

Adoption Scheme and Pay for Support Staff Policy

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Introduction

1. This Oxfordshire model policy has been adopted by the Propeller Academy Trust. It has been drawn up following consultation with all the recognised trade unions and associations: ASCL, ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, NUT and Unison. Advice on the application of this policy is available from the school's Finance/HR service.
2. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant documents such as the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales (Burgundy Book) and the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service for support staff (the Green Book).
3. The Propeller Academy Trust has chosen to continue to use the STPCD, Burgundy Book, and Green Book and therefore adopts this Oxfordshire model policy. Where the word 'school' is used this should be taken to refer to the academy.
4. The term 'relevant body' has been used throughout this policy. Within the Propeller Academy Trust (PAT) this refers to the local governing body (LGB).
5. The term 'headteacher' has been used throughout this document, however depending on the size and structure of the school this role may be delegated to other members of the senior leadership team, school business managers or line managers as appropriate. Where the head teacher is subject to this policy, this will be managed by the Chair of the relevant body or other nominated governor.

Who does this scheme apply to?

6. This scheme applies to all eligible school support staff. Teachers have their own scheme.
7. Adoption leave is available to:
 - individuals adopting a child or having a child through a surrogacy arrangement or;
 - one member of a couple where a couple adopt jointly (the couple must choose which partner takes adoption leave). This includes same sex couples, or couples regardless of their gender.

Exceptions

8. Employees don't qualify for Statutory Adoption Leave or Pay if they:
 - arrange a private adoption
 - become a special guardian or kinship carer
 - adopt a family member or stepchild

Time off to attend adoption meetings

9. Potential adopters will need to attend a number of assessment and matching appointments with the adoption agency.
10. By law, time off is given to employees applying to adopt, to attend up to five adoption appointments.
11. The time off will be paid where the employee is adopting the child on their own. If the employee is adopting jointly then one of the parents may elect to receive the time off as paid and the other will be entitled to take the time off as unpaid.
12. Employees should give their head teacher as much notice as possible and may be required to provide evidence of appointments.

Adoption Leave eligibility and entitlement

13. To qualify for adoption leave, an employee must:
 - be newly matched with a child for adoption by an adoption agency
 - give the correct notice to their head teacher
 - provide a "matching certificate" as proof of the adoption

Adoption Leave entitlement

14. Qualifying employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks' statutory adoption leave made up of:
 - Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) - first 26 weeks
 - Additional Adoption Leave (AAL) - last 26 weeks
15. Only one period of leave can be taken, irrespective of whether more than one child is placed for adoption as part of the same arrangement.
16. Couples adopting a child can choose which parent takes adoption leave; the other parent may be able to take:
 1. [Paternity Leave](#) - one or two weeks paid leave and unpaid leave for eligible partners.
 2. [Shared Parental Leave and Pay](#) – allows eligible adoptive parents to share the care of the child in the first year, taking time off together or separately.

3. [Parental Leave](#) - four weeks unpaid leave each year (up to 18 weeks in total) is available for each adopted child, up to their 18th birthday.

Adoption Pay entitlement

17. Pay for up to 39 weeks may be available to employees depending on certain eligibility criteria being met. Adoption pay may include:

- Statutory Adoption Pay
- Occupational Adoption Pay

Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

18. To qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay employees must:

- be newly matched with a child for adoption by an adoption agency
- have worked continuously for the **same employer** for 26 weeks ending with the week in which they are notified of being matched with a child for adoption
- give the correct notice to their head teacher - see paragraph 33
- provide proof of the adoption - see paragraph 34
- earn on average at least £123 a week (before tax)

19. Statutory Adoption Pay is payable for 39 weeks and is paid by the PAT to the employee on their normal pay day each month. The weekly amount is 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings for the first six weeks, followed by a [flat rate](#) amount set by the government each year, or 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings (whichever is lower). Tax and National Insurance is deducted.

Overseas adoptions

20. To qualify for both Adoption Leave and Pay, the conditions are the same as above except employees must:

- have worked continuously for PAT for at least 26 weeks by the time they get their 'official notification'*
- sign [form SC6](#)* if they are adopting a child with their partner.

*Official notification is permission from a UK authority that the employee can adopt from abroad. [Form SC6 - adopting a child from abroad](#) confirms the employee is not taking paternity leave or pay.

Surrogacy arrangements

21. To qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay you must:

- have been [continuously employed by your employer](#) for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby's due date
 - intend to apply for a [parental order](#)
 - expect the order to be granted (for example because you do not have any convictions involving children, and the birth mother or father agree to the arrangement)
22. All the other conditions for qualifying for pay and leave are the same as for adoptive parents.

Occupational Adoption Pay

23. Employees who have worked continuously for 6 months or more by the week they are matched with a child, qualify for Occupational Adoption Pay.
24. An additional 12 weeks half pay is also payable to employees who return from Adoption Leave for at least three months on a continuous contract. If this condition is not met, and an employee has received this payment, they will be required to repay the 12 weeks half pay, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
25. If employees are undecided about returning, they can opt to be paid this as a lump sum if they do return to work.
26. If half pay plus Statutory Adoption Pay is more than the employee's normal pay, it will be reduced accordingly.
27. Once entitlement to adoption pay is exhausted any remaining adoption leave taken is unpaid.
28. Where an employee works variable hours each week, adoption pay will be calculated using the average pay earned in the 12 weeks preceding the date on which the last complete week ended. This will exclude any week in which no pay was earned.

Qualifying continuous service

29. The adoption pay an employee is eligible for depends on the length of their continuous service. This is the amount of time an employee has worked for one employer without a break. For support staff in maintained schools, continuous service for occupational adoption pay is recognised between maintained schools and from one local authority to another and will be carried over in any transfer of employment under TUPE regulations, e.g. during academy conversion. However, if an employee voluntarily changes employer in the adoption qualifying period or during

the period of adoption leave then their entitlement to adoption pay may be affected and they should check this with the school's Finance/HR team.

Giving notice to take adoption leave

30. Adoption leave can start on any day of the week, either:
 - from the date of placement (date the child starts living with the employee)
 - for UK adoptions - up to 14 days before the placement date
 - for overseas adoptions - when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date
 - the day the child's born or the day after (if you've used a surrogate to have a child)
31. If the placement is delayed after the employee has started their adoption leave, they cannot stop the leave and start it again at a later date. Employees should ensure the placement will be going ahead, on the date agreed, before they start their adoption leave.
32. To help the head teacher plan appropriate cover arrangements, employees must let them know as early as possible about their intention to adopt and advise them of potential timescales.
33. Within seven days of being matched with a child, the employee must give formal notice of adoption leave by completing the **Adoption Leave Request Form**. The employee should print a copy for their records before submitting the form to the Finance/HR team. Once submitted a copy will be sent to the line manager and payroll.
34. Employees must also show their matching certificate issued by the adoption agency to the headteacher and send a photocopy to the Finance/HR team.
35. The employee will receive written confirmation within 28 days, confirming the date adoption leave will start and end, and their entitlement to adoption pay. Employees can change the start date of their adoption leave if they need to by giving the head teacher 28 days' notice, if possible.

Employment rights during adoption leave

36. Employment terms and conditions are protected and employees are entitled to any pay rises and improvements in terms and conditions given during the leave.

37. Employees have the same redundancy rights as their colleagues while on adoption leave and where they are selected for redundancy, have the right to be offered a suitable alternative job, where one exists.

Annual Leave

38. Employees on maternity will continue to accrue annual leave and should plan to take this by the end of the leave year. If this is not possible, they may carry forward any remaining annual leave entitlement.
39. Any bank holidays, that fall on an employee's normal working days during maternity leave, can be taken as paid leave, in a single block, at the end of their maternity leave before returning to work. For part time staff, the number of hours normally worked on those days, can be taken as paid leave.
40. For staff working during term time only there will be opportunities to take any accrued leave during upcoming school closure periods, however a payment for accrued leave during the maternity leave period may need to be made when they return from maternity leave. Managers/Headteachers must contact the Finance/HR team to calculate the accrued leave. For term time only employees, any bank holidays will already be included in the annual leave calculation.
41. No pay in lieu of days owed is payable unless the employee is term time only or leaves employment at the end of the maternity leave period.

Pension

42. Pension contributions continue during paid periods of adoption leave. For members of the Local Government Pension Scheme who take a period of unpaid adoption leave, pension contributions are optional. Information and interactive tools showing costs of buying lost pension can be found on www.lgpsmember.org. (See the section [*'How is your pension affected if you are away from work'*](#)).

Keeping in touch days

44. Employees and headteachers/line managers should keep in touch during adoption leave and agree at the outset how best to do this. Head teachers can make a reasonable amount of contact with employees, for example to let them know about changes at work, job vacancies, training opportunities or staff events. Employees are under no obligation to accept invitations to attend work events.
45. Employees on adoption leave will be kept informed and consulted about any school changes affecting their job.

46. Employees can work up to 10 days during their adoption leave. These days are called 'Keeping In Touch days' (KIT days). KIT days are optional - both the employee and head teacher need to agree to them.
47. KIT days can be used for employees to work or attend events such as training or appraisal meetings.
48. The type of work and pay employees get should be agreed before they come into work.
49. Depending on the work, employees can be paid at their normal rate of pay or at another rate agreed between the head teacher and the employee.
50. A part day worked is counted as one KIT day but the employee is only paid for the hours worked.
51. KIT days can be used as a single days or in blocks.
52. The employee's right to adoption leave and pay isn't affected by working the 10 KIT days but if an employee works more than this, it will affect their entitlement to statutory adoption pay.

Returning to work

53. Employees will be expected back at work on the date given on the Adoption Leave notification form. If a date was not given, it will be assumed that the maximum leave entitlement is being taken.

Changing the return to work date

54. Employees must give the head teacher at least 8 weeks' notice if they want to change their return to work date. The employee's return to work may need to be postponed by up to eight weeks, if this notice is not given.
55. If an employee decides not to return to work, they should resign in writing in the normal way, giving the amount of notice specified in their contract of employment.
56. If an employee returns to work before exhausting their full entitlement to statutory adoption pay or leave, they and their partner may be eligible for Shared Parental Leave/Pay.

Right to request flexible working

57. All employees have the right to request flexible working and the head teacher will give careful consideration to all requests, ensuring that the needs and priorities of the school can be met before agreeing to any new arrangements. See **Flexible Working Policy**.

Child Care Voucher Scheme

58. The Propeller Academy Trust participates in a childcare voucher scheme with the provider Kiddivouchers. This scheme allows childcare vouchers to be paid from the employee's salary, before tax and national insurance deductions. The scheme was closed to new entrants on 4th October 2018 but parents already registered by this date are able to continue using it for as long as their employer offers it or until they leave the scheme. For more information go to www.childcarevouchers.co.uk.
59. The Government's tax-free childcare scheme replaced childcare vouchers. For further details on eligibility and how to apply visit www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare.

Other related policies and sources of information

- Shared parental Leave policy
- Paternity Leave policy
- Parental Leave policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Oxfordshire Family Information Service ([OxonFIS](#))

Review of policy

We check our policies regularly to make sure they are up to date.

If you have any questions about this policy contact your Schools Finance/HR team.

Adoption Leave Request Form

Please complete and return this form to your HR/Finance Officer within 7 days of being matched with a child or young person.

Your details (Please complete all fields)

Name: _____ Job title: _____

School/Site: _____

Start date (continuous service): _____ Start date (Local Government): _____

Adoption leave details (Tick as appropriate)

I was notified of being matched to a child/young person for adoption on: _____

I intend to take only the first 26 weeks Adoption Leave (OAL): I intend to take the full 52 weeks Adoption Leave (OAL + AAL):

Other: please specify: _____

I confirm that I have been newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency:

I confirm that my partner will NOT also be in receipt of Adoption leave:

My Adoption Matching Certificate is: Enclosed: To follow:

The expected date of placement is: _____

I wish to start my Adoption Leave on: _____

I intend to take outstanding annual leave prior to my Adoption Leave (not applicable to term time only or teaching staff): Yes: No: How many days: _____

Occupational Adoption (OAP) (Tick as appropriate)

If you intend to return to work following adoption leave and have at least 6 months' continuous service by the week you are matched with a child, please complete the following section regarding Occupational Adoption Pay:

It is my intention to return to work for at least 13 weeks and therefore I am applying for 12 weeks at half pay. I accept that if I am unable to return to work for at least 13 weeks, I will have to repay the contractual element of the adoption pay.

You have a choice regarding the payment of Occupational Adoption Pay, please tick one of the options below:

A. I would like my 12 week's half pay to be paid in full as it becomes due

B. I would like the 12 weeks at half pay to be paid when I return to work

**Option B should be ticked by those not absolutely sure as to whether or not they will be returning for the required 13 weeks. If you have not ticked either box, Option B will be assumed.*

Return to work details (Tick as appropriate)

I intend to return to work following my Adoption Leave: Yes: No:

I intend to return to work on: _____ **Note:** If you intend to change your return to work date, you must give your Headteacher 8 weeks' notice of the revised date

I intend to return to work on a date to be advised:

Comments (Add any comments as appropriate, and sign and date the form)

Comments: _____

I have completed this form to the best of my knowledge and fully understand the terms and conditions.

Employee's Signature:		Date:	
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