

Supporting continuous improvement in
schools and trusts



HR Policies & Procedures Update

Straightforward, current and fit for purpose
employment policies

Be confident that you're acting fairly and in accordance with the law



To ensure managers and senior leaders are confident that they're acting fairly and in accordance with the law, it's important for your School to have up to date employment policies which are fit for purpose and easy to follow.

Time saving

To avoid your team completing this time-consuming task, and to ensure the review and adoption process is as simple as possible for your senior leaders and governors, we've done the hard work for you. We have reviewed and updated our model policies and procedures, so you can be assured that they're compliant with the latest statutory requirements and best practice.

Easy updates

Although there's no legal requirement for schools to review the content of the policies contained in their handbook, it's advisable to set a policy review date to ensure it continues to meet the needs of your School. There are of course exceptions, when changes to employment or education law occur. In these instances, we'll revise and re-date our model policies and inform you of this via email. So you can be sure you're receiving the information you need, please save oliviaclarke@epm.co.uk to your safe sender's list.

Sound advice

If you're considering fundamental changes to your current policies, you may need to consider consultation arrangements with recognised trade unions. Your EPM People Adviser and Lead People Partner can support and advise you in respect of any employment policy questions or concerns that you may have.

How We Can Help



EPM support, guidance and training on employment policies

Whether you're a MAT with a variety of inherited policies, an academy that's transferred policies on conversion, a maintained school who has traditionally adopted the policies of the LA, or a school that has developed policies of its own, we can support you. We'll support you in reviewing your employment policies and, where required, guide you in engaging in consultation with employees and professional associations.

What is changing?

For several years, we've issued one major, "all-in-one" annual update of policies and procedures. While this ensured you always had the latest wording, **we listened to your feedback**: having to review, consult and ratify an entire suite of documents in a single window can overload governing bodies just when the school year is getting underway.

- Starting Autumn Term 2025, we'll switch to a termly update cycle.
- Autumn, Spring and Summer releases will each contain only the policies where statutory or best-practice guidance has changed since the previous term.
- You'll receive a concise change log and an at-a-glance ratification checklist, allowing boards to approve the relevant items in their ordinary termly meetings.
- A rolling three-term schedule will let you see well in advance which policies we expect to review next, helping you plan agendas and stakeholder consultations.

Why now?

Lighter, better-timed workload

Governing boards and trust committees can spread ratification evenly through the year, rather than squeezing it into a single deadline.

Responsive to forthcoming legislation

The Government's Employment Rights Act (currently making its way through Parliament) will trigger staged amendments to several staff-related policies from late 2025 through 2027. A termly cycle means we can deliver those changes as soon as the regulations are confirmed, keeping you compliant without waiting months for the next "big release".

Improved clarity

Smaller, more focused update packs make it easier for leaders and staff to digest what has changed and why.

What You Need To Do



Diary dates

Build a standing “policy review” item into each term’s board agenda from Autumn 2025 onward.

Distribution lists

Check that your policy contacts are up to date so the right people receive the packs.

Training & support

We'll include key changes to policies in our termly People Updates and answer questions live.

Transitional arrangements

Our final annual bulk update will land as usual in July 2025. From that point, the new termly rhythm takes over. Any urgent statutory changes that arise before the Autumn Term 2025 will still be issued via our current alert system.

This move to termly releases will make compliance more manageable, give governing bodies the time they need for proper scrutiny, and ensure every school and trust adopts employment-law amendments promptly and with confidence.

Employment Policies Guide

This guide lists the policy documents you must have in place to meet your statutory obligations. To help facilitate the effective management of employees, we've also included other non-statutory policies which are essential for HR best practice.

This guide appears in alphabetical order and mirrors the sections on our website, www.epm.co.uk, where you can access all our model policies and procedures, along with other useful guidance and advice. This provides you with an easy-access, one-stop reference facility for each HR policy area.



Example

Schedule of policies	Summary	Next date for review
All our model policies and procedures stated below are up to date and can be accessed by logging into www.epm.co.uk. Guidance documents, model letters, templates, forms, and links to other relevant information are also available.	This column: • states whether the policy is statutory or non-statutory • briefly summarises the changes made by EPM at the last revision	This column states when the policy will next be reviewed

Data and Digital Technology

Data and Digital Technology

EPM Model Data Protection Policy	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, it is important to have a policy to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). • Last amended: June 2024 • Last reviewed: July 2025	Spring Term 2026
EPM Model Data Retention Policy	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, it is important to have a policy to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). • Last amended: June 2024 • Last reviewed: July 2025	Spring Term 2026
Model Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) Procedure	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, it is beneficial to have a policy to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). • Last amended: June 2023 • Last reviewed: July 2025	Spring Term 2026
Model Acceptable Use of AI Policy	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, publishing an Acceptable Use of AI policy shows regulators, parents and staff that the school is proactively managing data protection, safeguarding and bias risks, creating an audit trail that will stand up to future legal or ICO scrutiny. It also sets clear parameters that allow employees to explore AI's benefits confidently and ethically, rather than relying on ad-hoc or hidden use. • New policy for July 2025	Spring Term 2026

Employee Management

Absence

EPM Model Policy for the Management of Sickness Absence	This is not a statutory or legal requirement but is strongly recommended. A management of sickness absence policy gives your School or Trust a clear, fair framework for reporting, recording and managing staff illness, helping leaders meet duty-of-care and payroll obligations while keeping pupils safe and classes covered. It also supplies data to spot health trends early, supports timely interventions and shields you from grievances or discrimination claims caused by inconsistent decisions. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Significant additions are detailed in the version history • Last reviewed: July 2025	Summer Term 2026
EPM Model Policy for Leave of Absence	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. A leave of absence policy gives your School or Trust a clear, consistent process for approving time-off requests, balancing staff wellbeing with operational needs and shielding you from accusations of unequal treatment. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Minor tweak to clarify working days • Last reviewed: July 2025	Summer Term 2026
EPM Model Sabbatical Policy	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, a sabbatical policy offers a structured way for your School or Trust to grant extended paid or unpaid leave that refreshes staff and fosters professional growth, while enabling you to plan cover and retain talent long-term. • Last amended: June 2024 • Last reviewed: July 2025	Summer Term 2026

Discipline

EPM Model Code of Conduct for all Adults	This is a statutory requirement. • Last reviewed: June 2025 ◦ Minor amendments throughout - a tracked changes version as well as a "clean" version has been provided to support you in identifying these efficiently	Spring Term 2026
EPM Model Disciplinary Rules for all Employees	This is not a statutory requirement. However, having a clear set of disciplinary rules will give you a transparent, ACAS-compliant framework that promotes consistent and fair treatment of staff and safeguards decisions against grievances or tribunal claims. • Last reviewed: June 2025. ◦ Clarifications in "Purpose" section added	Spring Term 2026
EPM Model Disciplinary Procedures Relating to Misconduct for all Employees	This is a statutory requirement. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Amendments to Introduction, addition of information relating to disciplinary investigation and to suspension, recommendations alongside formal action, clarification of appeal process	Spring Term 2026

Flexible Working

EPM Model Flexible Working Policy and Procedure	This is not a statutory requirement but is strongly recommended. • Last reviewed: July 2025 ◦ Equality and diversity section added. Minimum % for leadership in Appendix A removed. Wording at Appendix B amended	Spring Term 2026
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Family Friendly

Maternity schemes are nationally agreed upon, with some local agreements in place. It is not normally necessary to adopt additional maternity policies.

There are statutory regulations covering parental, paternity and emergency dependents leave.

EPM Model Shared Parental Leave Policy (Births)	• Last amended: May 2024 • Last reviewed: July 2025	Spring Term 2026
EPM Model Shared Parental Leave Policy (Adoption)	• Last amended: May 2024 • Last reviewed: July 2025	Spring Term 2026
EPM Model Adoption Policy	• Last amended: May 2024 • Last reviewed: July 2025	Spring Term 2026
EPM Model Neonatal Leave Care and Pay Policy and Procedure	• New policy effective April 2025	Spring Term 2026

Grievance

EPM Model Grievance Procedure including Collective Grievance	This is a statutory requirement. New policy to replace old. • Released July 2025	Autumn Term 2026
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Pay, Reward and Benefits

EPM Model Pay Policy	This is a statutory requirement in maintained schools. The Academy Trust Handbook refers to a "Pay and Conditions Policy". This policy is updated annually to reflect changes to the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document. • Last amended: July 2025	Summer Term 2026 (subject to STPCD)
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Performance and Appraisal

EPM Model Appraisal and Capability Policy	This is a statutory requirement for teachers in maintained schools. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Part A: minor tweaks throughout, change drop-ins to learning walks, clarifications around feedback. Part B: confirmation of implications for formal capability for teachers. Addition of Appendices	Summer Term 2026
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Probation

EPM Model Probation Procedure	This is not a statutory requirement but is strongly recommended. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Addition of sections clarifying reasonable adjustments, serious concerns and missed or deferred meetings	Spring Term 2026
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Recruitment

EPM Model Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure	This is not a statutory or legal requirement but it is extremely important to have this policy and to follow it consistently in regard to KCSIE. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Reflect changes to KCSIE	Summer Term 2026
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Redundancy, Restructure and Organisational Change

EPM Model Redundancy Handling Policy and Procedure	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, this policy acts to ensure legal compliance in managing the process. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Additional process clarification added along with statutory minimums for reference	Autumn Term 2026
EPM Model Organisational Change Policy	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, it contains best practice guidance and acts to ensure legal compliance. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Clarification on consultation requirements added	Autumn Term 2026

Resilience and Wellbeing

EPM Model Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, a clear anti-bullying and harassment policy will support your School or Trust in actively fulfilling your duty of care under health & safety and equality law, protecting you from grievances and reputational damage. It also sets transparent standards and reporting routes that foster a respectful culture, enabling issues to be resolved before they escalate. • Last amended: December 2024 • Last reviewed: June 2025	Autumn Term 2026
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EPM Model Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy for Staff	This is not a statutory or legal requirement. However, a DEI policy shows your School or Trust's proactive commitment to fair treatment and inclusive recruitment, evidencing compliance with the Equality Act while reducing discrimination and reputational risk. It also sets clear goals and accountability that lift morale, widen talent pools and signal that everyone is valued. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Expanded scope and purpose, clarification on reporting to external agencies	Autumn Term 2026
EPM Model Public Sector Equality Scheme over 150	This is a statutory requirement. The statutory requirement to periodically publish an equality scheme applies to all schools and academies. • Last amended: April 2024 • Last reviewed: June 2025	Autumn Term 2026
EPM Model Public Sector Equality Scheme under 150	This is a statutory requirement. The statutory requirement to periodically publish an equality scheme applies to all, but there are exemptions for settings that employ less than 150 employees. • Last amended: April 2024 • Last reviewed: June 2025	Autumn Term 2026
EPM Model Menopause Policy	This is not a statutory requirement. • Last reviewed: July 2025 ◦ Added 1.2.4, 2.2, 4.6, 5.5 – 5.7, section 8 (optional) and 9	Autumn Term 2026
EPM Model Stress Management Policy	This is not a statutory policy but adoption will support you in meeting your statutory obligations. • Last amended: July 2024 • Last reviewed: July 2025	Autumn Term 2026

Whistleblowing

EPM Model Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure	This is a statutory requirement. • Last amended: July 2025 ◦ Additional sections added at 7.4 and 8.1	Autumn Term 2026
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Working With Trade Unions

EPM Model Statement of Policy on Trade Union Membership and on Trade Union Recognition	Not yet a statutory requirement but strongly advised as good practice and recommended by ACAS. • Last reviewed: July 2025	Autumn Term 2026
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Support for the everyday - as well as the critical moments



Contact your EPM People Adviser and Lead People Partner for support and advice with any employment policy questions or concerns that you may have