, or on the health and safety of themselves, pupils, other employees, volunteers or governors. Where appropriate medical advice will be sought from the Trust occupational health provider or the employees GP. Reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented as appropriate.

2.6 Honesty and Integrity

All employees must:

- maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work, this includes the handling and claiming of money, following correct procedures in all financial matters and the use of Trust/Academy property and facilities (see [Finance Policy](#))
- complete any documentation and forms honestly, without damage, alteration, or falsification. Employees should never conceal any matter that should be reported
- ensure that money, property, and other funds belonging to either the Academy/Trust or to others are properly used and protected from misappropriation
- report to their line manager or the Chief Operating Officer, if they suspect any financial irregularities have occurred and to co-operate fully with any subsequent investigations
- ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner which does not discredit them or the Trust/Academy or which might compromise the mutual trust and confidence that exists between the two
- ensure that they do not use their official position or information acquired in the course of their duties to further their private interests or those of others
- serve the Trust/Academy faithfully in the performance of their duties and not act unreasonably against the interests of the Trust/Academy
- ensure that all communications from the media regarding Trust/Academy business is directed to the CEO for the Trust or Headteacher for the Academy.

2.7 Relationships and contact between Academy employees, public, parents and pupils

Personal contact other than in certain exempted circumstances between employees and current/former pupils of Academy age outside the normal Trust/Academy work environment is not permitted. Any proposed work-related contact, outside of the normal working environment, must be agreed in advance by the Headteacher and an appropriate programme to record and monitor exceptional circumstances put in place. Unexpected contact with pupils should be kept to a minimum, for example a brief greeting. Any transport of pupils must be agreed in line with the Academy policy and always agreed with the Headteacher or their appointed representative and the person having parental responsibility.

Correspondence received by an employee from former pupils, the public or parents should always be reported to a line manager/Headteacher and filed with any response in the appropriate Academy records system.

Employees should be extremely cautious when using social networking sites outside of work and avoid publishing, or allowing to be published, any material, including comments or images that could damage their professional reputation and/or bring the Trust/ Academy into disrepute. We recommend that private settings are used.

Where employees do use social networking sites profiles **should** be set as '**private**' or be an '**anonymous**' account and the highest security settings used, unless where it is used for professional networking. Where a non-private or non-anonymous account is used, it must be made clear that any views expressed are personal opinions and employees should be mindful of what is being posted so as to avoid anything that may damage their professional reputation and/or bring the Trust/ Academy into disrepute.

Under no circumstances should employees knowingly allow access to pupils, their families, or carers.

Employees should not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or email address to pupils of the Trust or their families.

Where former pupils who are under the age of 18 and still in receipt of education in whatever educational setting make contact, the employees must refer to the 'Contact between Employees and Pupils outside the work context' and discuss their response to any such significant contact with their current line manager/Headteacher.

In having contact with former students over the age of 18 employees are encouraged to make sure the contact is appropriate and does not leave the employee vulnerable to complaint.

Employees should not publish any material which comments on the activities, policies etc. of the Trust/Academy without the consent of the Headteacher or CEO or make comments to the press or media unless specifically authorised to do so.

2.8 Employees, volunteers, or governors facing criminal charges

Anyone who during the course of their employment with DCAT faces criminal charges, is arrested, or taken into custody or who receives a new reprimand, caution or conviction, whether committed in the UK or elsewhere, **must** inform their line manager and the academy Headteacher without delay, including outside of term time. It is the responsibility of the employee to make sure that they understand requirements for disclosure and live up to expectations.

2.9 Home visits

Wherever possible all work with children and young people and parents should be undertaken in school. However, there may be occasions when it is necessary to make one-off or regular home visits in response to urgent, planned, or specific situations. In these

circumstances' employees must seek permission from line manager/Headteacher and adhere to school procedures/policy regarding home visits.

2.10 Dress Code

It is expected that all employees will dress in a way that clearly reflects and is reflective of the standards of the Academy within its community and the wider Trust. All employees must have regard for health, safety and welfare at work, and dress to convey a sense of professionalism, authority, and purpose.

Employees may wear diversity specific, religious and cultural dress including clerical collars, head scarves and turbans provided that such items do not breach the Code of Conduct or unreasonably compromise the health and safety of the wearer or any other person.

Children and young people registered in Trust academies are expected to dress to a high standard, and the same is therefore expected of all employees. The Trust requires its employees to dress in a manner that creates a good impression both on site and when representing the organisation on external business. The purpose of the dress code is to establish basic guidelines on appropriate clothing and designed to enable the Trust to:

- promote a positive, professional image;
- where possible, respect religious and diversity specific, including non-binary, clothing requirements and those of staff with disabilities;
- take account of health and safety requirements; and help colleagues decide what clothing is appropriate for work.

Different departments may have specific requirements that result in particular clothing demands, for example, because their work raises health and safety risks. Where appropriate the Trust will provide a uniform and appropriate safety wear which must be worn at all working times. It is important that all employees dress in a manner appropriate to their working environment and the type of work they do. We expect colleagues to take a common-sense approach to the dress code. Any enquiries regarding the operation of our dress code (including whether an article of clothing is suitable to wear to work) should be made to the employee's line manager in the first instance.

It is important that employees appear clean and smart at all times when at work, particularly when they may be in contact with children and young people, parents, other stakeholders or the general public.

Trainers, jeans and other casual clothing are not normally considered to be appropriate attire in most cases (i.e. unless required to your job role, e.g. teaching / supporting in physical education, drama and art or unless there is an organised trip or a "dress down"/INSET day). Employees present on site outside teaching time are permitted to wear the clothes that they feel best reflects the nature of the work to be completed, provided that no risk to health and safety is incurred.

Employees must wear their Academy/DCAT ID badges at all times when working.

Headteachers and line managers are responsible for ensuring that the standards set as part of the dress code are maintained. If your manager feels that you are dressing in an inappropriate way they may ask you to dress differently the next time you come into work. A persistent refusal to comply with a reasonable standard set by a manager may amount to misconduct.

Where an employee dresses in a completely inappropriate way, for example by wearing clothing with offensive images or slogans, then they may be asked to go home to change. Time taken to go home and change may be unpaid.

2.11 Personal Protective Equipment

If you are provided with any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you must ensure you wear this at all times, especially in any designated area which may pose additional risk, i.e. in the classroom etc. Faulty equipment must be reported as soon as possible. Failure to do so could place you and others at risk and could result in disciplinary action.

2.12 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The Trust is committed to creating a culture in which:

- Equality, diversity, and inclusion are actively promoted for the benefit of all staff, whether temporary, part-time, or full-time, and prospective employees.
- Equality, fairness, and respect are provided for all in our employment.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in all Trust policies and procedures.
- Discrimination and harassment against staff and also the wider school community (pupils, governors and parents) are prohibited and prevented.
- Unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment is eliminated, this includes the areas of recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline, and selection for redundancy.
- Diversity and inclusion are embedded throughout the employment lifecycle. This includes recruitment practices, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, decision making within formal procedures including but not limited to grievances, conduct, performance, attendance, absence, selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

The Trust believes that a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion not only benefits but supports wellbeing and enables people to work better because they can be themselves in the workplace and feel that they belong.

The Trust is committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust, and respect, and one that is free from all kinds of discrimination.

The Trust believes that a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion not only benefits but supports wellbeing and enables people to work better because they can be themselves in the workplace and feel that they belong.

This commitment is demonstrated through the Trusts [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

DCAT is committed to equality of opportunity and will not tolerate any harassment, bullying, unfair discrimination, or victimisation by employees.

Employees must adhere to the Trusts Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in relation to employment and to their duties and responsibilities. No act of discrimination will be tolerated with regards to a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

2.13 Bullying & Harassment (Including Sexual Harassment)

The Trust committed to a zero-tolerance approach towards bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment. This is achieved through the Trusts [Bullying and Harassment \(Including Sexual Harassment\) Policy](#). The aims of this policy are to:

- Work to eliminate all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination from the workplace;
- Build a confident and enabled workforce empowered to challenge negative behaviours;
- Create a healthy working environment which helps to minimise incidents of harassment and is based on trust, openness, respect and accountability;
- Build a workplace culture that identifies and addresses negative behaviours.

The Trust is committed to a zero-tolerance approach towards bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment.

All employees are expected to support the Trust to work to eliminate all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination from the workplace. Employees are expected to challenge negative behaviours to help create a healthy working environment which minimises incidents of harassment and is based on trust, openness, respect and accountability.

Employees must adhere to the Trusts Bullying and Harassment (including Sexual Harassment) Policy in relation to employment and to their duties and responsibilities. No act of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation or cyberbullying will be tolerated.

2.14 Disclosure of information and Confidentiality

The Trust is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and with data protection requirements observed in our academies, including requirements for employee training and consents ([see Data Protection Policy](#)).

Consent is required for data processing and disclosure, except for where required by safeguarding or other legislation. No commitment can be given that any safeguarding disclosure will not be shared.

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) at the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust is Handsam. There is an employee representative in every trust academy. The academy office is able to direct enquiries and otherwise to support data protection enquiries.

Advice should be sought from the DPO on any question of the appropriate use of data and disclosure of information held at academy or trust level. Employees must not use confidential information obtained in the course of their employment with the Trust/Academy for personal use, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it for unauthorised purposes. Information governance and security standards set out in the Trust Data Protection Policy and Information governance documents must be observed.

Employees and governors should be mindful that requirements in relation to maintaining the confidentiality of pupils, their families, colleagues, and any other matter apply to all forms of communication, including social networking sites.

2.15 Use of Equipment

i. Photographs of pupils

Staff are prohibited from taking photographs of pupils on any personal devices. Breach of this rule will be treated as a potential safeguarding concern and investigated under the Trust Disciplinary policy.

ii. Computer Use - Including the use of email/Internet/instant messaging

It is very important that the Trust is able to keep its data secure and ensure that computer systems are used only for their proper purpose. To assist with this, all employees are required to comply with instructions that may be issued from time to time regarding the use of Trust-owned computers or systems.

You should ensure that when leaving a computer for any lengthy period, that you lock your terminal, or log off if appropriate.

You must not attach any personal device to Trust IT equipment without authorisation from your line manager and you must not open attachments or click on links unless you know you can trust the source. Trust portable IT devices must be kept secure and password protected at all times.

Your computer password is an important piece of confidential information and you should treat it that way. Do not share it with others, and make sure that it is not written down anywhere where an unauthorised person can find it.

Unauthorised access to any of the Trust's systems may amount to gross misconduct.

iii. Internet Use

Employees with access to the internet on Trust-owned devices should use that access responsibly. Excessive personal use during working hours may be treated as misconduct. From time to time the Trust may block access to sites which it considers inappropriate, but whether or not a specific site has been blocked, employees must not use the internet to view or download offensive or sexually explicit material unless part of requirements for work (i.e. sex

education lessons). If in doubt you seek permission from your line manager before accessing such content. Any attempt to do so may, depending on the circumstances, amount to gross misconduct.

Employees must not download any software, plugins or extensions on to Trust-owned devices unless this is first cleared by an appropriate manager. Employees should also refrain from downloading music, video or any other entertainment content on any Trust-owned device unless part of their legitimate work. Caution should be exercised and if in doubt employees should discuss with their line manager.

Firewalls and anti-virus software may be used to protect the Trust's systems. These must not be disabled or switched off without express permission from management.

iv. Email

All email correspondence should be dealt with in the same professional and diligent manner as any other form of correspondence.

If you have a Trust email account, you should be mindful of the fact that any email that you send will be identifiable as coming from the Trust. You should therefore take care not to send anything via email that may reflect badly on the Trust. In particular, you must not send content of a sexual, racist or discriminatory nature, junk mail, chain letters, cartoons or jokes from any email address associated with work.

Using a Trust/work email address to send inappropriate material, including content of a sexual, racist or discriminatory nature, is strictly prohibited and may amount to gross misconduct. Should you receive any offensive or inappropriate content via email you should inform a member of management of this as soon as possible so that they can ensure that it is removed from the system.

You should also take care that emails will be seen only by the person intended. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential information that the email has been correctly addressed, marked 'private' / 'confidential' and not copied into those not authorised to see the information. Sending confidential information via email without proper authorisation or without taking sufficient care to ensure that it is properly protected may amount to misconduct.

v. Privacy

Monitoring of work email usage takes place without notice. You should have no expectation of privacy in respect of personal and academy business use of work email and the internet usage on devices connected to the academy's network whilst at work.

Your work email remains the property of the Trust and therefore you should not use your Trust work email to send or receive any information that you regard as private. The Trust will not usually actively monitor emails but may, in the course of its business, read work emails that you have sent or received - although in the absence of evidence of wrongdoing the Trust will try to avoid reading personal emails sent using your work email.

vi. Filtering and monitoring

Filtering and monitoring arrangements are in place on Trust devices and networks. This includes Trust devices that are used outside of the workplace.

vii. Phones

The Academy's telephones are provided primarily for business use in order to assist staff in carrying out official business. If an individual has an academy or Trust mobile phone for authorised business use, they can make personal calls for reasons other than emergencies, but should reimburse the academy / Trust for the cost of these calls. However, it should be remembered that inappropriate calls and abuse of a telephone system or mobile telephone may result in disciplinary action.

In making use of mobile or landline telephones all users are expected to act responsibly and keep costs to a minimum.

Information must never be given out over the phone unless it is absolutely clear who it is being given to and that they are entitled to the information and are ready and able to accept it. Care must be taken to ensure that conversations involving confidential and/or personal information cannot be overheard. Voicemail messages containing personal information should only be left after due consideration has been given to any security and confidentiality risks involved.

Where there is evidence of a high level of personal usage which is not compliant with this Policy the individual responsible will be liable to pay any excess call charges and may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

viii. Use of WhatsApp

To ensure compliance with data protection regulations and to protect the privacy of our students, staff, and stakeholders, DCAT prohibits the use of WhatsApp for any professional internal and external work-related communications.

However, the Trust does recognise that staff may use their personal WhatsApp to communicate with colleagues outside of work in different situations, including social arrangements, emergency situations or an update. The Trust, as an employer, has a duty to ensure the workplace is safe and respectful, which extends to work-related communications on platforms like WhatsApp.

To support colleagues using WhatsApp for work related communication we have created some guidelines to ensure that our use of WhatsApp as a staff group is safe and respectful.

[WhatsApp Employee Guidelines for Quick Communication, Sharing Non-Sensitive Information & Lone Working](#)

2.16 Use of AI Chatbots

We understand the need to embrace emerging technology and recognise that AI-powered chatbots can produce impressive responses on a wide range of subjects.

When you are using these tools for work-related activities, it is imperative for us to ensure that you do so in a safe and responsible way, and in a manner that does not compromise the organisation or its reputation.

It is not our intention to impose a ban on using AI-powered chatbots to assist with work-related activities. In fact, we encourage their use where they can save time and expense.

However, there are risks and limitations associated with using these tools.

Although AI-powered chatbots have come a long way, it is important that you are aware that their responses may not always be accurate or reliable. We expect you to verify any generated content, prior to relying on it, using more credible sources.

AI-powered chatbots are prone to bias due to the data that they are trained on and output from these tools may be unfair to certain groups of people.

We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

If you are using output from any of these tools in your work, you must ensure that you address and correct any bias and comply with the Trust's Policies on equality, Harassment and Bullying at all times.

When you receive a response from an AI-powered chatbot, you are not provided with any information about where that data has come from. For this reason, it may inadvertently include copyrighted works. There can be significant legal consequences for copyright infringement.

To minimise the risk of copyright infringement, you must not copy, reproduce and/or distribute entire or substantial parts of output from AI-powered chatbots.

You are also required to declare to your line manager when you have used an AI-powered chatbot for a work-related activity.

You should be aware that the content that you input into an AI-powered chatbot may be used to train its model and could form part of the responses to questions posed by other users. It is imperative that, when you are using an AI-powered chatbot, you do not share any confidential information that belongs, or relates, to the Trust.

You are strictly prohibited from sharing personal data and special categories of personal data with any AI-powered chatbot.

For further information/ guidance, please refer to the DfE Policy Paper on AI in education: [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education)

2.17 Personal Mobile Phones

Staff are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present/during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staff room).

The use of personal mobile phones is permitted when being used as part of the multi factor authentication [MFA] process.

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

Usage of any Academy/Trust equipment should be for professional use only. All use of equipment must be in accordance with the guidance set out in the [Trust Data Protection policy](#).

On leaving the employment of the Trust or when otherwise required, employees must return all property belonging to the Academy in good condition and within the timeframe set by the academy.

2.18 Social Media

An employee's behaviour on any social networking or other internet site must be consistent with the behaviour required of employees generally. Where it is possible for users of a social media site to ascertain who you work for, then you should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Trust.

Inappropriate and disparaging comments about the Trust, colleagues, pupils or parents may be treated as misconduct. You should be mindful that social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that you may not be able to control and that this can lead to serious unintended consequence for you and the Trust and may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct.

You must not take or retain images of any pupils on your own personal device or post any pupils' image on any personal social networking site.

You must not knowingly communicate with or request / accept links from pupils on any social networking sites or other online forum including Xbox etc.

You must not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated on or on behalf of the Trust without express permission to do so from your manager.

You should not attempt to access social networking sites, such as Facebook/Twitter or similar on Trust computers or devices. This includes during break times.

2.19 Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs

The Trust's approach to the consumption of alcohol, drugs and other substances (including legal highs) that have intoxicating and/or behaviour-altering effects or impair judgement (referred to in this policy as "other substances") is based on the need to ensure a safe and productive working environment. At the same time, and as a Christian employer, we

recognise that dependency on drugs and alcohol is often an illness that requires treatment and whilst it is never acceptable for an employee to attend work under the influence of drugs, alcohol or other substances, employees who have addiction problems are encouraged to disclose this to the Trust and seek assistance and take part in appropriate counselling/support as required. Because of the serious nature of the risks posed by the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances in the workplace, any breach of the rules in this area may be treated as gross misconduct which may result in dismissal.

An employee will be regarded as 'under the influence' of alcohol, drugs or other substances if their behaviour, speech, ability to concentrate or otherwise perform their duties is affected. An employee will also be regarded as under the influence if they fail a drug, other substance or alcohol test

i. Dependency

Employees who have a dependency on alcohol, drugs or other substances may be offered support and encouraged to seek appropriate counselling or medical help. Absence arising from treatment or counselling related to drug, alcohol or other substance abuse will be treated as sickness absence under the Trust's absence management policy. However, while the Trust will always try to be supportive toward employees with a drug, alcohol or other substance problem, this may not prevent disciplinary action being taken when employees act in breach of the rules laid out in this policy.

Wherever an employee informs the Trust that they have a drug, alcohol or other substance problem this will, as far as possible, be treated in the utmost confidence. However, the Trust may need to disclose particular circumstances to managers, regulatory authorities or others should this be necessary to ensure safety or compliance with legal requirements.

ii. Drugs

The consumption, storage, distribution or sale of illegal drugs or any other behaviour-altering and/or intoxicating substance, including legal highs, on Trust premises or during working time is strictly prohibited. The Trust will report any illegal activities to the police or other relevant authorities.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of illegal drugs or any other substance taken for non-medical purposes.

iii. Medicines and Prescription Drugs

If you are taking prescription drugs or any other medicine that may affect your performance at work or your ability to carry out any of your duties, then you must inform your line manager of this so that steps can be taken to ensure that the work can be done safely. It is your responsibility, when beginning any course of medication, to check whether it may adversely affect your ability to work.

Any medications (including over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol) brought on to site, must be kept locked away at all times and not left in unlocked drawers or handbags etc.

iv. Smoking

The Trust operates a smoke-free working environment. Smoking (which includes the use of e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers) is therefore strictly prohibited throughout all Trust

premises and immediately outside of the school. This policy applies to all employees, parents, pupils and visitors.

v. Alcohol

Consumption of even a small amount of alcohol may be sufficient to adversely affect the work of an employee and could pose a risk to health and safety. Remember that alcohol can remain in the bloodstream for up to 24 hours following consumption and that the consumption of a significant amount of alcohol in the evening may leave you unfit to work in the morning.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of alcohol. You must not consume any alcohol during working time, or during any break.

If you are staying away on an academy trip (for example), you should also refrain from drinking alcohol at all times on the basis that you have pupils in your care and could be called upon at any moment. You may also be required to drive.

Where alcohol is available at Trust / Academy organised events or occasions when you are representing the Trust / Academy – even outside working hours - it is important to behave responsibly and not drink to excess. Behaviour that reflects badly on the Trust will be a disciplinary matter and in serious cases may amount to gross misconduct.

2.20 Gambling

You are prohibited from gambling or betting on the Trust's premises whether during or outside of working hours including the use of gambling or gaming websites.

2.21 Driving

Where driving is required as part of your job, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are legally qualified to drive.

Licences will go through the Trust inspection procedure which requires us to check individual licences once a year with the DVLA, or as otherwise requested. The Trust will require you to share your driving licence information by supplying it with your driving license number and a check code provided by the DVLA. If you receive any points on your licence you must inform the Trust of this immediately.

If you use your own vehicle to drive on Trust work-related business (this does not include travel to and from work), it is your responsibility to arrange to be insured for that business use. Additional costs incurred will be reimbursed by the Trust, but authorisation must be sought in advance before expenditure. Mileage undertaken for work purposes may be claimed as expenses in line with HMRC rates. If you use your own vehicle for work related business, the Trust may require you at any time/annually to allow a copy of your insurance and any MOT test certificate to be made and kept in our records.

You are responsible for any driving offences committed while driving as part of your duties, including any parking fines. Dangerous, careless, inconsiderate or aggressive driving as well as causing a risk to others can be damaging to the Trust's reputation and can amount to gross misconduct. If you are banned from driving for any reason, and this affects your ability to discharge the terms of your contract the Trust is not obliged to find alternative work for you

and may choose to dismiss you if the ban renders you incapable of performing your duties as required.

It is illegal to use your mobile phone whilst driving. This includes texting etc.

Employees should **never** use their mobile phone whilst driving on Trust business unless they do so on a properly installed hands-free system and traffic conditions mean that it is safe to do so. In most cases, it would be preferable to make any calls when the vehicle is stationary.

Any journey carried out on Trust business must be scheduled in such a way as to allow adequate rest breaks – usually one break of 15 minutes for two hours of driving. Where possible, driving on Trust business should be avoided either late at night or very early in the morning.

Safety is the Trust's prime responsibility and you should not be required to compromise safety in any way when driving on Trust business. If you are concerned about any driving requirements you may have, then you should discuss these with your line manager and appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that any work-related journey can be completed safely.

2.22 Trust Vehicles

You may be entitled to use the Trust's minibus on a pool vehicle basis when it is necessary for the purposes of carrying out your duties.

Employees permitted to drive the Trust's minibuses are required to comply with the following requirements, which are conditions of entitlement: -

- to ensure that all children are wearing their seatbelts throughout the journey, and that when driving they must comply with speed limits;
- to take reasonable care of the minibus and to keep it in a clean condition;
- to report at the earliest opportunity to the Trust any damage to the minibus or any accident arising from its use, regardless of how such damage or accident occurred. Failure to do so may lead to loss of insurance cover for such damage or accident;
- to report at the earliest opportunity any incident concerning the police which arises from the use of the Minibus;
- to comply with the provisions and conditions of any policy of insurance relating to the minibus and the Trust's requirements in respect of assisting with insurance claims or investigations into accidents, damage or police enquiries arising from the use of the minibus. No person other than the authorised employee is allowed to drive the minibus.

An employee who is permitted to drive any of the Trust's minibuses will be required to have their driving licence checked by the Trust each year and to report immediately any points received or loss of licence.

If you have possession of a Trust minibus overnight or at the weekend, then you must ensure that it is securely parked in an appropriate location. In general, equipment or stock should not be left in a vehicle overnight.

2.23 Conflict of interest

Employees should declare any personal interest that could bring about conflict with the Trust/Academy's interest to their line manager. Employees must declare any financial interests or non-financial interests which could or could be perceived to conflict with their role within the Trust/Academy via a pecuniary interest form.

Employees are required not to take outside employment which conflicts with the Trust/Academy's interests; any employees intending to work for outside organisations should seek permission from the Headteacher. This is not applicable to zero-hour contract employees.

Employees may not initiate a private business relationship involving pupils. This means that a staff member may not approach a pupil, or the pupils' parents/carers, seeking work, including private tutoring.

2.24 Personal Relationships

Sexual/romantic relationships with pupils are illegal and strictly prohibited. Any such allegations will be investigated and responded to in accordance with the procedure contained within the Safeguarding Policy.

External and internal applicants for posts will be asked to declare relevant personal relationships when applying for the post to ensure that the member of staff they are related to / in a relationship with, has no involvement in the application process.

Anybody who is uncertain about whether they should take action regarding a personal relationship (whether their own or someone else's relationship that is affecting them) are invited to seek guidance in confidence from the Headteacher or Line Manager, as appropriate.

You should be aware that a breach of this policy could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

2.25 Other employment

Where employees have more than one job, both the Trust and your other employer(s) are responsible for ensuring that the 48-hour week is complied with. Employees should therefore inform their Line Manager about any work they undertake for other employer(s).

Employees may opt to work more than 48 hours per week and will need to complete a 'Working Time Regulations Opt-Out Agreement' and submit to their Headteacher/Line Manager. At no time should school time and equipment be utilised in connection with any other employment.

2.26 Acceptance of gifts

It is reasonable for employees to accept modest gifts, for example, in recognition of the teaching or pastoral support that they have given to an individual student or the contribution that they have made to a school throughout a teaching appointment. The giving of gifts should be in line with the agreed [Finance policy](#), and no individual gifts should have a value above £25.

2.27 Time Keeping and Attendance

A late arrival at work can put unfair pressure on colleagues and affect the smooth running of the business. The Trust therefore requires all employees to take responsibility for attending work promptly in accordance with their contract of employment or work roster. You should arrive in time to begin working at your appointed start time and not leave early, unless you have prior permission from your line manager.

The Trust may ask you to record your arrival and departure times and may keep such records of your working time as it thinks appropriate. Deliberate failure to record time may be treated as gross misconduct.

Persistent lateness without proper acceptable explanation may be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

Where it is clear that you are going to be late for work you must contact your line manager as soon as possible to explain the situation and give an estimate of your arrival time. You must make every effort to talk to your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If personal or domestic circumstances make it difficult for you to attend work on time, then you should discuss this with your line manager. In some cases, the Trust may be able to accommodate a reasonable need for flexibility. Any such requests will be considered on a case by case basis and taking into consideration needs of the Trust.

For employees who work during the school holiday periods their working hours remain the same but there can be flexibility on start and finish times as agreed with their line manager.

2.28 Rest Breaks

The Trust encourages all employees to take full advantage of scheduled rest breaks. These are provided not only for comfort, but also to protect the health of employees and prevent excessive fatigue from causing accidents.

A rest break should be taken away from your workstation or classroom wherever possible. Teachers are encouraged to take a lunch break, in line with the academy timetable. If you leave the premises you should bear in mind the time that it will take you to return from the break so that you can ensure that you begin work again on time.

You are required to comply with any requirements relating to such breaks as may be in place from time to time in line with your contract of employment.

2.29 Parking

All vehicles parked on the Trust's premises must be parked only in the designated parking areas and in such a way as to avoid obstructing access.

The Trust accepts no liability for damage to private vehicles parked on Trust premises, however it may be caused.

2.30 Collections

You must not make any collections from colleagues or undertake any other form of fundraising for charity on the Trust's premises without prior authorisation from the Headteacher.

2.31 Staffroom Facilities

Any staff facilities provided by the Trust must be kept clean and tidy at all times. This is the responsibility of all employees.

2.32 Dealing with the Media

You must not respond directly to any questions raised by the media unless you are expressly authorised to do so or an accredited trades union official discharging your duties as authorised by your union and established internal mechanisms have been exhausted.

2.33 Conduct Outside Work

Employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the Trust/Academy or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust/Academy community.

Employees should be careful to ensure that nothing they say or do brings the Trust or individual Academy or its name into disrepute. Offensive comments that are defamatory, discriminatory, or falsely stated in our communities or on social networking sites can damage a reputation that has taken a considerable amount of time to establish.

Criminal offences that involve violence, possession or misuse of drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable and may constitute gross misconduct.

Additionally, employees are expected to support the promotion of the Trust's values and culture at all times.

2.34 Trust communications standards

DCAT works to involve children and young people, families, and carers in decisions about their education and the services delivered by the Trust.

Employees should consider and use competently the best approaches to communication with the individuals they support, including considering barriers to effective communication, and considering that good communication creates opportunities, relationships and environments that allows individuals to respond in kind.

Our internal communications standards are:

- Clear expectations: The Trust produces leaflets and other guidance to help parents and stakeholders understand our expectations of conduct in our academies.
- Best practice: Trust employees are expected to model the standards of communication that we expect from others, including in our relationships with colleagues and external stakeholders

- We endeavour to demonstrate and practice good communication across the Trust; there is no place for abusive or threatening communications or conduct.

All employees are entitled to feel safe and secure at work and be free from intimidation or bullying behaviour (see Bullying and Harassment Policy). Employees are expected to show professional courtesy and respect at all times to others working within the trust or academy. Where employees feel that they have not been treated with the appropriate levels of courtesy or respect, this should be reported using the mechanisms set out in the [Grievance Policy](#).

2.35 Parental Contact

The Trust expects that employees will act swiftly and professionally at all times. This is particularly important where parents have contacted the Academy with a concern or complaint relating to the education of their child, we will investigate and where appropriate will seek to apologise and correct the mistake. The Trust [Complaints Policy](#) is available for parties seeking redress.

2.36 Communication and Teamwork

Effective teamwork is critical to the successful working culture at the Trust/Academy. Every employee is responsible for promoting and creating the culture of teamwork. It is the responsibility of team leaders and senior leadership teams to develop and promote teamwork through supportive communication, training, and team building.

2.37 Focus on Learning (whether in a teaching or education support professional role)

Following appropriate training employees are expected to follow the Teacher or other appropriate Standards; [Trusts Appraisal Policy](#), and in particular, as appropriate to the role, to areas such as:

- academic achievement
- personal development
- leadership effectiveness and capacity building
- service delivery and efficiency
- professional development

Additionally, employees are expected improve the effectiveness with which they deliver their role in relation to Academy/Trust objectives by:

- Promoting Trust and Academy values
- Prioritising student learning
- Being flexible and adaptable in response to changing academy days
- Supporting the development of the curriculum
- Supporting the improvement of pedagogical approaches
- Accelerating the progress of groups
- Researching and implementing best practice
- Delivering high-quality support to children and young people
- Developing high quality resources

2.38 Contribution to the wider aspects of Academy life

Our academies provide a wide range of extra – curricular activities, competitions, sports etc. which take place at lunch times, outside of the normal school day, at weekends and outside of term time. We appoint employees who are prepared to support and/or lead activities within our programme to continue to provide children and young people with new opportunities and experiences.

2.39 Breaches of the Employee Expectations and Code of Conduct

Trust Disciplinary Policies may be applied to breaches of the Code of Conduct, with sanctions up to and including dismissal. If an investigation is initiated resulting from an alleged breach of this code, employees may be accompanied by a companion who may be a colleague or a trade union representative.

All employees should report to their line manager or an appropriate senior manager any breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct.

2.40 Misconduct

Behaviour which is disruptive, disrespectful to colleagues, or which falls short of the requirements set out in this handbook may be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure. While employees will not usually be dismissed for a first offence a failure to remedy the behaviour or to adhere to required standards may ultimately lead to dismissal once appropriate warnings have been given.

During the first six months of employment during the employee's probationary period, the Trust reserves the right not to follow this procedure in full.

2.41 Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is behaviour which is fundamentally at odds with the employee's duty to the Trust, their colleagues or the pupils. In accordance with the disciplinary procedure, gross misconduct will usually result in dismissal without notice, or payment in lieu of notice, even in cases of a first offence.

It is not possible to list every example of gross misconduct which may arise, but the following provides an illustration of the sort of conduct that will fall into this category – some of which are then explained in more detail below:

2.42 Dishonesty

It is important to stress that any form of dishonesty may be regarded as gross misconduct. This includes theft of property, whether belonging to the Trust, colleagues, pupils or any third party. However, it also includes an employee seeking to gain any advantage through deception - such as making a false claim for expenses or overtime, falsely claiming to be sick or falsely claiming to have completed a particular task.

2.43 Refusal to carry out reasonable instructions

The Trust expects employees to work in a spirit of cooperation with their colleagues and managers for the good of the business as a whole. Employees are required to carry out their managers' reasonable and lawful instructions and a deliberate and wilful refusal to do so is likely to amount to gross misconduct.

If you believe that you have been instructed to do something that does not fall within your duties or which is in some other way unreasonable or unsafe then the appropriate way of dealing with this is to raise this with a more senior manager as soon as possible, speak to your trade union or use the grievance procedure. However, doing so may not prevent a refusal to carry out an instruction from amounting to gross misconduct if it is found to have been a reasonable one in all the circumstances.

2.44 Breach of a requirement set out in this Handbook

This handbook sets out a number of requirements aimed at ensuring the smooth running of the Trust and the fair treatment of all employees. A number of these are so important that any breach of them will amount to gross misconduct and these are clearly identified throughout the handbook. Your attention is drawn in particular to the following:

- The rules on [safeguarding](#);
- The rules on [gifts and hospitality](#);
- The rules on [smoking](#);
- The rules on [alcohol and drugs](#);
- The rules concerning the [use of computers, the internet and email](#);
- The rules regarding [social media](#); and
- The rules on [driving](#) and the use of [Trust vehicles](#).

2.45 Allegations of Misconduct and Gross Misconduct

The Trust is committed to treating all employees fairly and allegations of misconduct and gross misconduct will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

3. HOW WE DO THINGS

This section deals with some important administrative requirements to do with your employment and sets out the standards the Trust expects of employees in various situations.

3.1 Proof of Identity

The Trust is legally obliged to ensure that all employees are permitted to work in the UK. It is a condition of your employment that you comply with all reasonable requests to provide details of your identity, right to work in the UK and place of residence. This will include allowing the Trust to take copies of your passport or other appropriate documents and to check their authenticity. Copies of any such documents will be kept in your personnel file indefinitely and the appropriate details added to the Single Central Record.

The Trust may dismiss any employee who cannot demonstrate that they are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

3.2 Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff

In addition to the various staff records kept in the Trust and on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in each Academy in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education requirements. This is kept up-to-date and managed by each academy. The Single Centralised Record (SCR) will contain details of the following: -

- All employees who are employed to work at the Academy;
- All employees who are employed as supply staff to the Academy Trust whether employed directly or through an agency;
- All others who have been chosen by the Academy to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff and people brought into the Trust to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members e.g.: sports coaches etc.
- All employees working for the Trust Centre.

In the case of any staff who are not assigned to an individual academy within the Trust, these employees must be recorded on the SCR for each academy they work in, alongside all other staff employed by the Trust and Trustees.

3.3 Medical Fitness

Anyone appointed to a post involving regular contact with children must possess the appropriate level of physical and mental fitness before any appointment offer is confirmed. All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. DCAT is an equal opportunities employer and adjustments to facilitate candidate's ability to discharge their roles will always be discussed and considered based on medical and other relevant information.

3.4 Personnel Records/Data Protection

All information retained on employees is kept in each Academy, for school based staff and at the Central Trust office, for Trust Centre staff. This information is held securely and in line with the [Trust Data Protection policy](#).

We will process personal data and sensitive personal data (also known as ‘special categories of personal data’) relating to you in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Data Protection Privacy Notice (provided to you separately, and available from the Trust Compliance officer), as well as in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

We may monitor staff in accordance with our policies relating to email, internet and communications systems and monitoring at work, as detailed in this Employee Handbook and in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

You will comply with your obligations under our Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies as directed.

3.5 Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the Trust’s policies and procedures and make clear the expectation and code of conduct which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

The induction checklist will be completed with the new employee by their line manager and will identify role appropriate training.

For further information, please refer to the DCAT Induction and Probation Policy found in the [HR Handbook - Key Policies and Procedures](#).

3.6 Probation

For further information, please refer to the [DCAT Induction and Probation Policy](#) and your individual schools Early Career Teachers (ECT) policy.

3.7 Travel and other Expenses

If you incur valid expenses in the course of working for DCAT, these will be refunded providing you have prior approval for the spend from your Line Manager. Wherever possible items should be purchased centrally by the school office to obtain best value and to enable VAT to be reclaimed where appropriate, rather than being purchased directly by staff members.

Business Purchase Cards

If you have a business purchase card, it is expected that you use this method of payment (with the exception of any petrol/ diesel) to reduce the need to claim expenses. Please refer to the [Finance Handbook](#) for guidance of how to manage the use of your business purchase card. You must obtain a receipt/invoice for all transactions which must be passed on to the Business Manager in accordance with the school’s deadlines. VAT can only be claimed back with a valid VAT invoice/receipt, please make every effort to provide a VAT receipt to reduce

cost to the school. Staff that misuse the card or do not follow the procedure outlined above will have the card removed.

Claiming Expenses

For petrol/diesel claims or if you do not hold a business purchase card, you should complete an expense claim form; have it countersigned by your Line Manager and submit it to your Business Manager for payment. Please ensure the expense claim is typed rather than handwritten. Where you have incurred expenses, you are expected to make a claim at least every month.

i. Mileage

Mileage is paid at the rate of 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles claimed in any tax year. Any mileage claimed beyond 10,000 miles per year is paid at 25p per mile. An additional 5p per mile can be claimed per passenger for work related journeys.

You will be able to claim mileage from your usual place of work. To claim business mileage, you are required to have Class I business insurance for your vehicle and must provide your Line Manager with a copy of your Driving Licence and annual insurance certificate (to be held on your personnel file).

If claiming for any parking expenses, it is important that any free parking options (on-street parking, for example) are exhausted in the first instance.

ii. Other travel

Train travel should usually be standard class. In some circumstances, first class travel will be authorised by the Chief Executive where it can be evidenced that the cost/benefit is in favour of DCAT, e.g. that first class travel will allow the travel time to be spent working and/or booking significantly in advance results in a first-class ticket priced similarly to a standard-class ticket.

In the rare event of air travel, all tickets must be booked economy class. There are no circumstances in which business or first-class travel will be authorised.

iii. Overnight accommodation

It is expected that you are mindful of costs and transparent use of public funds when considering overnight accommodation. Where possible, accommodation should be booked on your behalf by a member of the DCAT Centre admin team.

You may claim overnight accommodation in the following circumstances:

- a. If you are attending a meeting or event more than 100 miles from your home address, provided the meeting or event lasts at least 5 hours.
- b. Where you are attending a meeting or event at the same or similar location over two or more consecutive days during normal working hours and where this meeting or event is 70 miles or more from your home address.
- c. Where you are attending a meeting or event at the same or similar location over two or more consecutive days outside of normal working hours on both days and where this meeting or event is 50 miles or more from your home address.

Normal working hours for the purposes of claiming expenses are defined as 7.00am to 7.00pm.

You may claim accommodation in the event of severe weather conditions (e.g. sleet, snow) where it would be dangerous to return to your home address. You should consider whether objectively accommodation would be seen as valid in such circumstances by an outside person and any decision should be agreed by the Headteacher/Line Manager (for Trust Centre Staff).

Outside of London, the maximum rate you may claim is £140 per person, per night. In London, the maximum rate you may claim is £180 per person, per night. If you are unable to secure accommodation within these rates, please seek your Line Manager approval before booking.

You may stay at any hotel of your choosing including where the cost is greater than the maximum rates stipulated above. In this circumstance, the amount you are able to claim will be capped to the maximum rates unless agreed by the Headteacher/Chief Executive.

iv. **Other expenses**

Sustenance is not usually provided for employees during the normal course of business activities and is only to be claimed if you are staying away from home overnight in accordance with this policy on a pre-approved business trip where food is not already included (e.g. a corporate training event).

You may claim up to the maximum value of £30 to cover the cost of an evening meal and £10 for breakfast if not included within the room rate, on production of a valid receipt. Any receipts submitted over the value of £30 will be capped. **You must not claim for the cost of alcoholic beverages in line with the ESFA requirements**, nor should you claim for tips/gratuities.

3.8 Adverse Weather and Traffic Disruption

The Trust's primary duty is to provide a safe place of work. If adverse weather means that this cannot be achieved and the individual Academy needs to close, then all employees will be sent home or told not to come in. In these circumstances employees will either be required to work from home or be paid in full for any working time that they have lost.

If the Academy remains open, it is the responsibility of employees to attend work if they possibly can and so long as it is reasonably safe to do so.

If you are unable to attend work due to severe weather or other travel difficulties then you may be asked to work at an alternative DCAT academy which you are able to travel to or work from home, but this will be entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher / Trust.

Where it is clear that you are not going to be able to get to work you must contact your line manager as soon as possible to explain the situation. You must make every effort to talk to your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

Additional paid leave will not normally be provided for employees who are unable, for whatever reason, to travel into work. Payments may be made in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher in consultation with HR.

4. ABSENCE

This section sets out the approach the Trust takes when you are unable to attend work, are taking annual leave or need time off.

For further information please see the [Absence Management policy](#)

4.1 Unauthorised Absence

The obligation on an employee to attend work at the times agreed is a fundamental part of the contract of employment. Employees who deliberately fail to attend work without proper reason or in breach of management instructions may be committing misconduct which could result in dismissal.

4.2 Medical Appointments

In general, appointments to see a GP, dentist or optician should, where possible, be made outside working hours.

The Trust appreciates that it is not always possible to avoid appointments during the working day and will judge each case individually in deciding whether any paid time off should be granted.

Employees who have a medical condition which will require regular appointments during the working day should discuss their situation with their manager so that appropriate arrangements and adjustments can be made.

You may be required to provide evidence of any appointment for which time off is needed.

4.3 Antenatal Care/Adoption Appointments

i. Pregnancy Related Appointments

Pregnant employees are entitled to reasonable paid-time off to attend antenatal appointments, once they have informed their employer that they are pregnant. This may include relaxation and parent craft classes that your doctor, midwife or nurse has advised you to attend, in addition to medical examinations, screening tests and any midwife appointments

After the first appointment, employees will be asked to provide proof of further antenatal appointments such as an appointment card or an equivalent document confirming the booking.

Employees should give as much notice as possible of antenatal appointments and, wherever possible arrange appointments at a time that will require the minimum amount of time off.

Any employee that has a qualifying relationship with a person who is pregnant, has a statutory right to take unpaid time off to accompany that person at up to two antenatal appointments.

This could be you if you are the spouse or civil partner of the pregnant person, or you could be living with the pregnant person in an enduring family relationship (and you are not their

parent, grandparent, sister, brother, aunt or uncle). In addition, you will be eligible for the time off if you are the biological parent of the expected child.

The antenatal appointment must be made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse. The right to time off work is limited to a maximum of six-and-a-half hours for each appointment.

Employees should give as much notice as possible of when you need the time off for the antenatal appointments and, wherever possible, arrange appointments at a time that will require the minimum amount of time off.

ii. **Adoption Appointments**

If you are adopting a child jointly, one of you can elect to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments. The other adoptive parent is entitled to take unpaid time off to attend up to two adoption appointments.

The parent who takes paid time off is not entitled, later on, to take paternity leave in respect of the child.

The appointment must have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. The right to time off work is limited to a maximum of six-and-a-half hours for each appointment.

You should give as much notice as possible of when you need the time off for the adoption appointment and, wherever possible, arrange appointments at a time that will require the minimum amount of time off.

4.4 Sickness Absence

Regular and reliable attendance at work is an important commitment that the Trust asks all employees to make. Unjustified or excessive absence can put pressure on colleagues and pupils, and seriously damage the Trust's operations, to everybody's detriment.

Nevertheless, the Trust will always try to be supportive when an employee is genuinely too ill to attend work. The [Attendance Management Policy](#) sets out the Trust's approach and the steps that you need to take if you are off sick.

i. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Trust is committed to making reasonable adjustments to an employee's duties or working arrangements where they would otherwise suffer a disadvantage arising from any disability.

In order to make appropriate adjustments the Trust needs to know about any disability the employee may have. Employees who feel that they may require an adjustment should discuss their situation with their line manager. If desired an employee may ask to be accompanied to such a meeting by their union representative or a workplace colleague. This would not in itself infer that the meeting was 'formal' or statutory. Any such discussions will be in the strictest confidence although when an adjustment is made it may be necessary to inform other

employees of the reason for this. The extent to which details of any disability will be discussed with other employees will be agreed as part of the process of making the adjustment itself.

The purpose of any adjustment will be to ensure that the employee can work effectively in an appropriate role and on appropriate terms and conditions. The Trust is not obliged to maintain an employee's level of pay if hours are reduced or the employee is moved to a less senior role as a result of any adjustment, but all options may be considered depending on the circumstances. Nor will the Trust agree to an adjustment which will not result in a commercially practicable working arrangement provided such a refusal is lawful.

4.5 Jury Service/Other Time Off

There are a number of circumstances in which employees have a right to time off from work either with or without pay. These include jury service and certain public duties such as serving as a local councillor, magistrate or academy governor. Where a need for such time off arises, you should discuss the matter with your line manager who will consider what arrangements should be put in place.

While the Trust will do its best to accommodate time off in these circumstances, the requirements of an employee's role may mean that the amount of time off granted may be limited.

Where serving on a jury would lead to a level of absence that would be detrimental to the business, the Trust may require you to seek a deferment. You will be paid a daily allowance by the court to attend jury service and should complete the Loss of Earnings Certificate supplied by the court with your payroll administrator.

4.6 Compassionate/Bereavement Leave

In the event an employee suffers a bereavement in their family or close friends, the Trust will exercise its discretion to allow reasonable time off to attend a funeral. What is reasonable will be determined on a case by case basis and the type of leave, whether paid or unpaid, will depend on the circumstances and the relationship the employee had with the individual.

In addition, there may be occasions where it may be necessary for an employee to take compassionate leave. Again, this will be considered on a case by case basis and dependant on circumstances, may be paid or unpaid.

An employee will not be eligible to receive paid bereavement or compassionate time-off benefits while off, or absent from work because of holiday, sickness (paid or unpaid) or for any other reason.

4.7 Parental Bereavement Leave

Employees are entitled to statutory parental bereavement leave (SPBL) if your child or a child for whom you have or were due to have parental responsibility for dies before they are 18 or has been stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, on or after 6 April 2020.

Leave can be taken as one week, two consecutive weeks, or two separate weeks, at any time within the first 56 weeks after the child's death.

i. Notification

During the first eight weeks after a child has died, you, or someone on your behalf as necessary, need only give notice to the Company to take SPBL before you are due to start work on the first day of leave. If you have already started work, then officially your SPBL period will start on the following day. If you want to cancel it at any time during the first seven weeks you can do so as long as it has not started.

After eight weeks, you need to give at least a week's notice to the Company to take SPBL. You can cancel it with a week's notice, or re-book it by giving a week's notice.

When giving notice to take SPBL, you must tell the Company: the date of the child's death; when you want your leave to begin; and whether you want to take 1 or 2 weeks leave). You can give notice by telephone or by email or by letter.

ii. Parental Bereavement Pay

To qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay (SPBP) during such leave, you must have at least six months' continuous employment and normal weekly earnings of at least the lower earnings limit. It is paid at the same rate as other statutory family leave pay, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with your line manager.

To claim SPBP, you must confirm the following information in writing within 28 days of starting any period of SPBL: your name; your entitlement to SPBP; the dates of SPBL you want to claim the pay for; the date of the child's death; and your relationship to the child. You can provide this information at the same time as giving notice to take SPBL, as set out above, so long as it is in writing.

iii. Other leave entitlements

In addition to parental bereavement leave, if you qualified for:

- maternity or paternity leave and pay and your child has died or been stillborn, you are still entitled to such leave and pay.
- adoption leave and pay, then the adoption leave entitlement runs for another eight weeks from the end of the week in which the child died (unless it would already have ended sooner).

If your planned period of SPBL coincides with another statutory family leave right, your SPBL will end at the start of that other leave. If you wish to take SPBL at the end of the other statutory family leave period, then a fresh notice to take the leave will be required, as per the above notice requirements.

Please speak to your manager if you require time off in addition to parental bereavement leave.

iv. Stillbirth, Miscarriage and termination

The Trust aims to be a supportive employer. Our counselling and employee assistance programme is available 24 hours a day 0800 028 5147. This is a fully confidential service and can provide counselling in the event of a still birth, miscarriage or termination. Depending on your circumstances, either sickness absence or compassionate leave will normally be available,

and your manager is also available to discuss any support you need upon your return to work. The Miscarriage Association also provide a range of advice and support at www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk.

If you have a miscarriage or termination during the first 23 weeks of pregnancy, maternity leave will not apply. Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP) will not be payable.

In the event of a still birth, after the start of the 24th week of pregnancy, maternity leave will apply and both SMP and OMP will be available if you are otherwise eligible.

4.8 Carers Leave

Employees have a statutory right to carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need.

At DCAT we recognise the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work, and looking after their own health. We are committed to doing what we can to help to ensure that the health and wellbeing of employees with caring responsibilities is looked after.

i. Being a carer

A carer is anyone with caring responsibilities who provides care, assistance and support to any other individual who may be seriously ill or unable to care for themselves.

Carers might find it difficult to distinguish their caring role from the personal relationship they have with the individual they are caring for, be it a relationship with a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, or friend. Therefore, some employees may not immediately identify themselves as a carer.

The activities that carers undertake are wide ranging, including but not limited to:

- help with personal care;
- help with mobility;
- managing medication;
- practical household tasks;
- emotional support; and
- help with financial matters or administration.

ii. Requesting support

We recognise that caring can be unpredictable and emotionally upsetting. An employee may acquire caring responsibilities overnight or caring responsibilities may develop over time.

We realise that caring is a subject that not everyone finds it easy to talk about. However, we urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.

In particular, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager about your caring responsibilities to explore how we can help you with any challenges that you are facing. If for any reason you are unable to approach your line manager, you can speak to your School Business Manager/HR Lead.

Any information disclosed by you during discussions with your line manager or the HR department will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

iii. Entitlement to carer's leave

Whatever your length of service, you have a statutory right to take carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant if they have a long-term care need.

In the context of statutory carer's leave, a dependant means:

- your spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- any person who lives in the same household as you (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or employee); or
- any other person who would reasonably rely on you to provide or arrange care.

A dependant has a long-term care need if they:

- have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months;
- have a condition that amounts to a disability under the Equality Act 2010; or
- require care for a reason connected to their old age.

This statutory right to carer's leave applies to a wide range of caring situations, but excludes general childcare, except where your child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need.

i. Amount of carer's leave you can take

The amount of carer's leave that you can take is up to one week in any 12-month rolling period.

A week of carer's leave is the same duration as your normal working week, meaning that a full-time employee is entitled to five days' carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period. If you are contracted to work four days per week, you will be entitled to four days of carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period, and so on.

You can take the leave in one continuous block, as individual days, or as half days.

If you are caring for more than one dependant, you do not have a separate entitlement to carer's leave for each dependant.

ii. Notice to take carer's leave

If you need to take carer's leave, you should submit your notice using the Carers Leave Request Form available from your School Business Manager/HR Lead. This form contains a declaration that will need to be signed by you.

We ask that you give as much notice as possible when requesting carer's leave so that we can plan for your absence. In any event, you must give notice in advance that is either twice the number of working days that you wish to take as carer's leave, or three days, whichever is earlier.

All carer's leave must be approved in advance by the Headteacher for school based staff and Line Manager for Trust Centre staff.

iii. Pay during carer's leave

You do not have a statutory right to be paid during carer's leave. Therefore, any leave taken as carer's leave is unpaid.

While sums payable by way of salary will cease, all other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

iv. Postponing your carer's leave

While every effort will be made to meet your request, we may postpone a period of carer's leave if we consider that your absence will disrupt the operation of the school.

If a decision is taken to postpone your leave, your line manager/the Headteacher will consult with you to find an alternative leave period within one month of the carer's leave period original requested.

The Headteacher/ your line manager will write to you within seven days of receiving your notice, clarifying the reason for the postponement and the revised dates on which the carer's leave can be taken.

v. Cancelling your carer's leave

You can cancel your carer's leave and take it at a different time as long as you let the Headteacher/your line manager know before your leave has started.

You cannot cancel any carer's leave that has already begun.

vi. Returning to work after carer's leave

Following your carer's leave, you have the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than the terms that would have applied had you not been absent. Your continuity of employment is not affected.

vii. Our commitment to you

You have the right not to be subjected to any detrimental treatment (including being unfairly penalised, disciplined or dismissed) because you have taken, sought to take, or made use of the benefits of carer's leave.

If you are told not to take or request carer's leave, or you believe that you have been subjected to detrimental treatment because you have taken or requested carer's leave you can raise it with a more senior manager or under the DCAT Grievance procedure.

Any such behaviour will not be tolerated and will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

4.9 Emergency Time Off for Dependents

The Trust recognises that situations arise where you need to take time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on you. Your husband, wife or partner, child or parent, or someone living with you as part of your family can all be considered as depending on you. Others who rely on you for help in an emergency may also qualify. For further detail as to who counts as depending on you and guidance on individual circumstances, please speak to your Manager.

Provided the reasons for such a request are genuine and you inform the Trust as soon as possible that you need this time off, you will be allowed reasonable time off work to deal with such emergencies.

The right to time off only covers emergencies and significant unexpected disruptions. If you know in advance that you are going to need time off (e.g supporting at planned medical appointments), you will not qualify for this type of leave, and you therefore should arrange this with the Trust by taking another form of leave, such as annual leave, parental leave etc.

If an emergency occurs and it is not possible for you to inform your manager in advance of any absence you should contact your manager as soon as possible to inform them of the situation. Appropriate arrangements may then be put in place.

If you suffer some other personal emergency, you should talk to your line manager who will discuss what arrangements can be made to grant you compassionate leave. These arrangements will always be at the discretion of the Trust and will depend on the circumstances of the case and the impact that any absence on your part may have on the business. However, the Trust will be sympathetic to your need for time off (which may be paid or unpaid at our discretion) to deal with the situation and make any arrangements that may be necessary.

1.

4.10 Annual Leave

Your individual holiday entitlement, including the calculation of any holiday pay, is set out in your contract of employment. This outlines the general approach taken by the Trust to requests for annual leave.

Due to the nature of the Trust's business, many roles are required throughout term time and employees engaged in these roles must take the whole of their holiday entitlement during academy closure periods. Your contract of employment will confirm whether you are required to take your holidays during academy closure periods. If you are, the rules below will not apply to your employment, and you should refer to your Contract for details as to how holiday is dealt with.

If your contract of employment does not require you to take holidays during academy closure periods, you must arrange your holidays at the mutual convenience of both you and the academy/Trust. You must give the academy/Trust reasonable notice of your intention to take your holiday. For longer periods of leave this would usually be four weeks.

You are not entitled to carry forward any holidays from one holiday year to the next except in exceptional circumstances and unless you obtain the express prior written authority of the Headteacher / Line Manager as appropriate.

In exceptional circumstances, up to five days of annual leave may be rolled over into the following year with prior agreement with your Line Manager.

No payments will be made in lieu of holiday not taken except in respect of your last year of employment.

All applications for holiday must be submitted to the Headteacher or Line Manager for approval. You are only allowed to take holidays if the Trust has approved them in advance.

You are not allowed to take more than two consecutive working weeks' holiday unless you have obtained the express prior written permission of the Headteacher or Line Manager to do so.

The Trust may object to you taking holiday on dates requested by you if it is inconvenient to the Trust. Holiday requests will be granted on a 'first come, first served' basis.

If you start or leave your employment during the holiday year you shall be entitled to pro rata annual entitlement for each week of service in that holiday year.

Upon termination of your employment you will be entitled to pay in lieu of any holiday accrued in your last holiday year but not taken. If you have taken holidays in excess of your accrued entitlement the Trust shall be entitled to deduct the excess pay from your final salary payment.

The Trust may require you to take (or not to take) any outstanding accrued holiday entitlement during your notice period.

i. Term time only employees

Term-time only employees are generally not permitted to take holidays during term-time, and so your Contract of Employment will specify that your annual salary represents payment for working the number of weeks you are employed to work out of 52 weeks, and includes a payment which represents your paid statutory holiday entitlement. Your salary will then be adjusted so that you will be paid in 12 equal monthly instalments.

4.11 Reserve Forces

The Trust supports employees who are also member of the reserve forces. Such employees have specific entitlements relating to time off including arrangements for them returning to work after a period of deployment. Employees who are members of the reserve forces or who are considering joining should discuss the implications with their line manager.

5. FLEXIBLE WORKING AND FAMILY RELATED LEAVE

The Trust understands the particular issues faced by employees trying to balance their work and family life. This section sets out the Trust's policies in this area and the specific rights given to new parents.

5.1 Flexible Working

At DCAT we are committed to creating a workplace where everyone is encouraged to grow and contribute to an environment of equality and development that allows all staff and children to reach their god given potential whilst embracing our Trust values of Wisdom, Respect and Aspiration.

We believe that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, enrich employee wellbeing and improve performance and productivity. Flexible working opportunities can also reduce staff absence and help improve retention by creating new opportunities and ways of working and allow us to recruit from a wider pool of talent that includes people with different lifestyles, experiences and perspectives.

Work-well is our promise to all staff working within DCAT to support their health and wellbeing. We are passionate about creating an inclusive culture across our family of schools that supports a good work-life balance. We care about the health and wellbeing of our employees and want to invest in an environment where everyone can thrive.

We are committed to ensuring that all managers have received training so that they are able to give full consideration to flexible working where appropriate. We will also continue to explore the benefits of new technology and new ways doing things to transform the way we work.

The DCAT Flexible Working Policy sets out our approach to flexible working requests under the statutory procedure and also provides arrangements for non-statutory requests to also be considered.

The DCAT Flexible Working Policy can be found in the HR Handbook Key Policies and Procedures.

5.2 Maternity Leave

All employees who give birth are entitled to take maternity leave which lasts for a maximum of 52 weeks. Employees with at least six months' service will also be entitled to be paid Statutory Maternity pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks of their absence. Because this is a statutory payment there are a number of procedural requirements that must be met in order to make sure that an employee qualifies. The most important requirements are set out below, but if you have any doubts about the rules that apply you should speak to your line manager who will make sure that you have all the appropriate information.

i. Notification

To qualify for maternity leave you must provide the Trust, no later than the end of the 15th week before your EWC (when you are approximately 6 months' pregnant) with the following information:

- that you are pregnant;
- the date of the week your baby is due (your expected week of childbirth or EWC);
- when you intend your maternity leave to start (this date can be changed later – see below); and
- you must also provide the Trust with the original Maternity Certificate (MAT BI) issued by your doctor. In some circumstances the Trust may be able to accept other medical evidence of when your baby is due, so if there is any difficulty in providing the MATBI certificate you should discuss this with your manager.

The Trust encourages employees to advise their line manager confidentially of their pregnancy in order that a risk assessment can be done for the individual to support them in the early stages of their pregnancy. This is part of the Trust's Health and Safety policy.

If you intend to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave, you should inform the Trust of this fact, giving at least 8 weeks written notice of your leave dates.

ii. Start of Maternity Leave

Generally, it is up to you to decide when to start your maternity leave. However, your leave cannot begin any earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before your EWC.

Where it is safe to do so, you may choose to continue working right up to your child's birth. However, your maternity leave will begin automatically if you are off sick for a pregnancy-related reason at any stage in the four weeks immediately before your EWC.

If your baby is born before the date that you have notified as the start date for your maternity leave, then your maternity leave will begin on the day following the birth.

You may change the date on which you intend to start your maternity leave, but you must notify the Trust of your new start date at least 28 days before the original date given (or the new date, if that is sooner). If there is a reason why you cannot give this notice, then you should explain the situation to an appropriate manager and the Trust will attempt to accommodate your changed circumstances. However, the Trust may need to insist on delaying the start of your leave until at least 28 days have passed since your notification of a changed date.

When your baby is born you should inform the Trust of this fact as soon as is reasonably practicable.

iii. Duration of Maternity Leave

The standard length of maternity leave is 52 weeks. Once you indicate the intended start date of your leave, the Trust will send you a written notification of your expected date of return.

Unless you give due notice to the Trust of an earlier date of return, it will be assumed that you intend to take your full 52-week entitlement and you will not be expected back at work before your leave ends. You do not then have to give any notice of your return although it

would be sensible to contact your manager some time in advance to discuss any arrangements that may need to be made.

At the end of your maternity leave you are generally entitled to return to the same job as you had before your leave began. If you are away for more than 26 weeks, however, there may be circumstances in which that is not reasonably practicable. In that case, the Trust will provide you with a suitable and appropriate role at the same level of seniority and on no-less favourable terms and conditions.

iv. Dismissal or Resignation

While on maternity leave you remain employed by the Trust and bound by your contract of employment. If you decide that you want to leave your employment you will need to submit your resignation in the normal way.

The Trust will not dismiss you for any reason related to your pregnancy or your exercise of any right which arises from it. However, if separate circumstances require your dismissal (for instance, because of redundancy) then that will bring your maternity leave to an end.

If your position becomes redundant during your maternity leave, then you will be offered any suitable alternative work that is available.

v. Maternity Pay

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid to employees who have at least 26 weeks' service immediately before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and whose pay is above the Lower Earnings Limit for paying National Insurance Contributions (this changes each year). Employees who earn below that amount may be entitled to a state benefit called Maternity Allowance. The Trust will provide you with an appropriate form to help you claim this, where appropriate.

To pay SMP, the Trust needs to be given at least 28 days' notice that you intend to claim it. This will normally be given when you inform the Trust of your intended start date for maternity leave. If it is not possible to give 28 days' notice, you should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

SMP is paid for a maximum total of 39 weeks. The first 6 weeks are paid at 90 per cent of your normal weekly earnings¹ and the remaining 33 weeks are paid at a flat rate specified in legislation (this changes each year).

Your entitlement to SMP will be affected if you undertake any paid work (other than 'Keeping in Touch' days, described below) or are taken into legal custody at any time during your period of SMP entitlement. You should inform the Trust immediately of any such change in your circumstances.

vi. Occupational Maternity Pay

Many employees will be entitled to Occupational Maternity Pay under the Green Book or Burgundy Book as identified under your contract of employment as being applicable to your

¹ This is based on an average of your total earnings in the eight weeks immediately preceding the 14th week before your expected week of childbirth

employment. If you do not qualify under the Occupational Maternity Pay Schemes, you will remain entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay if you meet the eligibility requirements.

vii. Burgundy Book Provisions

If you are under the Burgundy Book (teaching staff), your entitlement will depend upon your length of continuous service with the Trust, but also with other local authorities (if applicable).

Employees who have, by the qualifying date (i.e. at 26 weeks prior to the 15th week before your EWC) completed at least 1 year's continuous employment will benefit from the full entitlements under the Burgundy Book scheme as follows:

- First 4 weeks of leave: full pay (inclusive of SMP);
- Weeks 5 – 6 of leave: 90 per cent of a week's salary (inclusive of SMP);
- Weeks 7 – 18 of leave: half pay plus SMP (capped so as not to exceed full pay);
- The remainder of the paid leave period (i.e. weeks 19 to 39) will be paid at the prescribed rate of SMP, and weeks 40 to 52 unpaid.

Employees who have, by the qualifying date, less than 26 weeks' service with the Trust, but more than 1 years' continuous service with one or more local authorities, will be entitled to the same payments as set out above, save for the fact that SMP will be substituted for Maternity Allowance (MA), subject to eligibility.

Any benefits or rights conferred under the Burgundy Book are subject to the rules, conditions and criteria set out within those Agreements being met.

To retain maternity pay received under the Burgundy Book scheme, you are required to complete at least 13 weeks' full time service, or its part-time equivalent, on your return to work. If you were working part-time prior to maternity leave, you are required to complete 13 weeks' part-time service. This period includes both term time and academy holidays. There is no need to return to work if you claimed SMP only and there is no need to repay SMP if you do not return for 13 weeks. In the event that you do not return to work for this period, you will be required to repay any OMP the Trust has paid to you.

viii. Green Book Provisions

If you are under the Green Book (support staff), and have over one year's continuous local authority service immediately before the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth, you will be entitled to a "top up" during weeks 7 – 18 of your maternity leave (i.e. Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)), to bring you up to half of your normal weekly earnings during that period.

- For weeks 1 -6 you will be entitled to receive 90% of your average pay.
- The remainder of the paid leave period (i.e. weeks 19 to 39) will be paid at the prescribed rate of SMP, and weeks 40 to 52 unpaid.

The OMP pay detailed at clause 10.28 requires you to declare in writing to the Trust an intention to return to work after your maternity leave for at least three months. In the event that you do not return to work for three months following your leave period, you will be required to repay the Trust any payments made to you in the 12-week period in excess of SMP or MA, or such part thereof as the Trust may decide.

ix. Returning to Work Early

Not every employee will want to take the full 52 weeks of maternity leave. Some may simply want to return to work early and others may wish (with their partner) to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave (see below).

In order to make arrangements to accommodate an early return the Trust is entitled to ask for 8 weeks' notice of the new date, and if that is not given may delay your return until 8 weeks have passed since your notification.

In any event the law requires that you must not be permitted to return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth.

x. Returning to Work Late

Following your maternity leave, you are required to return to work on the date notified to you as your expected date of return. If you are unwell on that date, then you should follow the [Attendance Management Policy](#).

If you are entitled to begin some other period of leave (such as annual leave or parental leave) then you should ensure that you have followed the appropriate procedure for taking such leave as set out in this handbook.

xi. Maternity Suspension (Health and Safety Reasons)

Depending on the nature of your job, there may be circumstances in which it is unsafe for you to continue working while you are pregnant. In some circumstances the law requires a pregnant employee to be suspended on full pay or transferred to alternative duties. Jobs which may come under this category are identified in the risk assessments that the Trust has carried out under its health and safety policy. If you are affected by any health and safety issues connected with your pregnancy, then the Trust will discuss any detailed arrangements that need to be made until it is safe for you to return to your original duties.

5.3 Adoption Leave

Employees who are matched with a child for adoption may be entitled to take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave.

Adoption leave is also available to individuals fostering a child under the "Fostering for Adoption" scheme.

Where two parents are adopting a child, only one of them may take adoption leave, and the other (whether a man or woman) is entitled to take paternity leave. If both adoptive parents qualify, they may each take shared parental leave.

The arrangements for taking adoption leave are similar to the arrangements for taking maternity leave, but there are several important differences. The key ones are set out below, but if you believe you are entitled to adoption leave you should discuss the situation with an appropriate manager who will ensure that you have all the necessary information.

i. Notification

If you intend to take adoption leave you should notify the Trust of this within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption (or as soon as is reasonably practicable).

Your notification should set out:

- the date when the child is expected to be placed with you; and
- the date when you want to start your adoption leave.

As with maternity leave, you can change your mind about the start date provided the Trust is given at least 28 days – or as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

The Trust is entitled to require proof of the adoption which usually takes the form of a matching certificate provided by the agency placing the child.

Adoption leave is the same in duration as that of maternity leave and will last for 52 weeks unless you choose to return early or take advantage of shared parental leave. You may choose to start the leave from the date when the child is placed with you or at any time in the preceding two weeks.

If, for any reason, the placement is brought to an end – for example because the match turns out to be unsuitable – then adoption leave will continue for 8 weeks beyond the end of the placement or to the end of the additional adoption leave period, if that is sooner. After that period, you will be expected to return to work as normal.

ii. Adoption Pay

The arrangements for statutory adoption pay are similar to those for SMP (set out above).

Teaching staff may be entitled to Occupational Maternity Pay under the Burgundy Book as identified under your contract of employment as being applicable to your employment.

iii. Returning to Work Following Adoption Leave

Your return to work at the end of your adoption leave is on the same basis as for the end of maternity leave (set out above).

5.4 Paternity Leave

Entitlement to paternity leave (birth)

You can take paternity leave for the purpose of caring for the child or supporting the child's mother if:

- you are the child's biological father and have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing; or
- you are the spouse, civil partner, or partner of the child's mother and have or expect to have the main responsibility (apart from the mother) for the child's upbringing.

To exercise your right to take paternity leave in a birth situation, you must comply with the notification procedure set out below (see Notice to take paternity leave (birth)).

Entitlement to paternity leave (adoption)

You can take paternity leave for the purpose of caring for the adopted child or supporting the child's adopter if:

- you are the spouse, civil partner, or partner of the child's adopter, and have or expect to have the main responsibility (apart from the adopter) for the child's upbringing.

If you are one of a couple jointly adopting a child, only one of you will be entitled to take adoption leave and the other parent may elect to take a period of paternity leave, provided that the relevant qualifying conditions are met.

You are not entitled to take paternity leave if you have taken paid time off to attend an adoption appointment in respect of the same child.

To exercise your right to take paternity leave in an adoption situation, you must comply with the notification procedure set out below (see Notice to take paternity leave (adoption within the UK) or Notice to take paternity leave (adoption from overseas)).

Amount of paternity leave you can take

You can take up to two weeks' paternity leave. You do not have to take your leave in one single period, but the leave must be booked in blocks of at least one week.

This means that you can take the leave in:

- one block of one week;
- one block of two weeks; or
- two separate blocks of one week each.

A week of paternity leave is the same duration as your normal working week. This means that if you are a full-time employee, one week is [five] days. If you are contracted to work four days per week, one week is four days, and so on.

You can take only two weeks' paternity leave per pregnancy or adoption, even if more than one child is born as a result of the pregnancy or more than one child is placed under the same adoption arrangement.

Timing of paternity leave

You can start your paternity leave on any day from the child's birth, but it must end within 52 weeks of the birth (or the expected week of childbirth if the child is born early).

In the case of an adopted child, the 52-week period runs from the date on which the child was placed for adoption with the adopter (or the child's entry into Great Britain for adoptions from overseas).

Notice to take paternity leave (birth)

Notice of entitlement (birth)

Before you can take paternity leave, you must give your Headteacher/Line Manager written notice at least 15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. Your notice must confirm:

- the expected week of childbirth; and
- that you meet the eligibility requirements to take paternity leave.
-

You should submit your notice using Form to provide notice of entitlement to paternity leave (birth) available from your School Business Manager/HR Lead.

Period of leave notice (birth)

Each time that you wish to take a period of paternity leave, you must give your Headteacher/line manager further written notice confirming:

- when you want to start your leave (you may take this in one single block or two separate blocks);
- whether you wish to take one or two weeks' leave; and
- that the purpose of the leave is to care for the child or support the child's mother.

You can choose to start a period of paternity leave:

- **On the date of your child's birth:** Your period of leave notice must reach us at least 28 days before the first day of the expected week of childbirth.
- **A set number of days after your child's birth:** Your period of leave notice must reach us at least 28 days before the date that falls that set number of days counted from the first day of the expected week of childbirth.
- **On a predetermined date:** This date must be no earlier than the first day of the expected week of childbirth. Your period of leave notice must reach us at least 28 days before that predetermined date.

You should submit your notice using Form to provide period of leave notice to take paternity leave (birth) available from School Business Manager/HR Lead.

Notice to take paternity leave (adoption within the UK)

Notice of entitlement (adoption within the UK)

Before you can take paternity leave, you must give your Headteacher/line manager written notice within seven days after the date on which the child's adopter is notified that they have been matched for adoption. Your notice must confirm:

the date on which the adopter was notified that they have been matched for adoption;

- the date on which the child is expected to be placed for adoption with the adopter (or, if they have already been placed for adoption, the date of the placement); and
- that you meet the eligibility requirements to take paternity leave.
-

You should submit your notice using Form to provide notice of entitlement to paternity leave (adoption within UK) available from School Business Manager/HR Lead.

Period of leave notice (adoption within the UK)

Each time that you wish to take a period of paternity leave, you must give [your line manager/the HR department] further written notice within seven days after the date on which the child's adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption, confirming:

- when you want to start your leave (you may take this in one single block or two separate blocks);
- whether you wish to take one or two weeks' leave; and
- that the purpose of the leave is to care for the child or support the child's adopter.
-

You can choose to start a period of paternity leave:

- on the date on which the child is placed for adoption;
- a set number of days after the child is placed for adoption; or
- on a predetermined date, which has to be no earlier than the first day of the child's placement for adoption.

You should submit your notice of leave using Form to provide period of leave notice to take paternity leave (adoption within UK) available from School Business Manager/HR Lead.

Notice to take paternity leave (adoption from overseas)

Notice of entitlement (adoptions from overseas)

Before you can take paternity leave, you must give [your line manager/the HR department] written notice within 28 days after the date on which the child's adopter receives the official notification. Your notice must confirm:

- the date on which the adopter received the official notification;
- the date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain (or, if they have already entered Great Britain, the date of entry); and
- that you meet the eligibility requirements to take paternity leave and that the child's adopter has received the official notification.

You should submit your notice using Form to provide notice of entitlement to paternity leave (adoption from overseas) available from the School Business Manager/HR Lead.

Period of leave notice (adoption from overseas)

Each time that you wish to take a period of paternity leave, you must give [your line manager/the HR department] further written notice confirming:

- when you want to start your leave (you may take this in one single block or two separate blocks);
- whether you wish to take one or two weeks' leave; and
- that the purpose of the leave is to care for the child or support the child's adopter.

You can choose to start a period of paternity leave:

- On the date of your child's entry into Great Britain: Your period of leave notice must reach us at least 28 days before the date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain.
- On a predetermined date: This date must be no earlier than the date of your child's entry into Great Britain. Your period of leave notice must reach us at least 28 days before that predetermined date.

You should submit your notice using Form to provide period of leave notice to take paternity leave (adoption from overseas) available from the School Business Manager/HR Lead.

You must also give your Headteacher/line manager written notice of the date your child entered Great Britain within 28 days of entry, or written notice that the child will not be entering Great Britain as soon as possible after you become aware of this fact.

Late notice

If extenuating circumstances mean that it is not possible for you to meet the deadlines for giving notice as set out in this policy, we will accept later notice than this. Examples of extenuating circumstances include if you have been absent from work on sick leave or if a pregnancy is discovered very late.

In these circumstances, you should let us know that you would like to take paternity leave as soon as you reasonably can.

If there are no extenuating circumstances, you will be unable to take paternity leave. However, we will discuss other options with you, including you and your partner switching to shared parental leave, you taking annual leave, or you taking unpaid ordinary parental leave.

Changing your paternity leave plans

If you have submitted a period of leave notice but wish to cancel or vary the timing of your paternity leave, you must inform your Headteacher/line manager at least 28 days before the original date stated in your period of leave notice, or the revised start date, whichever is earlier.

Paternity pay

Statutory paternity pay is payable during your paternity leave period, provided that you are entitled to it.

The rate of statutory paternity pay is set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

You will qualify for statutory paternity pay if:

- you are entitled to take paternity leave;
- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us:
 - at the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (in a birth situation);
 - at the end of the week in which the child's adopter is notified of being matched for adoption (for adoptions within the UK); or
 - at the end of the week in which the child's adopter received the official notification (for adoptions from overseas);
 - your average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions;
 - you remain in continuous employment with us on the date the child is born (in a birth situation), is placed for adoption (for adoptions within the UK) or entered Great Britain (for adoptions from overseas);
 - you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements and are able to provide the declarations as set out in this policy; and
 - you confirm when you wish to start receiving statutory paternity pay within the relevant Form to provide period of leave notice to take paternity leave.

Your rights during paternity leave

During paternity leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue. Your pay will be replaced with [statutory paternity pay/enhanced paternity pay] if you are eligible for it. However, other benefits such as holiday entitlement will continue to accrue and pension contributions will continue to be paid.

Neonatal care leave

You are entitled to take neonatal care leave in addition to paternity leave. If you have already started a period of paternity leave, but subsequently become eligible for neonatal care leave, you can take your neonatal care leave after completing your paternity leave, provided that your neonatal care leave is taken within 68 weeks of your child's birth date.

Further information can be found in our neonatal care leave policy.

Bereaved partner's paternity leave

In the sad event that the child's mother or adopter passes away, you may be entitled to take bereaved partner's paternity leave. A bereaved employee can take up to 52 weeks' leave during the first year of their child's life or the year immediately after the child's adoption.

The School Business Manager/HR Lead will be able to share information about bereaved partner's paternity leave and any additional support that we may be able to offer.

Returning to work after paternity leave

Following your paternity leave, you generally have the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than the terms that would have applied had you not been absent. Your continuity of employment is not affected.

Data protection

When dealing with paternity leave and pay, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our data protection policy / policy on processing special categories of personal data. In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

5.5 Maternity Support Allowance

Employees who are subject to the Green Book are entitled to Maternity Support Allowance. This will apply where the employee has been nominated by an expectant mother (who does not have to be an employee of the Trust) to assist in the care of her child and to provide support to her around the time of birth. If you are nominated, you may take up to 5 days paid time off at or around the time of childbirth. If you are the father, then you may elect to take your Maternity Support Allowance initially, followed by a week's paternity leave (as opposed to taking two weeks' paternity leave), in order to get the benefit of full pay during the first week.

5.6 Ordinary Parental Leave

Parental leave is a flexible form of unpaid leave designed to help employees spend time caring for their children; it may be to look after their children during school holidays, be with them when they are unwell, or enjoy more quality time with them. Parental leave can be taken up until the child's 18th birthday and is available to employees who have parental responsibility for a child.

Amount of ordinary parental leave that can be taken

Employees can take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child, subject to a maximum of four weeks' leave for each child in any one-year period.

Ordinary parental leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week. However, if the employee's child has a disability, they can take the leave one day at a time.

Entitlement to ordinary parental leave carries over from your previous employment. This means that, if you have taken ordinary parental leave with a previous employer: an employee can take the balance with the Trust, subject to the qualifying conditions set out above; The Trust will ask employees about the amount of ordinary parental leave already taken for their child with previous employers.

Notice to take ordinary parental leave

To take ordinary parental leave, employees must give at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the date on which the leave is to start. The notice should set out the dates on which the employee intend to take the leave.

The employee should submit your notice using form to request ordinary parental leave available from the School Business Manager/HR Lead.

Fathers or others who will have parental responsibility - leave starting at birth

If an employee wants their leave to begin when their child is born (whether the birth is earlier or later than expected), they must give at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the start of the expected week of childbirth.

The notice should set out the expected week of childbirth and the length of leave the employee wishes to take.

Adopters - leave starting on child's placement

If an employee wants their leave to begin when the child is placed with them for adoption (whether the placement is earlier or later than expected), they must give at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the beginning of the week in which the placement is expected to occur.

If 21 days' notice is not possible, the employee should give us notice as soon as they can.

The notice should set out the week in which the placement is expected to occur and the length of leave the employee wishes to take.

Postponing ordinary parental leave

While our aim is to agree to employees requests for ordinary parental leave, there are circumstances in which the Trust may need to postpone the start date. The Trust will do this only if the employees absence would cause undue disruption to the organisation, and we will give the employee written notice of the postponement no more than seven days after we received the request.

However, we will never postpone an employees period of ordinary parental leave if the leave starts on the birth of their child or their child's placement for adoption.

If the Trust postpones an employees period of ordinary parental leave, we will discuss alternative dates with the employee to take that period of leave within six months of the first day the postponed leave was due to start.

During ordinary parental leave

During ordinary parental leave, all the terms and conditions of an employees contract, except normal pay, will continue and your continuity of employment is not affected.

This means that, while sums payable by way of [wages/salary] will cease, all other benefits will remain in place. Annual leave will continue to accrue in the normal way.

Returning to work after ordinary parental leave

If an employee takes an isolated period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less, they are are entitled to return to the same job they were doing before their absence.

Employees can also return to their previous job if they take a period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less following on immediately from a period (or consecutive periods)

of maternity, adoption, paternity and/or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the same child) that did not last more than 26 weeks.

Employees are entitled to return to their previous job or, if that is not practical for our organisation, to another job that is both suitable and appropriate in the circumstances if they:

- take a period of ordinary parental leave of more than four weeks; or
- take a period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less following on immediately from a period (or consecutive periods) of maternity, adoption, paternity and/or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the same child) that lasted more than 26 weeks.

If an employee is taking ordinary parental leave, and are unsure where they stand on their return, they can contact the School Business Manager/HR Lead.

5.7 Shared Parental Leave

Shared parental leave is a flexible form of leave available to both parents designed to encourage shared parenting in the first year of a child's life. It allows a more flexible pattern of leave than the traditional arrangement under which the mother takes extensive maternity leave and the father takes a short period of paternity leave.

Employees who give birth or adopt remain entitled to take the full 52 weeks of leave if they choose to do so and the arrangements described above for maternity and adoption leave continue to apply. However, an employee may choose to share part of that leave with their partner provided that certain qualifying conditions are met. When leave is shared in this way, there is no need for the 'primary' leave taker to have returned to work. Both parents can be on leave at the same time, provided that the combined amount of leave taken by the parents does not exceed 52 weeks and provided that all of the leave is taken before the end of 52 weeks following the birth of the child or its placement for adoption.

Generally, parents will qualify for shared parental leave provided that both are working and that each has at least 26 weeks' service immediately before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth with their respective employers. To exercise the right, both parents must inform their employer that they intend to take shared parental leave – usually at the same time as the employer is notified that an employee is pregnant or plans to adopt but at least 8 weeks before the first period of shared parental leave. They must also give an indication of the pattern of leave that they propose to take.

A parent proposing to take a period of shared parental leave must give the Trust 8 weeks' notice of any such leave. Depending on the circumstances, it may be possible for the Shared Parental Leave to be taken in intermittent blocks, with one parent returning to work for a time before taking another period of shared parental leave. Such an arrangement can only be made with the agreement of the Trust. While every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of individual employees, the Trust may insist on shared parental leave being taken in a single instalment. Any decision as to whether to permit intermittent periods of leave is entirely at the Trust's discretion.

An employee absent on shared parental leave will be entitled to a weekly payment equivalent to the lower fixed rate of SMP. The number of weeks for which payment will be made will

vary depending on the amount of SMP paid to the mother while on maternity leave. Essentially, if the mother ends (or proposes to end) her leave with 10 weeks of SMP entitlement remaining, the parent taking shared parental leave will be entitled to be paid for the first 10 weeks of leave.

Because of the number of options available, shared parental leave can be quite a complicated entitlement. If you want to take advantage of shared parental leave you should discuss this with your line manager who will check that you qualify and help guide you through the procedure.

5.8 Keeping in Touch Days

Employees during a period of maternity, adoption or shared parental leave are entitled to 10 keeping in touch days (KIT days). These allow the employee to attend work to catch up on the latest developments, undergo training or some other development activity, or to take part in important meetings without losing their right to subsequent pay entitlements. Employees on shared parental leave are entitled to a further 20 KIT days.

These 'keeping in touch days' are entirely voluntary and employees will not be required to take part, nor is the Trust under any obligation to arrange for keeping in touch days. Any arrangements for working KIT days must be agreed between the employee and their line manager.

KIT days will be paid at the usual daily rate of pay (not at the supply rate).

5.9 During Maternity/Adoption or Shared Parental Leave

The Trust is keen to keep in touch with employees who are on extended periods of leave, to inform them of any news and consult them over any changes which may take place in the business. However, we appreciate that many employees would prefer to be left alone at this very important time in their lives. In order to get the balance right, your manager may, before your leave begins, discuss with you how best we can keep in touch while you are away.

Please be aware, however, that if an important issue arises on which you need to be consulted, the Trust may have a legal obligation to discuss the issue with you and keep you informed.

5.10 Neonatal Care Leave and Pay

At DCAT we understand that having a child in neonatal care is an extremely stressful and challenging experience. The Trust is committed to supporting you and doing what we can to help ensure that you are able to be by your child's side while looking after your own health and wellbeing.

What is neonatal care leave?

Neonatal care leave is designed to assist new parents of babies who are admitted into neonatal care.

In this policy, neonatal care means:

- medical care that your child receives in a hospital;
- medical care that your child receives in any other place providing:
 - your child was previously admitted to a hospital as an inpatient and needs continuing care after leaving the hospital;
 - the care is under the direction of a consultant; and
 - the care involves ongoing monitoring and visits from healthcare professionals arranged by the hospital where your child was an inpatient; or
- palliative or end-of-life care.

i. Requesting support

If you are finding it difficult to cope at work because your child is in neonatal care, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager or the Headteacher. If for any reason you are unable to approach your line manager or Headteacher, you can speak to your School Business Manager/HR Lead.

We realise that this may not be an easy subject to talk about. However, we urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.

Any information disclosed by you during discussions with your line manager, Headteacher or Business Manager/HR Lead will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

ii. Entitlement to neonatal care leave

Whatever your length of service, you have a statutory right to take neonatal care leave if at the date of the child's birth:

- you are the child's parent and have responsibility for the upbringing of the child; or
- you are the partner of the child's mother and have main responsibility for the upbringing of the child (apart from the mother).

In this policy, partner includes someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the mother or the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not their child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

Additionally, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- your child was born on or after 6 April 2025;
- your child started receiving neonatal care within 28 days after the date on which they were born (the 28 days are counted from the day after the child is born);
- the neonatal care has lasted seven days or longer without interruption (the seven days are counted from the day after the neonatal care started);
- you are taking the leave to care for your child (however, see If you suffer a bereavement below); and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and declaration requirements set out in this policy (see Notice to take neonatal care leave below).

iii. Amount of neonatal care leave you can take

The amount of neonatal care leave that you can take is one week for every week your child has spent in neonatal care without interruption. A week is defined as a period of seven days starting from the day after the neonatal care began.

The maximum number of weeks that you can take as neonatal care leave is capped at 12 weeks.

Any neonatal care leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week.

You can take only up to 12 weeks' neonatal care leave, even if multiple children from the same pregnancy require neonatal care.

iv. Timing of neonatal care leave

You can start your leave on any day after your child has received seven days of uninterrupted neonatal care.

The seven days are counted from the day after the neonatal care started. For example, if your child's started receiving neonatal care on 7 April, the seven-day count begins on 8 April. This means that you can start your neonatal care leave on any day from 15 April.

Any neonatal care leave must end within 68 weeks of your child's date of birth.

The right to neonatal care leave is in addition to any other statutory leave that you may be entitled to, such as maternity, adoption, paternity, ordinary parental, parental bereavement or shared parental leave (see Other statutory leave below).

v. How neonatal care leave may be taken

Neonatal care leave is available to take in two tiers:

- The "tier 1 period" begins when your child starts receiving neonatal care and ends on the seventh day after your child is discharged. If you take neonatal care leave in the tier 1 period, you can take it in one continuous block or a number of non-continuous blocks of a minimum of one week at a time.
- The "tier 2 period" is any remaining period (within 68 weeks after your child's date of birth) that is not part of the tier 1 period. If you take neonatal care leave during the tier 2 period, you must take the leave in one continuous block.

You should be aware that the relevant notice requirements differ depending on whether you take your leave in the tier 1 or tier 2 period (see Notice to take neonatal care leave below).

vi. Notice to take neonatal care leave

Notice during the tier 1 period

For each week of neonatal care leave that you wish to take in tier 1, you should notify the Headteacher and the School Business Manager/HR Lead by telephone or email, preferably

before your first day of absence in that week. However, we understand that this is likely to be a challenging time for you, so please give notice as soon as is reasonably practicable for you to do so.

You are also required to give notice of your intention and entitlement to take neonatal care leave using our Form to provide notice of intention and entitlement to take neonatal care leave (birth). This form contains a declaration that will need to be signed by you.

The Neonatal Care Leave request form is available from your School Business Manager/HR Lead.

There is no expectation on you to complete this form straightaway while your child is receiving neonatal care. However, we do request that the form is sent to us within 28 days of the first day of your neonatal care leave, or if this is not possible, as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

Notice during the tier 2 period

If you wish to take neonatal care leave in the tier 2 period, you will need to give notice in writing of your intention and entitlement to take neonatal care leave using our Form to provide notice of intention and entitlement to take neonatal care leave (birth). This form contains a declaration that will need to be signed by you.

If you are taking a single week of neonatal care leave, your notice should be received by us at least 15 days before the first date that you have chosen for your leave to start, or if this is not possible, as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

If you are taking two or more consecutive weeks of neonatal care leave, your notice should be received by us at least 28 days before the first date that you have chosen for your leave to start, or if this is not possible, as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

vii. Changing your neonatal care leave plans

If you have submitted a notice of intention and entitlement to take neonatal care leave during the tier 2 period but wish to cancel your leave, you must inform the Headteacher and the School Business Manager/HR Lead.

If you intended to take a single week of neonatal care leave, you must submit this form at least 15 days before the first date that you had chosen for your leave to start.

If you intended to take two or more consecutive weeks, you must submit this form at least 28 days before the first date that you had chosen for your leave to start.

viii. Late notice

We understand that having a child in neonatal care is an incredibly difficult time for parents. Please be assured that if it is not possible for you to meet the timeframes for giving or withdrawing notice as set out in this policy, we will accept later notice than this and, in some cases, we may waive the requirement for you to give notice altogether.

ix. Starting your neonatal care leave

Your neonatal care leave will start on the date that is specified in your notice.

Alternatively, if you give notice on the same day that you want to begin your leave and you are already in work on that day, your neonatal care leave will start on the following day.

If we have agreed to waive the notice requirements, your neonatal care leave will begin on a day that is mutually agreed between us.

x. Other statutory leave

You are entitled to take neonatal care leave in addition to any other statutory leave that you may be entitled to, including maternity, adoption, paternity, ordinary parental, parental bereavement and shared parental leave

If you have already started a period of statutory leave, but subsequently become eligible for neonatal care leave, you can take your neonatal care leave after completing the other statutory leave, provided that your neonatal care leave is taken within 68 weeks of your child's birth date.

If you have already started a period of neonatal care leave during the tier 1 period but need to begin another type of statutory leave, your neonatal care leave will be temporarily paused immediately before the other statutory leave begins. You can then resume the remaining weeks of your neonatal care leave in one of two ways:

- if you are still within the tier 1 period - immediately after the end of the other period of statutory leave; or
- if you have transitioned into the tier 2 period - immediately after any other neonatal care leave taken during the tier 2 period.

You cannot take neonatal care leave in the tier 2 period if, at the time of giving notice, you are aware that the leave will overlap with another type of statutory leave.

xi. Neonatal care pay

Option 1 - statutory neonatal care pay

Statutory neonatal care pay is payable during your neonatal care leave period, provided that you are entitled to it.

The rate of statutory neonatal care pay is set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

You will qualify for statutory neonatal care pay if:

- you are entitled to take neonatal care leave;
- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the relevant week;

- you remain in continuous employment from the end of the relevant week (or from the child's birth if they were born before the relevant week);
- your average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions;
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements and are able to provide the declarations as set out in this policy; and
- you have confirmed when you wish to start receiving statutory neonatal care pay within your Form to provide notice of intention and entitlement to take neonatal care leave (birth).

In this policy "relevant week" means the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth if you are entitled to statutory maternity or paternity pay. In all other cases, it means the week before the neonatal care begins.

Neonatal care pay is treated as earnings and is therefore subject to PAYE and national insurance deductions.

Option 2 - enhanced neonatal care pay

You will continue to be paid your normal rate of pay while taking neonatal care leave provided [list the eligibility requirements that are suitable for your organisation - these are examples only]:

- you are entitled to take neonatal care leave;
- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the relevant week;
- you remain in continuous employment from the end of the relevant week (or from the child's birth if they were born before the relevant week);
- your average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions;
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements and are able to provide the declarations as set out in this policy; and
- you have confirmed when you wish to start receiving statutory neonatal care pay within your Form to provide notice of intention and entitlement to take neonatal care leave (birth).

Payment of enhanced neonatal care pay includes any entitlement to statutory neonatal care pay that may be due to you for the same period.

xii. Changes affecting your entitlement to neonatal care leave and pay

You must keep your Headteacher and School Business Manager/HR Lead informed about the date that your child's neonatal care ends as soon as reasonably practicable after the care has ended.

If your child starts receiving neonatal care again, after you have informed us that the care has ended, you must keep [your line manager/the HR department] informed of the new start and end dates.

xiii. If you suffer a bereavement

Employees who have accrued entitlement to neonatal care leave can still take the neonatal care leave that they have accrued if their child passes away.

Employees may also be entitled to parental bereavement leave in these circumstances, under our Parental bereavement leave policy.

If you have suffered a bereavement, please contact [name of individual/the HR department] so that we can discuss other support that we may be able to offer you.

xiv. Your rights during neonatal care leave

During neonatal care leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue. Your pay will be replaced with statutory neonatal care pay if you are eligible for it. However, other benefits such as holiday entitlement will continue to accrue and pension contributions will continue as set out below.

xv. Holiday entitlement

You will continue to accrue your holiday entitlement during your neonatal care leave.

Any statutory holiday entitlement that has not been taken because of neonatal care leave can be carried over into the next holiday year.

xvi. Pension contributions

We will continue to make pension contributions based on your normal pay during any period of paid neonatal care leave. The contributions that you make will be based on the actual pay that you receive during your neonatal care leave.

The organisation's pension contributions will cease during any period of unpaid neonatal care leave.

xvii. Contact during neonatal care leave

We reserve the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during your neonatal care leave. This may be to discuss your plans for taking leave, to discuss any special arrangements to ease your time away from work, or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

xviii. Returning to work after neonatal care leave

You have the right to resume working in the same job and on the same terms and conditions if returning to work from a period of isolated neonatal care leave.

If you return from a period of neonatal care leave that follows on immediately from another period of statutory leave (such as maternity, adoption, paternity, parental bereavement or shared parental leave) and your total time on leave is more than 26 weeks, you have the right to return to the same job wherever possible. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, we will offer you a suitable alternative job on terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

This also applies if you have taken neonatal care leave consecutively with a single period of more than four weeks of ordinary parental leave.

xix. Data protection

When dealing with neonatal care leave and pay, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our data protection policy. In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

Appendix A: Related Policies

This handbook is supported by the following other policies and procedures, some of which can be found in the Employee Handbook:

- a) [HR Key Policies and Procedures](#)
- b) [Induction and Probation Policy](#)
- c) Early Careers Teacher (ECT) Policy
- d) [Finance Handbook and appendices](#)
- e) [Flexible Working Policy](#)
- f) [Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Policies](#)
- g) [Parental Leave Policy](#)
- h) [Time Off for Dependants Policy](#)
- i) [Bullying and Harassment \(Including Sexual Harassment\) Policy](#)
- j) [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- k) [Trust Centre Handbook](#)
- l) [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- m) [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- n) Safeguarding Policy
- o) [Data Protection Policy](#)