



Statutory rights: support staff

The employment of most support staff in the maintained sector is governed by the National Joint Council National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service Handbook (the Green Book). In addition each support staff member should have a contract of employment with his or her school or local authority (LA). This contract will reflect the contents of the Green Book, as well as containing provisions specific to the individual staff member and the school. However, you also have certain minimum statutory rights, which are relevant to you as outlined below. Though much of this information will also apply if you work in an academy, you should check with your ATL rep, especially if you have signed a new contract of employment since your school became an academy.

Your right to a statement of particulars of employment

- Your employer has a legal duty to give you a written statement of the particulars of your employment within two months of you starting your job. The statement should contain, for example, your hours of work, holiday entitlement, place of work, etc.
- Your employer should also state the title of your job and a brief description of the work for which you are employed.
- Your 'contract of employment' is comprised of the written statement of the particulars of employment together with (depending on individual circumstances) the letter of appointment, and other particulars of your employment that are provided to you in instalments or contained in separate collective agreements. All of these might be contained or referred to in a contract of employment that you and your employer sign.
- ATL recommends that you should be given a proper job description that outlines your particular role and duties, as this helps to clarify your role and define your workload.

Working hours

- The standard working week for most full-time employees is 37 hours (35 or 36 in some London boroughs and 32.5 in some other areas). This should be specified in your contract.
- There is no requirement to work above these hours.
- If you are asked to work over your contractual hours,

then you should be paid for it. If you are asked to work over the full-time equivalent hours set out in your contract (eg over 37 hours), then the rate of overtime will depend on whether you are working on weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays or overnight.

Holiday

- Unlike teachers, most support staff members are employed on a term-time only basis. This means being paid only for the weeks that the school is open.
- If full time, you are entitled to a minimum of 21 days of paid annual leave per year, as well as all statutory and public holidays. Leave for part-timers is accrued on a pro-rata basis.
- An additional four days of holiday is granted to full-time employees after five years of continuous service.
- You are also entitled to two extra statutory leave days. Again, in practical terms this will result in you being paid for an extra two days of work, ie your entitlement will be 21 days, plus eight bank holidays, plus an extra four days after five years of service, plus the two statutory days.
- You should note, however, that nearly all employers pro rata annual leave entitlement in the same way as they calculate your salary. Contact your ATL branch secretary if you think your leave entitlement has been calculated incorrectly.

Special leave

- ATL recommends that each school has its own special leave policy and that it is applied in a fair, consistent

and transparent manner. You should check with your employer to establish whether there is such a policy. In the absence of a policy, the following points apply:

- Time off (whether paid or unpaid) to attend one-off events, such as graduations or overseas holidays, is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- Leave for compassionate reasons (whether paid or unpaid), such as bereavement, is also at the discretion of the headteacher, but ATL would expect most schools to look favourably on such requests. LA policies on special leave might also apply to schools.

Right to time off in case of family emergency

- You have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off in the case of a family emergency. LA policies on such leave might also apply to schools. In some cases, you may have the right to a number of days of paid leave. Individual schools/LAs have their own policies in place and you should check these.

Notice periods - how much notice you should give

- Usually, you will have to give one month's notice to terminate your employment, and this should be detailed in your contract of employment.
- If there is nothing in your contract, your notice should be the same as the ordinary period from one pay period to the next. Usually, you will be paid monthly, so the notice will also be a month. If you are paid weekly then your notice would be a week, providing that there was nothing in your contract of employment.

Notice periods - how much notice your school should give you

- Usually, the school/LA will be required to give you a minimum of one month's notice to terminate your employment and this will be stated in your contract of employment.
- If there is nothing in your contract, you will at least be entitled to the minimum periods of notice (which are dependent on your length of service) from the school/LA. These are: not less than one week's notice if your period of service is between one month and two

years; not less than one week of notice for each full year of service, if you have two years or more but less than 12 years of service; not less than 12 weeks of notice, if you have 12 years or more of service.

- If your statutory entitlement is greater than your contractual notice period, you are entitled to the longer notice period, ie if your length of service is five years then you are entitled to five weeks' notice, not the four-week period specified in your contract.

Employees on two or more fixed-term contracts

- If you have been employed on two or more fixed-term contracts for four years since July 2002 you have the right to a permanent contract of employment, unless the school can provide objective justification not to make you a permanent employee. Contact ATL as outlined below for more information.

Your right to stay on at work after you turn 65

The government has scrapped the default retirement age of 65. Employees can continue in post as normal unless the employer has a fair reason to dismiss them. Members are advised to contact ATL if they are concerned that their employer intends to dismiss them.

If you have any queries about your statutory rights, please contact ATL as outlined below.



Need advice?

Your first point of contact is the ATL rep in your school/college. Your local ATL branch is also available to help, or you can contact ATL's member advisers on 020 7930 6441, email info@atl.org.uk. Don't forget there's lots more advice on ATL's website at www.atl.org.uk.

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