



STEP Academy Trust

Sabbatical Leave Policy

Date of Policy: April 2019

Review: January 2022

Introduction

STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust.

Scope

1. Employees with three or more years' service will be eligible to apply for sabbatical leave to undertake, for example, research, further education or travel. Both full-time and part-time employees with the relevant service are potentially eligible. The purpose of sabbatical leave will normally be linked to personal development outside the usual confines of the job, allowing the employee to return to work with new ideas and enhanced skills.
2. Sabbatical leave will not be granted to any employee who has been subject to formal disciplinary or capability proceedings within the past two years.
3. Sabbatical leave may, at the Employer's discretion, be granted more than once during the course of an employee's employment but only in exceptional circumstances and only where a period of three years or more has passed since the employee returned to work following his/her first period of sabbatical leave.
4. Sabbatical leave will typically be granted in blocks of a school term commencing at the beginning of the term and ending on 31 December, 30 April or 31 August, as appropriate, with the employee returning to work at the beginning of the following term. An exception is in cases where the final term of the sabbatical break is the spring term, in which case the sabbatical will end on the last day before the start of the Academy Summer term. A further exception will be if the Executive Team consider there to be extenuating circumstances in which commencement from a half term date would be beneficial for STEP. In such incidents, clear rationale for the benefit to STEP will be set out.
5. A maximum of six half continuous terms of sabbatical leave will be granted in any one period.
6. Any eligible employee wishing to make an application for sabbatical leave should do so in writing to their Headteacher/Executive Head/Head of Service or CEO for STEP Central staff, stating the proposed objectives and duration of the sabbatical and the perceived benefits for the Employer and the employee.
7. The application for sabbatical leave must be made at least three months before the requested leave is due to start to enable time for suitable cover arrangements to be made.
8. The Employer will consider any such request and sabbatical leave, where granted, will be entirely at the Employer's discretion and with such qualifications and conditions as the Employer sees fit.

9. Within 14 days of receiving a written request for sabbatical leave, the Headteacher or Head of Service will respond to confirm whether or not the request has been granted. Employees should not automatically assume that their request will be granted and should not make any travel arrangements until they have received written confirmation.
10. If a request for sabbatical leave is turned down, an employee may appeal to their Chair of Finance and Operations Committee (or Chair of Trustees for STEP central staff). The appeal must be made in writing within seven days of receiving the original outcome. The appeal should state the reasons why they are appealing.
11. In considering an appeal, the Chair will ask the original decision maker for information regarding their reason for turning down the request and carry out such other investigation as they reasonably believe to be necessary, which may at their sole discretion include meeting with the employee to discuss the request. The Chair will endeavour to respond to any appeal in writing within 14 days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Chair will be final and there will be no further recourse or right to appeal under the sabbatical policy or employee complaints procedure.
12. During any agreed period of sabbatical leave the Employee will be on zero pay.
13. If the employee returns from sabbatical leave and works for the Trust for a further five half term periods they will receive a payment equivalent to 25% of their salary for the time they were on sabbatical leave. This payment will be made by the academy they worked at prior to their sabbatical leave.
14. The Employer will not contribute pension contributions into the employee's pension scheme during their period of the sabbatical leave.
15. It will be the responsibility of the Employee to make separate arrangements with their pension provider to cover any periods of unpaid service.
16. The Employee will not accrue any entitlement to holiday leave or pay in excess of the statutory minimum from time to time during the sabbatical leave.
17. The Employer will not pay any benefits such as Childcare Vouchers during the sabbatical leave.
18. The employee will be required to keep in contact with his/her Headteacher whilst on sabbatical leave on a monthly basis. This may be by telephone, by e-mail, or by post.
19. As part of the contact between the employee and Headteacher, the employee must confirm that they are still intending to return to work at the end of their sabbatical leave.
20. During the period of the employee's sabbatical, the employee remains an employee of the Employer on the normal terms and conditions of employment, save as amended hereby. Therefore the employee will not be permitted to take up employment or provide any consultancy services to any third party except with the Employer's express consent, and all provisions as to confidential information will continue to apply.