



WORK LIFE BALANCE POLICY

Policy owner:	HR Manager
Last Review:	April – June 2024
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Next Review:	June 2025

Vision

Loreto College is centred in God, rooted in Christ and animated by the spirit of Mary Ward, the founder of the institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our vision is that it will be an educational community where each person has the experience of being loved and valued as a sacred individual created by a loving God; a community where students enjoy an enriching and liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be people of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity and committed to making a better world.

Introduction

The College aims to be an educational community which gives expression to the core values of Mary Ward – freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, joy, excellence and internationality. Loreto College has the highest expectations of personal, academic and professional excellence.

The Employment Act (2002) and the Flexible Working Regulations (2014) were introduced to support work life balance changes. This document sets out the College policy and guidance on its approach to balance between their work commitments and non-work commitments. In doing so, the College will be mindful, not only of its legal responsibilities but of its mission and core values. The College will endeavour to act at all times with justice, compassion and respect for the dignity and worth of the individual, whilst recognising its duty of care to all its staff and students.

This policy incorporates the Flexible Working Regulations 2014 and enables any eligible employee to request to work more flexibly. However, this policy does not provide an automatic right to work flexibly.

Policy Statement

This policy is intended to give clear guidance to all concerned on issues relating to work life balance. The procedure is published as part of the College's staffing policies and is designed to uphold and safeguard the high standard maintained by College staff.

The purpose of this policy is to promote a fair, reasonable, non-discriminatory and consistent approach to absence (excluding absence due to personal illness) throughout the College and recognises that there are occasions where discretion and flexibility need to be exercised. As part of the application of this policy, the College will collect, process and store data in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Statutory Guidance

The following guidance has been taken into consideration in drafting this policy:

- The Employment Act 2002
- Flexible Working Regulations 2014
- Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014
- Work and Families Act 2006
- Employment Relations Act 2004
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- ACAS Code of Practice
- Children Act 2004
- The Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018

Scope and Purpose

The Governing Body recognises that staff will, from time to time, require time off from employment for a variety of reasons and in this respect has established this policy to ensure that staff are aware of leave (either paid or unpaid) which will be granted in each instance. Periods of leave quoted in the scheme are pro-rata for part-time staff as appropriate.

The Governing Body believes it is important to support employees who are parents (including adoptive parents) and provides both paid and unpaid leave in this respect.

Retention and data protection

When managing an employee's leave and pay under this policy, the College processes personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the leave and pay. We will comply with the requirements of the **Data Protection Legislation** (being (i) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998, including the Data Protection Act 2018).

Records will be kept in accordance with our Workforce Privacy Notice, our Retention and Destruction Policy and in line with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation.

Flexible Working

When considering any requests from full-time employees to work on a part-time basis, or from part-time staff to change their working arrangements or from staff who work full year and wish to reduce to term time only, the request will be considered in light of the business reasons set out below:

- The key functions of the post held by the member of staff must not be undermined by any changes
- Any possible detrimental effects upon the business of the College or on other colleagues will be considered.
- Any requests will be considered on an individual basis and any decision will not set a precedent for whole College practice.
- Any agreement resulting in a change to working hours will be reviewed after 12 months

Members of staff must apply to the HR department, who will forward to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team in writing by completing a 'Request for Flexible Working' form. This can be found in **Appendix 1** or is available under the HR forms section on myLoreto.

Meeting Format

On receipt of an application, the College might be able to agree to the proposal without the need for a meeting (which is the next stage of the formal procedure). If a meeting is required, the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team will arrange to meet with the member of staff and representative if required (the representative may be a work place colleague or a recognised Trade Union representative).

During the meeting, the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team will review the request submitted by the employee and discuss the circumstances around the request. They will also allow the employee the opportunity to offer further input on their proposal to limit any detrimental effect on the business of the College and other colleagues based on their requested new working hours.

Following this meeting the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team will respond in writing to confirm the decision, and if the application is accepted, they will explain the changes that will be made to their contract of employment. If an application is refused, the reason for this will be explained to the member of staff within the outcome letter along with details of the appeal process.

The permitted eight business reasons for refusal are as follows:

- Burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet demands on teaching and learning or services to students or staff
- Inability to re-organise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes

If a request is agreed, the member of staff will not have an automatic right to revert to their original hours. The request will be then reviewed after 12 months.

Guidance and advice on the application of this policy and procedure should be sought from the HR Manager.

Appeals Procedure

The member of staff has the right to appeal against the decision to refuse their request for flexible working. The appeal must be made in writing to the Principal, within five calendar days of receipt of the outcome letter, and must state the grounds upon which the appeal is being made. Where the initial decision was made by the Principal, the appeal will be heard by a panel of Governors.

The appeal meeting should be convened within a reasonable timeframe. The member of staff may be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official.

The procedure to be followed at the appeal meeting will be that outlined in the Meeting Format section. The appeal meeting cannot be a re-run of the original meeting but may address points which the member of staff considers were not properly considered at the original meeting and should focus on the grounds of appeal.

The outcome of the appeal will be notified to the member of staff within seven calendar days of the meeting taking place. If the appeal is unsuccessful a sufficient explanation will be provided to the member of staff within the outcome

letter. Requests will be dealt with within a period of two months from the first receipt to notification of the decision on appeal. The decision on appeal is final.

Compassionate Leave and Time Off for Dependents

The College expects staff to make their own arrangements to meet domestic problems. However, it recognises that there will be occasions where unforeseen circumstances result in a member of staff being unable to attend work due to domestic reasons.

Such leave is authorised by the Principal who will have the discretion to determine the amount of leave to be granted within the framework of the policy, bearing in mind the circumstances and the needs of the department and College.

It should be understood that leave of this kind is not intended to meet long term domestic or family needs. These provisions are available to all staff, there is no qualifying period of service necessary.

Bereavement Leave

Time off with pay will be granted at times of the bereavement of a member of staff's immediate family:

- Father or Mother
- Brother or Sister
- Spouse
- Child aged 18 plus
- Parents in law
- Grandparents

The amount of time permitted for this leave will be given at the Principal's discretion, depending on the circumstances. This should not exceed five days.

Parents who lose a child below the age of 18 will be granted 2 weeks paid leave as a minimum as per The Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018, however additional time may be permitted at the Principal's discretion.

Time off of one day with pay will be granted to allow members of staff to attend the funeral of extended family or close friends or colleagues.

Dependent Care Leave

Where a dependent has to attend hospital unexpectedly, or requires total care at home, a reasonable amount of time off with pay will be given to enable alternative arrangements to be made and immediate domestic affairs to be managed. A dependent for the purposes of this policy is:

- an employee's spouse, civil partner, parent or child;
- a person who lives in the same household as the employee, but who is not their tenant, lodger, boarder or employee; or
- anyone else who reasonably relies on the employee to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action of the kind referred to below

The maximum period for which paid leave will be granted per academic year is six days, additional reasonable unpaid leave may be granted as necessary. However, this is not an additional entitlement to leave and all requests should meet the criteria.

Where an employee knows well in advance that a problem might arise or they wish to take time off to care for a dependent themselves, rather than make alternative arrangements, this policy will not apply. Other arrangements should be made.

Members of staff must advise their line manager and the HR Manager of their need to take the leave at the earliest opportunity, giving notice wherever possible. Members of staff must complete a Leave of Absence form on all occasions when leave of absence is requested in advance.

Where a member of staff is unexpectedly unable to attend work, they must follow the absence reporting procedure outlined in the staff handbook and on myLoreto.

If a member of staff is called away during the working day, they must advise their line manager and the HR Manager that they are leaving the premises and sign out at Reception.

Members of staff must complete a leave of absence form via Cintra Self-Service. This will be sent to their line manager for authorisation before being sent to the Principal for final authorisation.

Where compassionate leave is requested or taken, the College may seek reasonable evidence before leave is granted.

Guidance and advice on the application of this policy and procedure should be sought from the HR Manager.

Leave of Absence

As part of its commitment to good employment practice, the College is keen to support staff in balancing the demands of work and home life where possible. It recognises that there will be occasions which cannot be predicted, leaving members of staff with difficulty in achieving a home and work life balance. The following leave arrangements will be considered in those circumstances.

Such leave is authorised by the Principal who will have the discretion to determine the amount of leave to be granted within the framework of the policy, bearing in mind the circumstances and the needs of the department and College.

It should be understood that leave of this kind is not intended to meet long term domestic or family needs. Leave of absence is available to all staff regardless of length of service.

Section 1.

Reason for Leave	Maximum period during which leave may be granted	Paid or Unpaid
Interview for another post	As may be necessary. However, the Principal reserves the right to refuse time off where significant requests have already been made that impact on teaching and learning.	Paid
Sitting for an approved examination, for the benefit of the College and individual	No more than five days	Paid - where the College has approved the training
Witness at a Court or Jury Service	As may be necessary. Staff are required to provide a copy of the court summons to the HR	Paid The College will continue to pay staff in the usual way throughout their period of jury service.

	Manager to support their request for time off work If on any day on which a member of staff attends court they are told that their services are not required, they must return to work and inform the HR Manager.	Staff should therefore not claim a loss of earnings allowance from the court.
Attendance at meetings of Examiners	As may be necessary	Paid Where staff are able to claim expenses, these should be reimbursed to the College
Parliamentary Agent or Candidate	No more than fifteen days	Unpaid
Home Removal	One day	Paid
Membership of the reserved armed forces and Voluntary Public Service	No more than five days' subject to the needs of the department. If further time off for this purpose is requested, this should, wherever possible, be granted as part of the employee's annual leave	Paid If in the course of such duties a member of staff receives payment other than for travel and subsistence, they must declare the payment to the HR Manager and agree its deduction from their salary
Attendance at personal doctor/hospital appointments for dental or medical examinations, screening or treatment which are unavoidable, or in an emergency	As may be necessary. Appointments should, as far as possible be made outside of working hours or with the minimum disruption to the working day. Evidence of medical appointments should be attached to the leave of absence request form	Paid
Accredited representatives (including safety representatives) of a trade union recognised by the College to undertake trade union duties, attend meetings and undertake reasonable training in respect of their trade union duties (excluding activities which themselves consist of industrial action whether or not in contemplation or furtherance of a trade union dispute).	Union Representatives: 5 working days Health and Safety Representatives: As may be necessary	Paid Further unpaid period as necessary

Section 2.

The total permitted amount of leave that may be granted in total to any member of staff under this section shall be limited to twelve working days or twenty-four half days in any academic year. This amount is pro-rata for part time staff.

Reason for Leave	Maximum period during which leave may be granted	Paid or Unpaid
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Wedding ¹ of the member of staff's immediate family	One day	Paid
Wedding of other than the member of staff's immediate family	One day	Unpaid
Urgent private or family business	As may be necessary	Unpaid
Attendance at a child's school play, assembly or sports day	As may be necessary	Unpaid
Religious Holidays or attendance at a religious ceremony or observance	No more than three days annually. If further time off is requested this will, wherever possible be granted as part of the employee's annual leave. Staff may request to alter their working time to accommodate periods of fasting.	Paid
Transport Failure	As may be unavoidably necessary. The College may seek reasonable evidence of this before approving the leave.	Paid
University graduation ceremony – self or member of immediate family receiving degree	One day	Paid
Delegate of a Teachers' Association at conferences or meetings of Executive or other Committee or Association at National Level	No more than one day in any one month or in exceptional cases as approved	Paid
To contest a local Government election	One day	Paid
To lecture on approved courses	As may be appropriate	Paid If in the course of such duties a member of staff receives payment other than for travel and subsistence, they must declare the payment to the HR Manager and agree its deduction from their salary

Section 3.

Reason for Leave	Maximum period during which leave may be granted	Paid or Unpaid
Study leave – approved examinations for the benefit of the College and the individual	No more than five days per year	Paid
Obligatory Open University Courses (Summer School)	As may be approved	Paid

All requests for leave of absence must be submitted via the Leave of Absence form on the Cintra Self Service Portal. This will be sent to their line manager for authorisation before being sent to the Principal for final authorisation. An email will be sent to the member of staff advising them that the leave of absence has been authorised. Staff must ensure that their leave has been granted before it is taken.

¹ Employees should make their own wedding/civil partnership arrangements outside normal working days.

Section 4.

The total permitted amount of leave that may be granted in total to any member of staff under this section shall be limited to eighteen working days or thirty-six half days in any academic year. This amount is pro-rata for part time staff.

Reason for Leave	Maximum period during which leave may be granted	Paid or Unpaid
Magisterial duties	As may be approved providing such duties and activities are not a detriment to the business of the College.	Paid
Attendance as a member at meetings of public bodies	As may be approved providing such duties and activities are not a detriment to the business of the College.	Paid

Holidays

Staff paid annual leave entitlement is as set out in their contract of employment. All requests for annual leave must be made via the Cintra Self Service system.

Holiday year

The College's holiday year for support staff runs from 1st September to 31st August. Staff must use all of their holiday entitlement by the last day of each holiday year. Remaining allowance of five days is permitted to be carried over to the next holiday year, this must be approved by the member of staff's line manager and the annual leave must be taken by the end of the Autumn Term. Remaining holiday allowance over five days will usually be lost, payment in lieu will not be made for holiday entitlement that is lost.

The first year of employment

Within their first year of employment, the member of staff's holiday entitlement will be equivalent to the proportion of the holiday year in which they have been employed. This will be calculated to the nearest half day. During the member of staff's first holiday year they will not normally be entitled to take more annual leave than they have accrued at the time the holiday is taken. Holiday that has been booked and paid for prior to the member of staff being offered a position at the College will be honoured. The College may ask for evidence of the booking and payment dates.

Illness during or before annual leave

If a member of support staff on a full year contract is incapacitated for work due to sickness or injury during any period of annual leave, whether in whole or part, the College will reimburse the period of annual leave lost due to incapacity.

The member of support staff must contact the College in line with the absence reporting procedure to report their sickness on the first day that they fall ill. The member of staff must provide the appropriate medical certification covering any period of incapacity and attend a return to work interview with the HR Manager after their absence.

Public Holidays

The College will normally be closed on the following Public Holidays:

New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Bank Holidays, August Bank Holiday, Christmas Day, Boxing Day.

Staff are entitled to one day's leave for each English public holiday, paid pro-rata, on top of their leave entitlement. They should use their public holiday entitlement on public holidays that fall on one of their normal working days. If fewer public holidays fall on one of their normal working days than they are entitled to, they may add the balance to their statutory leave entitlement.

Christmas Closure

Full time support staff are entitled to two local statutory days' leave. These statutory days will normally be identified by the College as falling between Christmas and New Year to coincide with the College's Christmas closure period.

Termination of Employment

Employees leaving the service of the College are entitled to receive pay in lieu of any untaken leave. If on the date of termination of employment, the member of staff has taken more annual leave than they have accrued that holiday year, they will be required to reimburse the College in respect of such unearned annual leave. The College shall be entitled to deduct the value of the unearned annual leave from any final payment of salary made to the member of staff.

Additional Hours: Support Staff

Support Staff are expected to work their usual contracted hours, and there is no obligation for them to complete hours above their contracted time. As part of its commitment to good employment practice, the College is keen to ensure that staff do not exceed their normal weekly working hours. However, in order that the College's business is not disrupted there may be times where this is unavoidable.

Where staff are requested to work additional hours, they will be compensated either through overtime pay, at the appropriate rate, or time off in lieu as deemed appropriate by the Principal.

All staff at point 33 or above will normally be compensated through time off in lieu only.

Additional hours worked Monday to Friday will only be paid once 37 hours per week have been exceeded.

Overtime and Time off in Lieu

Overtime Payments

Weekday overtime hours will be paid at the employee's normal rate of pay or 'time'. Saturdays or weekday hours worked past 7pm will be paid at the rate of time and a half. Sunday, or general or public holidays will be paid at double time. Extra time of less than half an hour on any day will not qualify.

Time off in Lieu

Time off in lieu may be granted instead of overtime payments. Time off in lieu must be agreed in advance and is a joint agreement between the College and the employee. Time off in lieu must be taken within 3 months from when it has been accrued, and any that is not used by the correct date will be lost and payment in lieu will not be made for time off in lieu that is lost.

Work undertaken in exchange for time off in lieu must be agreed in advance by the line manager and authorised by the Principal before it is worked. Staff should endeavour to give as much notice as possible of the dates that they propose to claim their time off in lieu. A decision on whether to allow the time off in lieu to be taken on the proposed dates will be based on the requirements of the College business and to ensure adequate staffing levels being maintained at all times.

Time off in lieu cannot be claimed for work undertaken of less than 30 minutes continuous duration.

All overtime pay requests must be submitted using the Extra Hours form available under HR Forms on MyLoreto. This must be signed off by the individual's line manager and handed to the HR team for final sign off by the Principal.

Any requests for time off in lieu must be submitted via the Cintra Self Service portal. This will be sent to their line manager for authorisation before being sent to the Principal for final authorisation.

Sabbaticals and Career Breaks

The College recognises that there are circumstances in which it is of benefit to staff, and the College, to allow an unpaid period of time away from work.

The purpose of this is to support in the development, recruitment, retention and return of key staff whose contribution is vital to the future needs and success of the College, and where such leave provides advantage to both the College and the employee. The College may agree to staff taking time away from their employment for a defined period of time without a break in service to fulfil personal commitments whilst maintaining and developing their career in the intervening period. Alternatives such as part time working or a temporary reduction in hours may also be considered depending on the needs of the individual and the College. The period of the break will be subject to agreement between the College and the individual.

Examples of the reasons for an application for this type of leave include:

- To undertake a period of formal training or broader development
- To care for dependant relatives. Please note that these provisions are in addition to the separate provisions for maternity and parental leave.
- To undertake voluntary work or a period of long-term travel

Eligibility

Employees must have three years or more continuous service and the period of the Sabbatical / Career Break cannot exceed the duration of any existing contract of employment.

Conditions of Service

During the Sabbatical / Career Break the employee agrees to undertake the following:

- To keep up to date with their career and the College's activities
- Attend regular training commitments including refresher courses as deemed appropriate by the College
- Let management know of any changes to their circumstances, including holiday commitments
- Agree to return to a substantive post at the end of the Sabbatical/Career Break scheme for a period of not less than six months
- Employees must not undertake any substantial paid employment with another employer during the period of the Sabbatical/Career Break without prior approval of the College
- If an employee does not intend to return to work following the Sabbatical/Career Break, they must advise the College of this in writing at least three months prior to the end date of the Sabbatical/Career Break

Employer Conditions

During the Sabbatical/Career Break the College will undertake the following:

- Keep the employee updated on any changes within the Department/College
- Confirm annually the continuation of the Sabbatical/Career Break arrangements

General Conditions

Any vacancy created as a result of a Sabbatical/Career Break will normally be filled on a fixed term basis, renewable annually if appropriate.

During the period of the Sabbatical/Career Break no salary will be paid.

During the period of the Sabbatical/Career Break pension contributions will not be payable.

There will be no entitlement to annual leave during the period of the Sabbatical/Career Break. Any annual leave owing must be taken before the commencement of the Sabbatical/Career Break. There will be no payment in lieu for any leave outstanding.

There will be no entitlement to sick pay whilst on Sabbatical/Career Break.

When on Sabbatical/Career Break, the normal accrued Maternity Leave entitlements will apply. Where appropriate, the Sabbatical/Career Break will be superseded by maternity leave, but the Maternity Leave will not extend the period of the Sabbatical/Career Break, nor will there be entitlement to Occupational Maternity Pay in these circumstances. Entitlement to SMP will be dependent on the average weekly earnings received during the eight weeks ending with the Qualifying Week.

A period of time on Sabbatical/Career Break shall not be regarded as a break in service.

Normal incremental progression will be suspended during a Sabbatical/Career Break, but will recommence upon return to work.

The duration of the Sabbatical/Career Break will be clearly specified and agreed before commencement of the break, and an employee will not be entitled to return to work before the expected end date of the Sabbatical/Career Break, unless agreed by management.

Returning to Work

The employee will confirm their intention to return to work, in writing, three months in advance of the actual date. Flexible arrangements may be introduced in order to ease the transition back to work.

It is expected that the employee will return to their substantive post, or to a similar post either within the original Department or another Department of the College. If this is not possible, other appropriate duties within the College will be assigned on a temporary basis until a suitable vacancy occurs. Such temporary duties will be assigned for a maximum of six months, and during this time the employee will be paid at the same salary point as was received on taking the Sabbatical/Career Break, irrespective of whether the duties are of the same level as the post originally held.

In some circumstances it will not be possible for the employee to return to the same role because either:

- their position has become redundant
- their duties have changed as a result of a re-structure

Where this happens, the employee will be included in any consultation, ideally at the time the request is granted or as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The employee may request to return to work on a part-time basis. The granting of such a request cannot be guaranteed, and will depend on the circumstances of the break and College needs, but will not be unreasonably refused.

Application Process

Applications under the scheme will be considered by the Principal. Acceptance of a Sabbatical/Career Break is solely at the discretion of the College, and the College reserves the right to refuse a Sabbatical/Career Break application. In

certain circumstances, the Sabbatical/Career Break Scheme may not be the most appropriate arrangement for individual employees in terms of maintaining their careers. In such circumstances, alternative arrangements more appropriate to the individual case may be agreed between the individual and the College. Application to the scheme should normally take place at least three months prior to the commencement of the Sabbatical/Career Break, however the earlier the notice given the better. The employee must fulfil the eligibility criteria for the scheme, and agree to all terms and conditions governing the scheme. The duration and commencement date of the break must be agreed between the College and the employee.

The Sabbatical/Career Break proposal form must be completed and forwarded to the Principal. This can be found in **Appendix 2** or is available under HR forms on MyLoreto. Employees must be able to provide appropriate documentation to accompany their Sabbatical/Career Break proposal. This documentation may be in the form of:

- Details of the training/education course or development opportunity
- Appropriate evidence supporting requests submitted on personal grounds
- A statement of the benefit the College is likely to achieve as a direct result of approval of the application

Employees wishing to apply under this scheme are advised to seek the advice of the Human Resources Manager at an early stage. The College's decision on the application is final.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Family Leave Policy
- Attendance Management Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy for Staff
- Data Protection Policy GDPR

Appendix A

Request for Flexible Working



Please complete all sections of this form and submit to the Human Resources Manager.

Name	
Department	
Job Title	

Start date with the College	
Date form submitted	

Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/time worked)	
Describe the working pattern you would like to work in the future (days/hours/time)	
Date from which you would like the working pattern to commence	
Impact of the new working pattern	I think this change in my working pattern will affect my department, students and colleagues as follows:
Accommodating the new working pattern	I think the effect on my department, students and colleagues can be handled as follows:

Signature of Employee	
Date	

Appendix B Sabbatical / Career Break Proposal



Please complete all sections of this form and submit to the Human Resources Manager at least three months prior to the commencement of the proposed break.

Section A

To be completed by the employee

Name	
Department	
Job Title	

Please provide your reasons for requesting a Sabbatical / Career Break below:

Please provide detail of the likely benefit to the College:

Please attach any supporting documentation as appropriate

Proposed start and end date:

From:

To:

Total number of weeks / months requested:

I have read and understand the terms and conditions of the Sabbatical/Career Break Scheme. After the period of Sabbatical/Career Break.

Signature of employee:

Date: