

Whilst you are required to observe and implement all organisational policies and procedures, the various policies are non-contractual and are not incorporated into your contract of employment. They may be amended at any time.

1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out Ambitious about Autism's (AaA) and Ambitious about Autisms School Trust's (AaAST) approach to the retirement of employees.

AaA/AaAST is committed to equal opportunities for all its employees. The organisation recognises the contributions of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older employees. It believes that employees should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so. Staff may voluntarily retire at a time of their choice. AaA/AaAST recommends that any employees who are contemplating retirement should consider their pension provision and seek independent financial advice before making any final decision in relation to retirement.

AaA/AaAST does not operate a compulsory retirement age for its employees. We acknowledge that retirement should be a matter of choice for individuals and will not pressurise employees into resigning because they have reached or are approaching a certain age. However, we will review whether a fixed retirement age may become necessary for particular roles from time to time.

Related Policies:

- Sickness Absence
- Capability
- Pay & Benefits
- Flexible Working
- Wellbeing

2 Who is involved in the process

Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

Who is Involved	Responsibility
ELT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure retirement procedures are followed consistently within teams
Line managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and manage the Retirement Policy and follow procedures as they apply to their area of the organisation • Inform the People Team as soon as any notification of retirement is received • Once notification is received, arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss their retirement and any necessary arrangements in relation to this
People Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor those approaching retirement age and inform line managers • Provide advice and guidance to managers • Write to the employee to formally acknowledge their notice to retire and to confirm the date on which employment will end, and inform the payroll services provider

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Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and ensure understanding of the Retirement Policy and procedures relating to their area of the organisation • Maintain appropriate discussions with line manager giving appropriate notice of intentions (see section 3 below) • Seek independent financial advice
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3 Discussing your future plans

Employees are encouraged to discuss any plans they may have for retirement as early as possible with their manager in order to aid future organisation planning. These discussions can take place informally at any stage, but they may also be conducted more routinely during check-ins when managers and staff jointly consider future career progression.

We will not make generalised assumptions that performance will decline with age, whether due to competence or health issues. If we think there are problems with an employee's performance or ill-health, these will be dealt with in the usual way, through the Capability or Sickness Absence Policy and Procedures.

If you indicate that you are thinking of retiring, you are free to change your mind at any time until you have actually given notice to terminate your employment.

4 Support for employees

Retirement, and planning for retirement can be a stressful time for employees. AaA and AaAST will support employees as much as possible at this time.

Things for employees to consider:

- Getting advice from an independent financial advisor
- Planning ahead - think about how retirement will affect you emotionally as well as financially
- There are many organisations and charitable organisations which can provide advice and support to individuals, such as Age UK, the Money Advice Service, or the Gov.uk website

AaA/AaAST recognises the importance of helping its employees to balance their work and personal life. Staff may wish to consider requesting flexible working to support their transition into retirement. If you express an interest in moving to a more flexible working pattern or changing role, we will confirm that this is what you want before any action is taken which could affect your employment, such as a change to your role or responsibilities. Alternatively, you may wish to make a request to change your working arrangements under our Flexible Working Policy.

Employees are reminded that at any stage in the process, they can seek support and advice through the Employee Assistance Helpline (Workplace Options 0800 243 458). The helpline provides both financial advice and counselling.

5 Giving notice of retirement

An employee who wishes to retire should write to their line manager, to confirm their decision to retire and the date on which they intend that the employment will end. Wherever possible, staff should notify their line Manager as far in advance as possible, and must give at least as much notice as the member of staff is required to give under their contract of employment. This is in order for suitable arrangements to be made with

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the relevant pension scheme and to aid workforce planning, as well as to support the employee who is retiring.

The line manager will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss his or her retirement and any necessary arrangements in relation to this. This may, for example, include making arrangements in relation to a handover of the employee's work or responsibilities, assisting with training of other members of staff or making arrangements in relation to any pension entitlement of the employee.

The People Team will also write to the employee to formally acknowledge their notice to retire and to confirm the date on which employment will end.

The employee will be advised to contact their relevant pension provider directly and make the necessary arrangements for drawing their pension. People Team (payroll) will inform the payroll services provider.

Qualified teachers' retirement – if you are a qualified teacher on a teacher's pension you may have a Normal Pension Age (NPA) which relates to the drawing down on the teacher's pension and usually applies at ages 60 or 65. Where AaA/AaAST is informed in writing of an NPA associated with an employee's pension scheme they will contact the employee in writing, between 6 and 12 months before the NPA. This will enable to be had as to how the teacher employee wishes to proceed and in order that AaA/AaAST can support them in undertaking any required notifications.

Teachers that reach the NPA are not obliged to retire and may continue working beyond their NPA. Teachers in this position are advised to take independent financial advice before proceeding.

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