



South Tyneside Council



Carers Policy & Procedure

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- set out the support the School will offer to our employees who have a caring responsibility, in order to help them balance their working and caring commitments, and continue to be effective in their job;
- help us recruit and retain employees with caring responsibilities.

2 Definition of a Carer

The legal definition of a carer is a person who provides or intends to provide a substantial amount of unpaid care on a regular basis for another individual. This could include someone who is living with cancer or any other critical or chronic mental or physical illness.

The School cannot treat carers less favourably than other people who do not have caring responsibilities. The Equality Act 2010 protects a person who experiences discrimination because they are associated with someone who has a disability. For example, it would be unlawful if the partner of someone who has cancer was refused promotion because of concerns that they would be unable to give sufficient commitment to the job.

The Act also allows reasonable adjustments to be requested for caring responsibilities, and other legislation provides the right to a 'reasonable' amount of unpaid time off work for unplanned caring responsibilities.

3 Responsibilities

Employees

- Employees are actively encouraged to inform their Head Teacher if they are caring for someone and need any support. In this way we can work together to ensure that, wherever possible, they can continue in their job and effectively balance work and care commitments.
 - If employees have caring responsibilities and need support, they should speak to their Head Teacher and explain the situation and what assistance they think would help. Examples of the types of support available are outlined in Section 5 and the Head Teacher and employee should discuss the options available and agree what is possible and suitable.
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Head Teachers/Managers

- Head Teachers have the responsibility to familiarise themselves with this Policy and to work within its parameters.
- They also have a responsibility to ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and understand their own and the School's responsibilities in respect of it.
- Head Teachers have a responsibility to record carers leave and inform the Payroll Team of any required adjustments to pay and benefit contributions.

Human Resources

- HR has a responsibility to provide advice about Carers' Leave to Head Teachers and employees as necessary.

4 Policy

We recognise that some of our employees will have caring responsibilities for children or seriously ill or disabled dependent relatives, partners or close friends.

We appreciate the demands this may place on them, and that at times it may be difficult for them to combine their work and caring responsibilities.

As a responsible employer, it is our Policy that:

- Head Teachers will give sympathetic consideration to requests for support from those who have caring responsibilities, based on a shared understanding of the situation and its impact.
- It should be viewed by all as acceptable to request support and to be confident that no one will be unfairly discriminated against because they have caring responsibilities.
- All such requests will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
- Employees who require support will be provided with guidance on the options available to them.
- We will treat all employees fairly and consistently, while taking into account the individual needs of a particular case.

5 Support options

The specific options that we will consider and management practices that we will put in place in support of carers will include:

- Flexible working – the School has a Flexible Working Policy which enables employees to request a change to the number of hours they work, the times they work and/or their work location on a temporary or permanent basis. This could include part-time working, job share, compressed hours, school term-time working etc.
 - Employees with children up to the age of 18 can take periods of unpaid parental leave to take care of the child. This means looking after the welfare of the child and can include making arrangements for the good of the child. Further information can be found in the Parental Leave Policy.
 - Leave of absence and special leave – Head Teachers have authority to determine applications from employees for leave of absence with or without pay. They can also grant special leave with or without pay,
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normally for a maximum of 3 days, in cases of emergency. Further information can be found in the Leave of Absence Policy.

- The School operates a Compassionate Leave Policy which extends the provisions that exist to deal with an immediate crisis or family incident to situations where longer-term support is required. Compassionate Leave may be granted in the case of bereavement, or serious illness which requires the employee to devote their time to the long-term care of a dependant.
- Support from the Head Teacher in informing team members about the situation if appropriate, staying in touch during absences and handling return to work.
- Counselling Service – employees can receive confidential support from the Counselling Service which can be accessed via Occupational Health either via their Head Teacher or directly.
- The Council website provides information on further support which may be available Carers - South Tyneside Council

6 **Equality and Diversity Statement**

The School is committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity. An equality check of this policy was carried out in 2018 and no equality check implications were identified.

Policy approved:	February 2024
Date of next review	: February 2025