



Hope Church Network Sabbatical Policy

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Statement

Hope Church Network recognises the importance of leaders and employees' wellbeing and personal development, whether that be via life-long learning, charity work, leisure activities, travel or other interests.

Long-serving employees are therefore eligible for a career break, for example to:

- Rest and recuperate
- Fulfil caring responsibilities;
- Study;
- Pursue a particular project/carry out some research;
- Travel;
- Other reason.

The policy operates using the biblical principles found in Geneses 2: 2:

“he rested from all the work of creating that he had done”

and Matthew 11: 28:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Hope Church Network.

Purpose of policy

The aim of this Sabbatical policy is for Hope Church Network to support employees to strengthen their relationship with the Lord, seek God's direction or vision, develop new skills, or experience true rest.

Application

Length of Sabbatical Leave

Sabbatical leave is for a minimum period of one month and a maximum period of 12 months.

Where an employee wishes to take more than 12 months' leave they should provide their written resignation prior to its commencement.

Eligibility

Employees with seven or more years' continuous service are eligible to request sabbatical leave. Both full-time and part-time employees with the relevant service are eligible.

Sabbatical leave may, at the Trustee's discretion, be granted more than once during the course of an employee's employment but only in exceptional circumstances and only where a period of at least seven years has passed since the employee returned to work following their previous period of sabbatical leave.

Requests For Sabbatical Leave

All requests for sabbatical leave should be made in writing, stating the preferred start date of the sabbatical, duration of the sabbatical and proposed objectives of the sabbatical. Employees (or the employer if they have recommended it) will give sufficient notice of a sabbatical period to allow planning for that individual's absence.

Hope Church Network will consider any request for a sabbatical, and in some circumstances, recommend it, but the decision as to whether or not to grant the sabbatical will be entirely at the Trustee's discretion. There is no right of appeal against the Trustee's decision.

Terms and Conditions During Sabbaticals

During the period of the employee's sabbatical, they will be paid full salary and all other terms of the employee's contract of employment will remain in force.

If an employee has any accrued but untaken holiday, they may be asked to take it before the sabbatical begins. The employee will continue to accrue statutory annual leave and contractual annual leave during the sabbatical.

An employee who wishes to take up any other paid employment during the period of sabbatical leave, or provide any services on a self-employed basis, must obtain the agreement of the Trustees.

Contact During Sabbaticals

In advance of the employee's sabbatical leave, contact frequency will be agreed with colleagues or Trustees. It is recommended that there is contact at least 3 times in any 12 month period.

Trustees will also contact the employee to inform them of any important workplace developments. Similarly, it is up to the employee to inform the Trustees of any changes in personal circumstances of which the employer should be made aware, such as a change of address.

Return to Work

On completion of sabbatical leave, the employee will return to the same job as before or, if that is not reasonably practicable, to a job of equivalent seniority and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those that would have applied had the sabbatical not been taken.

The employee's period of service will be regarded as continuous for all statutory purposes.