

Love Learning, Love Life.

For Every Step of Your Journey

A Handbook for all our Staff



2026-2027

EMBARK
F E D E R A T I O N

Welcome

At Embark Federation, we believe that standout schools are built by standout people, and I'm delighted to welcome you to our community. Whether you are just joining us or continuing your journey within the Trust, this handbook has been created to support you, outline what you can expect, and help you feel fully part of the Embark family.

We are proud to be a family of schools rooted in our four core values: Family, Integrity, Teamwork, and Success. Alongside our collective commitment to inclusion, these values are more than words on a wall: they guide how we treat each other, work together, and support every child and adult to thrive.

Our strategic plan sets out our longer-term goals, which you are now part of, and ultimately ensures we deliver our shared mission: to help all our children, and all our staff, Love Learning, Love Life.

That means creating schools where people feel safe, valued, encouraged, and inspired. You play a vital role in shaping our culture and delivering this mission every day. This guide provides the key information you need - from induction, wellbeing, and training opportunities to the terms and benefits that support your role.

We are committed to being a great employer: one that listens, supports, and helps people grow. Wherever you are based, and whatever your role, please know that you are an important and valued part of our journey.

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Our shared mission is to help all our children and our staff, to Love Learning, Love Life. That means creating schools where people feel safe, valued, encouraged and inspired. As a staff member, you play a vital role in shaping our culture and delivering this mission every day.

This guide sets out the key information you need to understand how we work from induction, wellbeing, and training opportunities to the terms and benefits that support your role. We are committed to being a great employer: one that listens, supports, and helps people grow.

You can view our full future ambitions in our Strategic Plan [here - Embark Strategic Plan - Embark Federation](#)

Wherever you are based, and whatever your role, please know that you are an important and valued part of our journey.

Welcome to Embark.



**Matt Crawford,
Chief Executive Officer,
Embark Federation**

Our Collective Commitment to Inclusion

We are committed to bring our Collective Commitment to Inclusion to life. This commitment drives what we do, and how we behave with each other and with our children and young people. Every member of our team is responsible for making this the lived experience across Embark.



Your Induction Journey

Every new team member at Embark receives a thoughtful induction to help them settle in and feel part of our family. You'll start with a trust-wide induction, where you'll meet colleagues from across our schools, hear our vision and values, and receive a welcome from our CEO. This is followed by a local induction at your school, giving you everything you need to feel confident in your role from Day 1.

Induction at Embark is an ongoing journey. A nominated lead at your school will guide you through each stage and help you grow, build connections, and develop over time.

Key milestones:

Week 1: School induction + buddy support

Month 1: School onboarding + CPD signposting

Term 1: Me at My Best 1:1 review

Term 2+: Access wider Trust development opportunities



Grow With Us

Training and development are central to your journey at Embark. From the moment you start, we focus on helping you grow, thrive, and reach your full potential.



- Your development needs are identified during recruitment.
- Ongoing support is shaped through our Me at My Best conversations.
- You'll be part of a culture that encourages continuous learning and growth.

From online learning to trust-wide networks and leadership pathways, we provide the resources and guidance you need to develop your skills and progress in your career.

Your Pay, Pension & Pay Progression

At Embark Federation, we are committed to rewarding the talent, commitment and professionalism of all our staff both teaching and support through fair and transparent pay structures.



Pay and Grades

Every role at Embark is linked to a clearly defined grade with an incremental pay structure. This means:

- You will receive annual pay progression
- This progression is automatic, unless a formal capability process is in place
- Where concerns arise, we work constructively and supportively with individuals to help them succeed in their role
- This continues until you reach the top of your grade
- Pay scales reflect the responsibilities of your role

You can view the current salary scales here:

[Derbyshire County Council Pay Scales – Support Staff](#)

[Teachers' Pay Scales – National Pay Framework](#)

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Pay Day

We pay all staff on the 25th of each month. If this falls on a weekend or bank holiday, you'll be paid on the last working day before. At Christmas, pay usually arrives slightly earlier, we'll let you know in advance.

Need to contact payroll? Email: traded@derbyshire.gov.uk

Your Pension

As a member of staff at Embark, you'll automatically be enrolled into the appropriate public sector pension scheme:

- Teachers – Teachers' Pension Scheme
- Support Staff – Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Unpaid Leave and Your Pension

If you take 15 calendar days or more of unpaid leave, this may affect your LGPS pension. You may be able to buy back any lost pension through an Additional Pension Contribution (APC) within 12 months of returning to work. For more information, visit: [here](#).

These schemes offer generous employer contributions, life cover, and benefits in retirement. You'll receive a pension pack when you join.



Leave, Flexibility and Family Support

One of our core beliefs is Family. We see ourselves as an extended work family and also understand that your family will always come first. We understand that work-life balance contributes to the well-being of our team. Our flexible working arrangements reflect our Love Learning, Love Life philosophy, ensuring employees can be their best selves both in and out of work.

Annual Leave (Support Staff Only*)

Employee group	Basic entitlement	After 5 years local government service
Grades 1 to 9	25 days (pro rata)	30 days (pro rata)
Grade 10 to 13	27 days (pro rata)	32 days (pro rata)
Grade 14 and above	34. days (pro rata)	34 days (pro rata)

*For support staff on term-time only contracts, annual leave is built into your annualised salary and not taken as separate time off.

Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental and Adoption Leave

We are committed to supporting you during this important life transition:

- Eligible Support Staff are entitled to occupational maternity pay in line with Derbyshire County Council terms: 6 weeks at 90% pay, followed by 12 weeks at half pay plus SMP (subject to eligibility), then SMP for 21 weeks, and 13 weeks unpaid.
- Eligible Teaching Staff receive occupational maternity pay in line with the Burgundy Book: 4 weeks full pay, 2 weeks 90%, followed by 12 weeks half pay plus SMP, and then SMP for the remaining period.

Special Leave: Includes a range of reasons from bereavement to unexpected emergencies. We also encourage staff to attend their own children's events like sports day or performances, reinforcing our family-first culture. Each school will manage this slightly differently, and it will be covered in your local induction.

Parental Leave: Unpaid parental leave is available to eligible employees with over one year's service, allowing you to take time to care for your child in important moments.

Medical Appointments: We support essential time off for hospital appointments or medical check-ups that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside your working hours.

Flexible Working: We consider flexible working requests from day one of your employment and will always seek to work with you on flexibility that meets your commitments and the needs of the school.

Wellbeing Strategy & Employee Benefits

We are committed to staff wellbeing, aligning with the DfE Wellbeing Charter to ensure our people feel valued, supported, and heard. Wellbeing goes beyond a core offer - it's about voice, with regular staff surveys shaping our approach, with a commitment to managing workload, ensuring a healthy balance for all. Our active wellbeing network continuously reviews and enhances our wellbeing provision, keeping it relevant and impactful. [**Click here for a Summary of our Embark Benefits.**](#)

Feeling Unwell or Overwhelmed



Financial Support



Staff Recognition



Everyday Discounts



Support for Life Outside Work



When You're Absent: What to Expect

We understand that there will be times when absence is unavoidable and we approach every situation with support, care and trust. Our approach to attendance management is about relationships, and we will follow our guidance to ensure that our obligations to you, and you to us are being met.

What Happens When You're Absent:

- Call in personally (where possible) and let your line manager know the reason and likely return date.
- We'll keep in regular contact with you during your absence to check in and offer support.
- On your return, we'll hold a Return-to-Work conversation to see how you are and discuss any support you might need. It's not formal just part of how we look after each other.
- If absence becomes frequent or extends over a longer period, we'll meet with you supportively to discuss the situation. These discussions are not disciplinary; they are about understanding the reasons for absence, being open and transparent, and connecting you with the right support. At the same time, we aim to work together to bring attendance back to acceptable levels, so you can remain healthy, supported, and fully engaged in your role.

Sick Pay Entitlement

Support Staff:

Sick pay follows the Derbyshire local government (Green Book) scheme, here's a quick overview:

Length of Service	Full Pay	Half Pay
First year (after 4 months)	1 month	2 months
Second year	2 months	2 months
Third year	4 months	4 months
Fourth & Fifth year	5 months	5 months
After five years	6 months	6 months

Teaching Staff:

Sick pay follows the national Burgundy Book conditions:

Length of Service	Full Pay	Half Pay
First year (after 4 months)	1 month	2 months
Second year	2 months	2 months
Third year	4 months	4 months
Fourth & Fifth year	5 months	5 months
After five years	6 months	6 months

Working days = school days, not calendar days.

Travel and Expenses



We understand that some roles involve moving between schools, attending meetings, or training events and we want to make that as easy as possible.

- If you use your own vehicle for work, you must have business insurance, a valid driving licence, and ensure your vehicle is roadworthy and taxed.
- What you can claim depends on your contracted base, the distance to your destination, and Trust travel rules.
- For full guidance, visit: **[Travel policy](#)**.

Claiming Expenses

- Mileage is reimbursed at the current agreed rate (e.g. 55p per mile, check the latest policy).
- Parking fees or public transport tickets can be reimbursed if pre-approved.
- Submit claims within 3 months using the approved expense claim process or system.
- Keep all receipts where applicable.

We're Here for You

At Embark, we want you to feel informed, supported, and valued throughout your time with us. This handbook is just one part of that journey. Whether you are new to the Trust or have been part of our family for years, please know that we are collectively committed to making your experience positive and purposeful, supporting your professional and personal growth, and staying true to our values - Family, Integrity, Teamwork, and Success.

Please note that for support staff we follow the **Derbyshire County Council full terms of service, which can be found in the Working for Us booklet.**

For teaching staff, we follow the Burgundy Book (Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Service). These documents set out your rights, responsibilities, and entitlements while working within the Trust.



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