Applecroft School



Carer's Leave Policy

Review Cycle:	Annually
Person Responsible:	Headteacher
Date of Issue:	October 2026
Review Date:	October 2027

The Professional Associations and/or Trade Unions have been consulted on this policy, and the school has adopted the contents based on HFL Education recommendation.

Carer's Leave Policy

1) Introduction:

School Vision
'To be a positive and inspiring community that nurtures each individual and empowers leaders for life'.

School Mission Statement
'Nurturing Potential, Inspiring Minds, Changing Lives'.

School Values

- Ambition and Leadership
- Kindness and Supportiveness
- Respect and Honesty
- Determination and Resilience.

2) Scope:

We recognise that some of you have caring responsibilities and that you may need our support to combine work with care. You may acquire caring responsibilities overnight or caring responsibilities may develop over time, and we acknowledge this may be in addition to time off for dependants.

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 are looked after.

This policy applies to all our employees. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants, or any self-employed individuals working for us.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

The school is committed to supporting all employees with caring responsibilities and will administer this policy fairly and consistently, regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or any other protected characteristic.

Information relating to an employee's caring responsibilities will be handled sensitively and confidentially, in accordance with data protection requirements.

3) 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.

Employees experiencing challenges associated with caring responsibilities are encouraged to speak with their line manager or the Headteacher to discuss available support and wellbeing resources.

The school recognises the valuable contribution made by employees who balance work with caring responsibilities and is committed to creating a supportive and flexible working environment wherever operationally possible.

4) Eligibility:

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.

5) Entitlement:

You are entitled to one week of unpaid leave in any 12-month period i.e. up to 5 days. [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.

No employee will suffer a detriment or be treated less favourably because they request or take statutory carer's leave.

6) Notification:

You must give notice in writing to your line manager of your intention to take carer's leave and reasonable notice should be provided.

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 the greater.

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 setting.

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

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.

7) Cancelling your Carer's Leave:

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

8) 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.

9) Other Types of Leave:

The statutory right to carer's leave is intended to be for planned and foreseen caring commitments. If you need to take time off to manage an unexpected or sudden problems relating to a dependent and make any necessary longer-term caring arrangements, please see our Time off for dependents' policy.

We recognise that you may need a longer period of time off work that goes beyond your statutory entitlement to carer's leave under this policy. In such cases, we may agree for you to take the time off work as discretionary authorised, unpaid absence.

Employees may also be entitled to additional leave and pay provisions where other statutory family leave rights apply.

10) Flexible Working:

We realise that flexible working can help navigate the challenges of caring while also working. If you feel that you would benefit from a permanent change to your working arrangement to help balance your work responsibilities, we encourage you to look at our Flexible Working Policy.

We also appreciate that the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be enough for you to balance work and your caregiving responsibilities. This could include working from home, hybrid working or changing your start and finish times.

If you feel that you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis, you should discuss and agree these with your line manager.

We will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet your needs.

Employees have a statutory right to request flexible working from the first day of employment. Requests will be considered in accordance with the school's Flexible Working Policy.

11) External Sources of Information:

There are various organisations that provide help and support to carers, including:

- Carers UK, which provides help and advice for carers on employment rights, benefits and tax credits, assessments, and other practical matters for carers;
- the NHS Website, which provides a wealth of information and advice for carers;
- Grace Care Consulting, which provides advice and support on care, special needs and neurodiversity;

- Age UK and Independent Age, which offer information and support to anyone providing informal unpaid care to an older person through a range of local services;
- Contact a Family, which provides support, advice and information to families with disabled children; and;
- Carers Trust, which works with other organisations to provide access for carers to breaks, information, advice, education, training and employment opportunities.