



The Robert Carre Trust

Temporary Changes to HR policies due to the Coronavirus Situation

This document explains what temporary changes we made to some of our HR policies and procedures under the Covid-19 restrictions. The changes also apply for those staff working in school during any pandemic-related school closure periods.

Although most practices have now reverted to normal, these provisions remain as options, for implementation if deemed necessary by the Trust.

We may update and make further changes as the situation develops.

N M Law

Executive Headteacher

May 2022

1 Protocol for HR meetings

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
Location of meetings	Meetings taking place under various HR policies (for example, sickness review meetings, grievance and disciplinary meetings, supervision meetings) would normally take place on the school site unless it was agreed by all parties that the meeting should be at a neutral venue. Meetings would normally be face to face and in person.	<p>Where it is not Covid safe to hold meetings on site, and to limit the number of external visitors to the school where appropriate, meetings may be held by remote means to ensure HR processes can continue.</p> <p>The Trust uses MS Teams for the majority of remote meetings. Notification and joining links will be sent to all parties by the Trust in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>The school will ensure the software's security measures are in place when using the software.</p> <p>Unless otherwise agreed by all parties involved in the meeting, the meetings will not be recorded using the recording facility on the software.</p>

2 Recruitment

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
Interviews and selection methods	<p>A face to face interview must take place for all applicants to all posts</p> <p>Observation of a teaching lesson carried out in our school</p> <p>In-tray exercises carried out onsite to assess likely performance in role</p>	<p>Where it is not possible to ensure social distancing or during a period where the government has advised against travel, we will carry out recruitment interviews using remote video conferencing technology. Our preferred method is MS Teams.</p> <p>Where it is not possible to ensure social distancing, candidates may be asked to send in a film of them teaching a lesson.</p> <p>Exercises may be emailed to candidates who are asked to complete them and return by email by a certain date</p> <p>Details of alternative methods will be set out in the invite letter</p>

3 Probation

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
	<p>The probationary period lasts for 6 months (plus any extension) to allow assessment of suitability for role</p>	<p>We may need to extend the probationary period for longer than 6 months (or the further extension). This is where an employee has been self-isolating/self-shielding/working remotely from home and it has not been possible for the Trust to assess performance, suitability and progress in the new role.</p> <p>The extension in this case is due entirely to the impact that the coronavirus outbreak has had on the work circumstances and to allow the employee an appropriate period to demonstrate suitability for the post, not due to any issue concerning the employee's performance or suitability for the role.</p>

4 Sickness absence policy – See also RCT Sickness Absence Policy

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
<p>Sickness absence reporting</p>	<p>Under our normal sickness absence policy, if you fall ill and cannot attend work, you would be required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. notify your line manager and the Cover Manager by 8am at the latest, or as soon as possible if that is not practical; and 2. provide medical evidence (typically, a fit note from your doctor) for sickness of more than seven calendar days' absence. 	<p>You should notify your line manager as soon as possible at any time during the working day if you or anyone you live with develops a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever, particularly a high temperature (i.e., a temperature of 37.8 degrees or over); • a new or continuous cough; or • loss or change to your sense of taste or smell. <p>You must then not attend work and you must follow the Government's self-isolation guidance at www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance</p> <p>You may also be self-isolating in some circumstances in which you have no symptoms, including if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have been in contact with a confirmed coronavirus carrier; or • recently travelled overseas to a country not covered by the travel corridor exemption, within the common travel area or British overseas territories. <p>You do not have to get medical advice from NHS 111 to self-isolate. However, if your symptoms worsen during self-isolation or are no better after seven days, you should contact NHS online at 111.nhs.uk. There is a tool at 111.nhs.uk/service/covid-19 for you to carry out a check if you think you have symptoms.</p> <p>If you have a test for coronavirus which is positive, please inform the Cover Manager of the date the test was taken and the expected return date after the period of isolation. This is so that the Lincolnshire Health Protection Team can be updated regarding any positive cases within schools within the county.</p>

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
		<p>For more than seven days' absence, we ask that you provide us with an 'isolation note' from NHS 111, which you can obtain by completing a simple questionnaire at 111.nhs.uk/isolation-note. For other illnesses you should still send in a fit note from your doctor.</p> <p>Shielding measures are a guideline only and we will comply with the full measures recommended by the government to allow those employees who are extremely clinically vulnerable and clinically vulnerable to return to work. We will deploy those staff enabling them to work remotely where possible or in roles where it is possible to maintain social distancing.</p> <p>Given the coronavirus situation, you must make sure that your contact details are up to date with the HR Administrator and that your line manager has a telephone number and email address where they can reach you if you are in self-isolation.</p>
Acceptable levels of absence	<p>Under our short-term sickness absence policy, we would normally invoke a formal review of your absence levels when you reach:</p> <p>10 days' sickness absence; or 3 separate periods of sickness absence, in the previous 12 months.</p>	<p>If you are in self-isolation because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you or anyone you are living with displays symptoms; • have been given medical advice to self-isolate (for example from NHS 111); or • we ask you to self-isolate <p>we will not take this absence into account when determining whether or not we are taking formal action under our sickness absence management procedure.</p>
Sick pay arrangements	<p>Under the terms and conditions of employment you are entitled to full or half pay which is based on your length of service with us.</p>	<p>You will be paid (full pay) if, irrespective of your sickness entitlement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we have asked you to stay away from the workplace and self-isolate; • you are self-isolating because you have symptoms; or • you are self-isolating in response to medical advice from NHS 111, your doctor, or a local health protection team.

5 Flexible working and working remotely

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
Requests for changes to working patterns	<p>If you wish to change your working pattern, we normally ask you to make a formal request for flexible working and follow the procedure set out in our policy on employees requesting flexible working.</p>	<p>As long as the school's operational needs continue to be met, you may be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adapt your working patterns, for example to allow you to travel on public transport at less crowded times/work flexible hours if you are balancing working from home with caring responsibilities; or • work from home if your role allows for this (see below), <p>for an extended period without having to follow our formal procedure. You can agree informally with your line manager to these changes.</p> <p>You should speak to your line manager if you wish to take advantage of either of these options, or any other flexible working options that may help you at this time. However, the decision as to whether or not to agree to your request for flexible working remains with your line manager and will depend on the needs of the school.</p> <p>Once agreed, the temporary flexible working arrangement will continue until further notice. If circumstances change, your manager will discuss with you any adaptations to, or the withdrawal of, the flexible working arrangement, with the final decision remaining with your manager.</p>
Work remotely	<p>Except by prior agreement with us, we do not normally require you to work remotely for an extended period.</p> <p>There is normally no expectation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you use a laptop, you always take it home with you after work each day; or 	<p>If it is agreed that you can work remotely, please ensure that you are familiar with Remote Access. Please contact ICT Support if you are unsure. If you use a desktop, you can access your emails remotely from most devices and computers via Remote Access.</p> <p>You should ensure that you follow all guidance about IT security which is available in the ICT Acceptable Use policy on the school/Trust websites.</p>

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if you use a desktop, you access your emails remotely while away from the workplace. 	You should contact the IT department if you have any queries about the remote-working system.

6 Annual leave (full year employees)

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
Changing your holiday plans	<p>Once you have booked annual leave, we normally allow you to cancel or change annual leave only in limited circumstances. These circumstances include where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> your personal circumstances warrant it and the cancellation or change does not inconvenience the organisation; or you fall ill shortly before or during annual leave. 	<p>The government advises against non-essential international travel, except to countries and territories listed as exempt¹. The destinations on this list are currently assessed as no longer being an unacceptably high risk to British people travelling abroad; however, given that the risk level within countries can change swiftly, this list is being kept under review and remains subject to change. You should check this before travelling.</p> <p>Anyone travelling from the Common Travel Area and from a country on the travel corridor² list will not need to self-isolate, provided that they have not stopped in, transited through or visited another country which is not on that list in the preceding 14 days.</p> <p>However, if during the coronavirus situation, you are unable to travel to your planned destination, you may wish to cancel or change annual leave that you have already booked.</p> <p>If you would like to cancel or change planned leave, please speak to your line manager. We may allow you to change or cancel booked holiday, taking into account the coronavirus situation. However, this will continue to be a decision for your line manager, depending on the circumstances.</p>

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-countries-and-territories-exempt-from-advice-against-all-but-essential-international-travel>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
		For example, if we have arranged cover for you, or we have a large number of staff building up holiday they have not taken, we may require you to take the leave as booked.
Unused annual leave	<p>Our organisation's holiday year runs from 1 September to 31 August.</p> <p>Normally, we require you to take your holiday entitlement in the relevant holiday year and we allow you to carry over no more than three days' annual leave into the following leave year and it must be taken by the end of December of the following leave year.</p>	<p>The expectation is that in most cases, staff will be able to take their holiday in the current holiday year, during the normal school closure periods.</p> <p>However, we recognise that some staff may be unable to take their remaining annual leave before the end of the leave year. For example, you could have an increased workload because of the coronavirus situation or not been able to take annual leave because you have been sick or self-isolating.</p> <p>In such situations, we are allowing that you can carry over up to five days' annual leave into the following leave year and it must be taken by the end of December of the following leave year.</p> <p>Whilst you should endeavour to take your holiday entitlement in the relevant holiday year, you should speak to your line manager if you think that you will be unable to do so.</p>

7 Maternity leave

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
Notification (MATB1)	The MATB1 certificate is normally provided at 20 weeks of pregnancy. This is a printed document that employees give to their employers.	Where a GP/midwife is unable to provide a printed MATB1 due to social distancing arrangements, an electronic document confirming your pregnancy may be sent to you. This should be forwarded onto the Payroll administrator in the Finance Office.
Risk assessment	We are required to carry out a risk assessment to identify and assess the workplace risks to women who are	We will update our risk assessment to take account of risks associated with Covid-19 and take necessary action. Pregnant employees are considered clinically vulnerable but from 1 August 2020 will be able to return to the workplace that is Covid secure. The risk assessment will identify if the

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	<p>pregnant, have given birth within the last six months or are still breastfeeding.</p> <p>We provide information of the risks identified in the risk assessment, and any preventive and protective measures that have been or will be taken. If we consider an expectant mother is at risk, in carrying out your normal duties we will take reasonable steps necessary (for as long as necessary) to avoid those risks.</p>	<p>employee needs to continue to work from home or needs to be suspended on medical grounds where there is no safe system of work in place.</p>

8 Appraisal

	Normal arrangement	What is changing temporarily?
	<p>The October 2021 appraisal is based on the full performance year (September 2020 until July 2021)</p> <p>The criteria for performance review are set out in the pay policy</p> <p>Pay progression is based on performance for the full year</p> <p>Objectives are set in line with the appraisals policy and are set based on the position as at October 2020.</p>	<p>In line with government guidance, appraisal arrangements will still be in place for the appraisal year 20/21. However, we will be pragmatic in our approach, ensuring we adapt arrangements to take account of the current situation.</p> <p>Teachers will not be penalised during the appraisal process or in respect of any subsequent pay progression decisions as a result of the partial school closures, where this has impacted on the ability to meet fully their objectives. In addition, our priority is to ensure the process is managed in a way that avoids increased workload for all parties concerned.</p> <p>For the appraisal review to take place on October 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions will be made based on the performance up to March 2021 • Where at the time of the mid-year review, it was identified that the expected standards of progress against targets were not being met and this was documented and comments made on how to improve with an expected timescale, it will not be reasonable to consider the

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		<p>level of performance during lockdown as it cannot be measured as there is no opportunity to correct/improve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there has been performance below expectations identified during the year and where there was an opportunity to improve prior to lockdown, appraisal and pay progression decisions will be based on that evidence. • No one will be expected to create new evidence to demonstrate progression against objective as the evidence should already be available.

You are reminded of your obligations as an employee of The Robert Carre Trust to follow our policies and procedures which set out rules and requirements of working in this school, in particular those in relation to Covid-19 which are in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our pupils and staff. Failure to follow the policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken.