LANGLEY FITZURSE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

TIME OFF FOR FOSTERING POLICY

MAY 2020

*To be house styled once approved*

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**Introduction**

1. The policy details the time off employees are entitled to have from work if they are a Wiltshire Council prospective/approved foster carer in addition to their substantive role with the Wiltshire school/academy. Employees who are foster carers may also wish to discuss other flexible working opportunities and time off policies with their headteacher/principal.

**Who is included in these arrangements?**

1. This policy applies to all Wiltshire school/academy employees.
2. It applies to employees who:
* have applied to become Wiltshire Council foster carers and are in the process of being formally assessed; or
* are approved Wiltshire Council foster carers and are actively fostering; and
* have 26 weeks continuous service with the school/academy.

The school/academy actively supports employees who take on fostering roles but employees must obtain the approval of their headteacher/principal before taking time off under this policy.

**When does it not apply?**

1. The policy does not apply to employees who do not meet the eligibility criteria above.

**What are the main points?**

1. The school/academy recognises and values the contribution that foster carers make to society and especially the lives of children in care. The school/academy understands that foster carers who do other work in addition to fostering need some flexibility in their working arrangements, to meet the needs of their fostered child. The school/academy is committed to supporting any employee who is/is applying to be a foster carer through this policy and other flexible working options where possible.
2. The process of becoming approved as a foster carer is a lengthy one and places a number of reasonable but demanding expectations upon prospective foster carers, particularly in relation to training and the assessment and approval process.
3. The school/academy offers employees the opportunity to work flexibly where this is compatible with the demands of their job. All current policies regarding flexible working, including family emergencies and compassionate leave for dependents and ordinary parental leave, apply to approved foster carers.
4. If an employee is eligible for the fostering time off policy as detailed above, they will be entitled to the following paid time off in any 12 month period as follows:
* Up to three days in total to attend assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer
* Up to one day to attend the approving foster panel
* Up to five days in total to attend a child’s in care review, annual foster carer review, health and education related meetings associated with the child they care for, foster carer training, foster panel and other associated meetings.
1. The entitlements above represent the maximum total amount of time off which can be granted under this policy, if employees are involved in the specific fostering activities outlined above. It is recognised that not all of these activities will occur in a 12 month period and some are one off events. Employees should only claim for the actual fostering activities which they are involved in during any 12 month period and this may be below the total amounts specified for each purpose.
2. Employees should obtain the approval of their headteacher/principal for leave under this policy. The leave will be considered and approved on a pro rata basis for part time employees.
3. If an employee requires time off which is additional to the entitlement set out in this policy they should discuss this further with their headteacher/principal and consider other options which may be available to them including, leave of absence, or unpaid leave.

**Employee responsibilities**

1. Employees must obtain the prior approval of their headteacher/principal for time off work under this policy. It is the employees responsibility to discuss this with their headteacher/principal providing as much notice as possible.

**Headteacher / principal responsibilities**

1. Headteachers/principals will need to consider requests from employees for time off from work for fostering fairly. If leave is approved employees are entitled to paid leave as set out in this policy and this should be recorded Where possible every attempt should be made to meet requests for panel assessments and training as timescales for panels in particular, can be critical and arrangements for both can be particularly difficult to change.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. I am an approved foster carer. What other policies are available which offer me flexible working opportunities to assist me with my fostering responsibilities?

You may find it helpful to discuss the range of options available with your headteacher/principal. Options may include:

* Flexible working policy
* Family emergencies and compassionate leave policy
* Ordinary parental leave
* Leave of absence
* Career break scheme