

Work Life Balance/Flexible Working Policy including: - Family Leave Part-time working/Phased Retirement/Winding Down Career Breaks and Sabbaticals

1. Context

Education Services recognises the benefits to be gained by developing existing working arrangements and introducing new provisions within a Work Life Balance / Flexible Working and Career Break Policy. Good working practices are key to delivering effective services, increasing morale, commitment, and improving recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced teachers.

This agreement is intended to provide a framework of flexible working arrangements to the mutual benefit of teachers, the Council and service users. Where possible requests will be granted however this is dependent on the impact on service delivery.

2. Related Provisions – Family Leave

This policy should be applied taking cognisance of the SNCT Handbook, Part 2, and other related policies and employment legislation. The SNCT conditions of Service on Family Leave, [Part 2, Section 7](#) are an integral part of this work life balance policy.

In addition to the range of provisions of Family Leave at [Part 2, Section 7, 7.1.1](#), Glasgow City Council will afford teachers paid leave for Kinship Care. Any teacher applying for paid leave for a Kinship Care arrangement should normally provide a minimum of 4 working weeks' notice. It is, however, recognised that some Kinship care arrangements are made on an emergency basis.

The teacher should provide formal correspondence confirming the Kinship Care arrangement and will be granted 2 weeks paid leave and reasonable paid time off, where required, during the working day to attend meetings as required with other agencies.

On occasion, a Kinship Care arrangement may lead to a formal Adoption. In these circumstances, a teacher will be entitled to Adoption Leave and Pay as per Part 2, Section 7.3 of the SNCT Handbook

Due consideration should be given to the SNCT Joint Secretaries advice on Parental Leave and flexible Working Applications (JS/19/75 Appendix 1). The employer should consider all application for flexible working from teacher occupying promoted posts. No employee should automatically be turned down because they hold a promoted post. Due consideration should be given to alternative ways of working that provide a solution for the employee and the employer.

3. Procedure for Individual Requests

The Flexible Working Procedure provides detail regarding how requests should be managed and administered.

Where an application is received in a school or department with existing work life balance arrangements already in place for other teachers, consideration will be given to the wider impact on both service delivery for young people and the wider workforce. Every application will, however, be considered on its own merits, and a teacher will only be refused a work life balance application for the reasons stated in this agreement.

Teaching is a front line service and this can present challenges with regard to working flexibly. The Council reserves the right to refuse requests and/or review arrangements, where it is apparent that service delivery is negatively impacted. Where an existing request requires to be reviewed teachers affected will be advised formally and given the right to representation at any meetings to discuss the matter. There should always be an attempt to seek a volunteer before any proposed changes to existing contracts

No employee should be automatically turned down for a work life balance request because they hold a promoted or leadership position. Due consideration should be given to alternative ways of working and trying to accommodate the employee wherever possible. (Appendix 1)

4. Core Flexible Working Arrangements

The following are considered to be the core flexible working arrangements which can be considered as options for teachers:

- Reduced Hours/ Part-Time Working (previously Job Sharing)
- Winding Down and Phased Retirement (must be agreed by Education Services and SPPA)
- Career Breaks/Sabbaticals
- Family Leave

This is by no means an exhaustive list of options and there are many other ways to work flexibly. In every case the request will be seriously considered, and the procedure applied. It should be noted, however, that the nature of teaching may limit options. The employer must ensure that due consideration is given to all requests, notwithstanding the needs of the service.

Every effort should be made to approve an application unless there is evidence of a detrimental impact on service delivery. Glasgow City Council fully supports flexible working as providing an opportunity to retain experienced teachers in the profession. It will be for Head Teachers, with advice from HR, to determine and assess those arrangements, which may, or may not, be suitable.

The Flexible Working Procedure provides an outline explanation on how each of the core arrangements will operate and the key principles the Council would expect to apply in terms of pay, leave, conditions etc. in order to provide a level of consistency and equity.

5. Flexible Working Procedure

5.1 Eligibility

- Teachers who make a request for flexible working should have at least 26 weeks continuous service with the council and should not, normally, have made an application to work flexibly in the past 12 months.
- In making an application, the applicant(s) will state the grounds, including the reason(s) why the preferred working pattern is required.

- It should be noted that the agreed change in working pattern will represent a permanent contractual change unless agreed otherwise as a temporary change for a specified time period, e.g. to allow full recovery following serious illness, or for a trial period.
- The teacher will be issued with correspondence from the employer confirming the nature of any contractual change, (temporary/permanent, change of hours/days etc.)

5.2 Procedures for Individual Request

- A teacher should submit an application form to the Head Teacher using the appropriate form for teachers (appendix 2), setting out the reason why the request is being made and how it is compatible with the needs of the service. The pattern requested will normally be one of the core flexible working arrangements.
- Applications must contain a date where it is proposed that the revised working pattern may become effective. This date must be at least 12 weeks in advance of the date the application is submitted to allow sufficient time for the application to be considered and, if agreed, for arrangements to be put in place in terms of implementation.
- The Head Teacher, on receipt of an application to work flexibly, will initially ensure that the applicant is eligible. Thereafter, a meeting will be arranged with the eligible teacher concerned, and his/her trade union representative, if they so wish, within 28 days of receiving the application.
- Should more than one application be received at the same time priority will be given to anyone covered directly by the Equality Act 2010.
- A similar process is followed for a Career Break or Sabbatical Application, guidance for this can be found on SNCT and the application form for this is attached (Appendix 3)

5.3 Considerations

The meeting will discuss the application, the effect of the proposed change in terms of the needs of the service, any strategies to address this, and any appropriate compromises to the requested working pattern. The meeting will also discuss the specific terms and conditions associated with flexible working.

In arriving at a decision on the proposal the Head Teacher will take the following into consideration, in conjunction with HR:

- The impact on service delivery
- Is the request consistent with one of the menu of core flexible arrangements?
- Is there an alternative work pattern or arrangement that would be more suitable
- The ability to recruit a teacher to backfill the vacant hours
- The impact on teacher(s) career development.
- If a trial period would be appropriate in the circumstances.
- Any planned organisational changes.

A further meeting may be required with the applicant to discuss the various options, and the effect of the proposal. This further meeting should take place within 14 days

of the original meeting. The further meeting may propose an alternative and mutually agreeable solution where this is possible.

5.4 Form of Decision

The Head Teacher will confirm the decision to the teacher, in writing, within 14 days of the meeting. The form of the decision will be one of the following:

Application Approved

The teacher will receive a letter/email from the head teacher agreeing to the new arrangement with the agreed start date and confirming whether the new arrangement is temporary with a review date, or a permanent contractual change. The Headteacher should notify the HR team to ensure that any additional staffing requirements are considered, and the employee is issued with correspondence form CBS confirming the arrangement.

Variation of Application Approved

A compromise may be reached and approved, and in this event the head teacher will define the compromise arrangement in the letter and, as above, determine the start date of the arrangement, and confirm if this arrangement is permanent or temporary. If the application cannot be approved for the teacher's current post, the terms associated with any proposed move should be made clear to the teacher. Any compromise that includes a transfer of location will require the involvement of the relevant HR team to ensure that a suitable alternative position is available for the teacher.

Trial Period Agreed

The head teacher may determine that the arrangement be introduced on a trial basis for a limited, defined period of time. This will normally be in line with school terms. The head teacher will arrange a review meeting prior to the end of the trial period, to discuss whether the trial has been successful. The applicant may also request a trial period in order to assess the suitability of the arrangement. Any trial period requested or approved will normally be aligned to school terms/session.

Trial Period Unsuccessful

If, in the view of the head teacher, the trial has not been successful the application will be rejected and the applicant advised in writing of the business ground(s) as to why it has not been successful.

A right of appeal as detailed in this procedure will apply if the applicant deems the trial period to be successful, and therefore the default contractual position will be the revised arrangement until the appeal is concluded.

Application or Variant Not Approved

In this event, the Head Teacher will confirm the decision, in writing, within 14 days of the meeting. Such notification will contain a reference to the needs of the Service and ground(s) on which the decision is based, and also contain an explanation of why these apply in the circumstances.

Examples of business reasons are, as follows:

- Negative impact on service delivery to children and young people.
- Inability to recruit qualified teacher to backfill any vacancy following request
- Planned organisational change.
- Additional costs to implement

The letter advising a teacher that the application has been rejected will include an explanation as to why that is the case, and will also notify the teacher of the right of appeal.

5.5 The right of appeal

To appeal the decision taken by the head teacher the teacher should submit in writing to the Head of Service the grounds for appeal. The appeal should be submitted within 14 days of receiving the outcome.

An appeal hearing will be held within a further 14 days unless the Council indicates that the appeal has been upheld in advance. Where an appeal hearing is held, Education Services will provide a written decision within 14 days, either upholding the appeal or specifying the grounds for refusal.

6. Core Flexible Working Arrangements

Reduced Hours/Part time working (normally 2 or 3 days per week)

Winding Down/ Phased Retirement

Career Breaks/Sabbaticals

6.1 Part Working Arrangements: In service days, Parents Nights, Leave

Definition

Part time working is defined as any situation where a teacher works less hours than a standard working week which is 35 hrs.

There are a small number of existing employees who hold a job-sharing contract and, as such, are entitled to be offered the remaining hours of the full-time post if they become vacant. Part-time contracts are issued stating the number of contractual hours per week and do not normally specify the days. The days to be worked should be agreed at the outset of the arrangement, and any changes required by either the employee or employer discussed in May of each year for the following session.

In Service Days

Part time teachers may, on occasion, be required to attend In-service on a day they would not normally work, and, if the teacher can attend, an agreement should be reached whether this is paid or time off in lieu, which may be more difficult to accommodate. Normally all teachers should attend the first In-Service day in August. Part-time teachers are required to attend for a pro-rata of 195 days and Inset days are part of this.

Where a Head Teacher does not require part time teachers to attend an in service day, and it is not a normal working day for the teacher, but the teacher wishes to attend in the interests of their own personal development, then that teacher may attend the In-service day and will be granted time off in lieu/payment, if agreed in advance.

Parents Nights

Part time teachers will be expected to attend a pro rata proportion of parents' evenings appropriate to their current deployment in the school, even when these parents' evenings do not occur during or after their normal working day.

Working time Agreement

Part-time teachers will undertake a pro-rata number of collegiate hours agreed as part of the school Working time Agreement (WTA)

Part Time Leave Arrangements

Leave entitlement is pro rata for teachers who work less than full time teachers. At the start of each session part time teachers should consult the agreed School Holiday Calendar and review their working days for the forthcoming session taking into consideration public holidays.

e.g. a 0.6 FTE teacher should work 0.6 x 195 days, and depending on their individual work pattern, they may be owed days, or have to work extra days to take them to the 117 working days required.

The arrangements for this then needs to be discussed and agreed with the Head teacher or appropriate member of the management team.

For 2 teachers job sharing or 2 x part-time teachers sharing a full time post, they should calculate at the start of each session their working days with their own individual work pattern to ensure both teachers work their pro rata number of days. Any rebalancing of days should be discussed and agreed between them, and then signed off by the Head teacher or appropriate member of the management team.

6.2 Continuous Professional Development

Part time teachers will be given pro rata access to CPD in line with the SNCT Conditions of Service, however, access to CPD is not restricted to working days. Part-time teachers may wish to undertake additional CPD or attend an event in their school that does not occur on their normal working day. Agreement should be reached with the teacher in advance regarding remuneration. All other conditions of service will apply to part time teachers to reflect their reduced working week. A teacher's continuous service will be unaffected by job sharing or part-time working.

7. Winding Down and Phased Retirement

Winding Down is a particular phased retirement option which offers those members approaching their retirement age, the opportunity to continue in employment on a part-time basis for up to 4 years whilst protecting their overall final retirement pension entitlement. Teachers must be a member of SPPA and meet the qualifying criteria to apply to "Wind Down". (Appendix 4).

Phased retirement that is not "Winding Down" can be undertaken, if approved by the employer and SPPA for an unlimited period.

Any teacher considering either the general Phased Retirement Scheme or Winding Down Scheme should consider taking professional financial advice

Application Process

Teachers wishing to Wind Down or undertaking Phased Retirement must first apply to reduce their working hours in line with the flexible working policy. (Appendix 2). If the

application to reduce their hours is granted, teachers should then proceed to complete the appropriate form for SPPA and seek professional advice regarding the potential impact on their final pension.

Whilst Education Services approve the work life balance request from teachers, the winding down or Phased Retirement application can only be granted by the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA). Teachers should ensure that before any application is submitted to the SPPA, the reduction in hours has been approved (Appendix 2)

Please note that applications for Work life balance for the purposes of Winding Down or Phased retirement that are refused are eligible to submit an appeal and should do this before submitting pension papers to SPPA.

Teachers who are Winding Down or undertaking Phased Retirement are still required to provide appropriate notice to the employer and SPPA when they decide to fully retire.

8. Career Breaks

Career Breaks may be granted in accordance with SNCT Conditions of Service Part 2, Appendix 2.15 which should be referenced before an application is made or granted.

The key points to note of a Career Break are as follows;

- To be eligible for a career break, teachers must have two years continuous employment, on a permanent or temporary basis after achieving the Standards for Full Registration
- During a Career break, the teacher remains an employee by Glasgow Council and has personal responsibility to inform any relevant parties i.e., SPPA, GTCS, DWP if appropriate.
- GTCS membership is a contractual requirement of all teaching posts within Glasgow City Council and any incidents of lapsed membership could delay/prevent a return to work until resolved.
- The decision to grant a Career Break is based on the needs of the service e.g. availability of a suitable qualified replacement, continuity of learning and teaching etc.
- There is no automatic right to a career break.
- Career breaks may be taken for caring responsibilities, voluntary work, or travel or study. A career break should not generally be used for alternative full time employment.
- The period of a career break will not be recognised for the following; incremental pay progression, sickness allowance, occupational maternity pay or annual leave entitlement.
- Should a Career Break application be refused or only granted in part, there is the right to appeal the decision.
- During a career break an extension may be requested, however if this is refused there is no right to appeal.

This work life balance policy may be reviewed following updates from SNCT, ACAS guides or legislative changes.

An application for a Career Break should be submitted by completing the Career Break Application Form for teachers (Appendix 3)

9. Sabbaticals

Any teacher is entitled to apply for a self-funded sabbatical after 5 years continuous teaching service with Scottish councils. Normally a teacher should provide 12 months' notice of the intended start date of a sabbatical.

Glasgow City Council will approve requests for a sabbatical normally up to a figure representing 1% of the teacher workforce based on the Headcount from the most recent annual census. Approval of Sabbaticals beyond 1% of the teaching workforce may be granted where there is no detrimental impact on service provision.

A sabbatical is distinct from a Career Break and provides the employee with an opportunity to refresh and re-energise their career, and as such, there are no prescribed reasons required or restrictions on activities for a teacher during a sabbatical. A teacher may undertake alternative employment, including teaching outwith Scotland.

Any teacher undertaking alternative employment during a sabbatical must ensure that they notify their employer

A sabbatical will normally be for a period of between 3 months and 1 year in accordance with school terms/session, but may, by exception, be extended.

Full details of the terms and conditions associated with Sabbaticals is documented in [Part 2 Appendix 2.23](#) of the SNCT Handbook. Teachers should complete the proforma for Career Break/Sabbatical

Conclusion

Glasgow City council wish to remain an employer of choice for the teaching profession and the promotion of work life balance policies can assist in employee motivation and retention.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – [Joint Secretaries Letter 19/75 – Parental Leave and Flexible Working Applications](#)

Appendix 2 – [Joint Secretaries Letter 21/83 - Sabbaticals](#)

Appendix 3 – [SNCT Handbook Part 2, Section 2.15 – Career breaks](#)

Appendix 4 – [SNCT Handbook Part 2, Section 2.23 – Self Funded Sabbaticals](#)

Appendix 5 – [Career Break and Sabbatical Application Form](#)

Appendix 6 – [Worklife Balance application form for teachers](#)

Career Break/Sabbatical - Application Form

(Teaching Staff)

This form should be completed when applying for a Career Break or sabbatical. Employees can apply for a Career Break provided they have 2 years' continuous service with Glasgow City Council before the start of the Career Break or 5 years teaching service. Employees applying for a Sabbatical require 5 years teaching service.

Section 1 – Your Details

Name:			
Job title:			
School/Service		SAP No:	
Date started with GCC:			

Section 2 – Reason(s) for Application (please tick)

I wish to take a Career Break or Sabbatical to:

Care for children or other dependants	
Undertake a course of study or other skills development activity	
Undertake voluntary work or some other work activity	
Undertake Teaching out-with Scotland	
Travel	
Other, please give further details of the reason(s) for your application:	

I would like to take my Career Break or Sabbatical

From:	To:
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Please note that:

- You will normally need to give 3 months' notice of a Career Break and 1 years notice for sabbatical
- A break can be between 6 months and 2 years in length - for a shorter break than 6 months you should discuss the possibility of unpaid leave with your manager.
- A sabbatical will normally be between 3 months and 1 year

Please sign and date

Signature: _____ Date: _____

When you have completed these sections send the form to your Headteacher. You will normally be told if the application has been approved and given a copy of the completed form within 4 weeks of the form being received by the manager.

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Section 3 – Approval (to be completed by the authorised Manager)

Human Resources can be contacted if you wish to discuss this application.

Application discussed with HR: Yes No

Decision: Approved Rejected

Reason(s) for decision if rejected:

Please refer to LNCT 22 for right of appeal

Do you agree with the start date and length of the requested break?

Yes

If you have answered “No” to the above, you should discuss and agree alternatives with the employee and detail them below:

Revised dates:

From:	To:
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Employee Contact Details

A condition of the break is that the employee may be contacted **only** if necessary to provide important work updates. The employer will agree how contact will be maintained and the frequency of this.

Contact details:

Section 4. Employee Declaration (completed by employee with manager)

I agree with the conditions of the career break/sabbatical scheme and the information I have provided on this form is correct.

Employee Name: _____

Signed Employee: _____ Date: _____

Section 5. Manager Authorisation

Manager Name: _____

Job title: _____ Section: _____

Signed Manager: _____ Date: _____

This form should be completed and copied to your Human Resources Team and the employee within 4 weeks of you receiving it.

Please note that it is a contractual requirement to maintain GTCS registration. Teachers on a Career Break /Sabbatical should make direct arrangements with GTCS regarding payment of fees.

HR should send this form to CBS for processing at CBSServiceHR@glasgow.gov.uk.