



'Christ at the centre, children at the heart'

**Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT**

**Company No: 08444133**

**Registered Office: Fordham Road, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7AA**

<b>Approved by the Trust Board:</b>	July 2025
<b>Signed by Trust CEO:</b>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	July 2028

**TIME OFF FOR ADOPTION APPOINTMENTS**

## **Introduction**

The Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust (the Trust) is committed to ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect free from discrimination.

This policy outlines the statutory right to take paid or unpaid time off to attend adoption appointments.

The Trust applies this policy to employees and certain qualifying agency workers only (who have worked in the same role for us for at least 12 continuous weeks and meet the qualifying criteria in the Agency Workers Regulations 2010). It does not apply to self-employed contractors, volunteers, or casual workers.

This policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have any contractual effect. We reserve the right to amend it at any time.

## **Time off for an adoption appointment**

If eligible, you will be entitled to attend a set number of adoption appointments arranged by an adoption agency (or at the agency's request) for you to have contact with a child who is to be placed with you for adoption, or for any other purpose related to the adoption.

You may take time off to attend an adoption appointment once the agency has notified you that a child is to be placed with you for adoption but before the child is placed with you.

## **Eligibility to time off for adoption appointment**

### **1. If you are adopting a child with another person**

Where you and your partner have been notified by an adoption agency that a child is to be, or is expected to be, placed for adoption with the two of you jointly, and each of you are either an employee or a qualifying agency worker, for the purposes of taking time off to attend adoption appointments, you must decide between you who will be treated as the primary adopter and who will be treated as the secondary adopter. You must tell us of your decision the first time you request time off for an adoption appointment, as this will affect how much time you can take off.

This choice is significant because if you choose to be the primary adopter, you are also the person who will take the adoption leave (subject to eligibility requirements) when the child is placed with you, and in accordance with our Adoption Policy. If you are elected to be the primary adopter, you will not be able to take paternity leave. The primary adopter will be entitled to paid time off to attend adoption appointments.

If you choose to be the secondary adopter, you will also be the person who intends to take paternity leave (subject to eligibility requirements) when the child is placed with you. The secondary adopter will be entitled to unpaid time off to attend adoption appointments.

## **2. If you are adopting a child alone**

If you are adopting a child alone, you are treated as the primary adopter.

## **3. If you are adopting more than one child**

If the agency is placing more than one child with you as part of the same arrangement, this will be treated as one adoption and will not increase the number of appointments you can take time off to attend.

### **Amount of time off**

If you are the primary adopter, you may take **paid** time off to attend up to **5** adoption appointments after you've been matched with a child. Any time off under this policy must be taken before the first child is placed with you.

If you are the secondary adopter, you may take **unpaid** time off to attend up to **2** adoption appointments after you've been matched with a child.

The right to time off is for the purpose of having contact with the child that is to be placed with you or for any other purpose connected with the adoption and have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency which notified you of the placement.

For any given appointment, the maximum time off during working hours that you are entitled to is six and a half hours off, including travel and waiting time.

Any such appointment must be on a date that is after you have been notified of placement but before the date on which placement occurs. Where more than one child is to be, or is expected to be, placed for adoption as part of the same arrangement, appointments must be on a date before the date on which the first child is placed.

### **How to book time off**

Please try to arrange the times of your appointments at the beginning or end of the working day and in consultation with your Line Manager if possible.

Please try to give us as much notice as possible of the date and time of any appointment. You must provide your Line Manager with written confirmation of the following:

- the date and time of any appointment;
- the time of day at which you wish to start your period off work, and the time that the period off work will finish; and  
whether you have previously taken time off to attend an adoption appointment in relation to the adoption arrangement and, if so, the date of each occasion that you took such time off.

You may also be asked to provide proof of the following:

- the date and time of the appointment (e.g. an appointment card); and
- that the appointment has been arranged at the request of the adoption agency which notified you of the placement for adoption;
- where you and a partner are jointly adopting, you may be required to provide a signed declaration stating that, in connection with the adoption, you have chosen to be the person who exercises the right to take paid/unpaid time off (as applicable) to attend adoption appointments.

If you are an agency worker you may be required to provide the same notice to your agency, you are encouraged to check with the agency.

We may sometimes ask you to try and rearrange an appointment where it is reasonable to do so. In exceptional circumstances we reserve the right to refuse a request for a particular appointment, but we will not do so without good reason.

### **Fostering to adopt**

The rights to paid and unpaid time off work to attend adoption appointments will also apply if you are a local authority foster parent who has been approved as suitable to adopt a child, and the local authority places a child in its care with you in a 'fostering to adopt' arrangement. Please contact the Trust HR advisors for further information regarding how the policy will operate in such circumstances.