General Leave Policy

PRN-70: General Leave Policy
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Introduction

CAREHOPES (TC) recognises that rest, personal time, family responsibilities, and life events are essential to staff wellbeing and organisational productivity. This General Leave Policy outlines the rights, responsibilities, and procedures for permanent, fixed-term, and contract staff when requesting or taking leave.

The policy ensures:

- fairness
- transparency
- compliance with UK employment law
- safeguarding continuity
- operational stability
- staff wellbeing

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define leave entitlements
- outline leave request procedures
- ensure compliance with UK statutory requirements
- support staff wellbeing
- maintain service continuity
- prevent misuse of leave
- clarify expectations for all staff categories

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- permanent staff
- fixed-term staff
- contract staff
- companions
- volunteers (where applicable)

4. Types of Leave Covered

This policy covers:

- annual leave
- statutory leave
- compassionate leave
- emergency leave
- unpaid leave
- maternity, paternity, and adoption leave
- parental leave
- bereavement leave
- public duties leave
- religious observance leave
- study leave (where applicable)

Each category follows UK statutory rules and TC's organisational standards.

5. Annual Leave Entitlement (UPDATED)

5.1. Financial Year Definition

TC's financial year runs:

- **Week 1:** 1 April (current year)
- **Week 52:** 31 March (following year)

All leave calculations follow this structure.

5.2. Permanent Staff

Permanent staff are entitled to:

- **28 days of paid annual leave per financial year**, inclusive of UK bank holidays
- pro-rated leave for part-time staff

5.3. Fixed-Term Staff

Fixed-term staff receive:

- pro-rated annual leave based on contract duration
- leave calculated according to UK statutory formula

5.4. Contract Staff

Contract staff receive:

- leave entitlement as specified in their contract
- statutory minimum leave where applicable

5.5. Accrual

Annual leave accrues monthly and may be used once accrued.

6. Annual Leave Expiry & Carry-Over Rules (UPDATED)

6.1. No Carry-Over Allowed

TC operates a strict annual leave cycle:

- **Annual leave cannot be carried over to the next financial year.**
- **All unspent leave expires on 31 March (Week 52).**
- Leave does not roll over under any circumstance unless required by UK statutory law (e.g., maternity-related carry-over).

6.2. Staff Employed in Week 52

If a staff member is employed in **Week 52**:

- they receive **pro-rated 1-week annual leave**, if eligible
- leave entitlement resets on **1 April (Week 1)**
- no additional leave is carried into the new financial year

6.3. Reason for Strict Expiry

This rule ensures:

- fairness

- operational stability
- accurate leave planning
- compliance with TC's financial structure
- prevention of leave accumulation
- safeguarding continuity

7. Leave Request Procedure

7.1. Notice Period

Staff must provide:

- **at least 2 weeks' notice** for planned leave
- **longer notice** for extended leave (over 7 days)
- **reasonable notice** for emergency leave

7.2. Approval

Leave must be approved by:

- the staff member's supervisor
- or a designated manager

Approval depends on:

- operational needs
- client safety
- staffing levels
- fairness and rotation

7.3. Documentation

Staff must:

- submit leave requests through official TC channels
- provide supporting documents where required (e.g., bereavement, medical, legal)

8. Emergency Leave

Emergency leave may be granted for:

- sudden illness

- family emergencies
- unexpected childcare issues
- urgent personal matters

Staff must notify their supervisor immediately.

9. Compassionate & Bereavement Leave

Staff may receive:

- **up to 5 days paid compassionate leave** for immediate family
- additional unpaid leave (subject to approval)

10. Maternity, Paternity & Adoption Leave

TC follows UK statutory rules:

- **Maternity:** up to 52 weeks
- **Paternity:** 1–2 weeks
- **Adoption:** up to 52 weeks
- **Shared Parental Leave:** available where eligible

11. Parental Leave

Eligible staff may take:

- **up to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave per child**
- taken in blocks of one week or more

12. Religious Observance Leave

Staff may request:

- paid leave (where contract allows)
- unpaid leave
- flexible scheduling

13. Public Duties Leave

Staff engaged in public duties may receive:

- reasonable unpaid leave
- paid leave where contract allows

14. Unpaid Leave

Unpaid leave may be granted for:

- extended travel
- personal development
- family responsibilities
- non-medical personal matters

15. Leave Restrictions

Leave may be restricted during:

- peak operational periods
- critical client needs
- safeguarding emergencies
- organisational restructuring

16. Working While on Leave (UPDATED)

16.1. Working While on Annual Leave

Staff **will not be penalised** for working during annual leave. However, TC strongly reminds staff that:

- annual leave is for **rest, relaxation, and recuperation**
- staff should avoid overworking
- wellbeing must remain the priority

16.2. Working While on Sick Leave (STRICT PROHIBITION)

Staff must not:

- engage in paid work
- engage in unpaid work
- volunteer for other organisations
- perform activities inconsistent with being medically unfit

This is:

- **Gross Misconduct**
- a **criminal offence** under UK statutory sick pay rules
- grounds for **summary dismissal**

16.3. Working While on Maternity or Paternity Leave (STRICT PROHIBITION)

Staff must not:

- engage in paid work
- engage in unpaid work
- volunteer elsewhere

This is:

- a breach of statutory leave rules
- **Gross Misconduct**
- grounds for **immediate dismissal**

16.4. Working While on Compassionate or Emergency Paid Leave (STRICT PROHIBITION)

Staff must not:

- engage in paid work
- engage in unpaid work
- volunteer elsewhere

This is:

- a breach of trust
- **Gross Misconduct**
- grounds for **immediate dismissal**

16.5. Consequences

TC may:

- suspend staff immediately
- conduct disciplinary investigation
- dismiss staff summarily
- notify statutory authorities (e.g., HMRC)

17. Misuse of Leave

Misuse includes:

- falsifying reasons

- failing to return on time
- taking leave without approval
- repeated last-minute requests
- working during prohibited leave

Penalties may include:

- written warnings
- suspension
- loss of leave entitlement
- termination

18. Leave During Investigation or Disciplinary Action

Staff under investigation:

- may request leave
- but leave may be restricted
- must remain available for meetings

If staff resign during investigation:

- investigation continues
- reference will state resignation during investigation
- safeguarding concerns will be disclosed where legally required

19. Leave Payment Upon Termination

Staff leaving TC will receive:

- payment for accrued but unused leave
- no payment for leave taken in excess of entitlement

20. Record-Keeping

TC will:

- maintain accurate leave records
- store records securely
- comply with UK GDPR
- restrict access to authorised personnel

21. Amendments to This Policy

TC may update this policy to reflect:

- legal changes
- operational improvements
- safeguarding updates