

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME – EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS POLICY

This policy adheres to and should be applied with due consideration to the College's commitment to the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education.

This policy has been reviewed in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mission Statement

Our mission inspired by the Christian tradition is to be a community based on faith, hope and love; developing each individual intellectually, emotionally and spiritually to achieve their full potential.

To achieve this we will:

- Provide a welcoming, supportive community where everyone is valued.
- Provide a high quality, meaningful education which encourages the development of the whole person, inspired by the Notre Dame tradition.
- Promote a caring environment, rooted in the virtues of service, kindness, gratitude and respect.
- Work together for the benefit of each person as well as the wider community.
- Recognise, celebrate and treasure, without exception, the unique gifts and dignity of each person, ensuring equality and fairness for all, as found in the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Policy to be reviewed by or before	April 2027

OVERVIEW

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England and Wales was amended from 1 April 2014. The provisions of the new LGPS, together with protections for member's benefits accrued before 1 April 2014, are now contained in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (the '**LGPS Regulations 2013**'), and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 (the '**LGPS Transitional Regulations 2014**') (as at 14th May 2018).

Therefore, this statement now relates to the application of discretions under:

- (a) the **LGPS Regulations 2013**
- (b) **LGPS Transitional Regulations 2014**; and
- (c) the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 ('**LGPS Regulations 1997**') and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 ('**LGPS Benefits Regulations 2007**'), which continue to have effect in so far as is necessary under *Regulation 3 (Membership before 1 April 2014) of the LGPS Transitional Regulations 2014*.

INTRODUCTION

Under *Regulation 60 (statements of policy about exercise of discretionary functions) of the LGPS Regulations 2013* and *paragraph 2(2) of Schedule 2 of the LGPS Transitional Regulations 2014*, employers are required to make and publish policy statements on how they will exercise **five specific mandatory discretions**.

In addition there are **two further discretions** relevant to employers, which relate to members who left before 1 April 2014. These are under *Regulation 66 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008* (in respect of leavers between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014) and under *Regulation 106 of the LGPS Regulation 1997* (in respect of leavers between 1 April 1998 and 31 March 2008).

Any policy statements made must not limit, or 'fetter' how an employer uses any of the discretions afforded by the scheme.

The use of any discretion is likely to lead to immediate and potentially continuing increased pension costs for the employer, which could be considerable.

The employer is required to keep its statement under review and make such revisions as are appropriate following a change in its policy. Following any changes in its policy the employer must publish the revised policy and send a copy to the administering authority within one month of the date the policy is revised.

In formulating and revising the policy statements outlined below, the employer must have regard to the extent to which the exercise of its discretionary powers could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service.

The discretions listed below are those that require a written policy, however employers have further discretions under the regulations that they may wish to formulate a written policy on.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES ADOPTED IN EXERCISING DISCRETIONS

Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, in formulating the policy statements outlined below, has considered that the discretionary powers must:

- be exercised reasonably;
- not be used for ulterior motive;
- be used with regard to all relevant factors (cost should be balanced against benefit for the College);
- only be used where there is a benefit to the College in return for incurring extra costs; and
- be duly recorded when used.

In addition the College should consider where appropriate the views and/or advice of the following bodies:

- WYPF's Actuary;
- the Local Government Pensions Committee of the Employer's organisation (currently the Sixth Form College's Association (SFCA));
- UNISON, the trade union recognised by the College.

The College will from time to time, as it sees fit, review the content of its discretionary policy under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations to meet its requirements as an employer participating in West Yorkshire Pension Fund.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Where individual cases are to be considered within the scope of the discretions contained in these statements they will be considered by the Human Resources Committee of the Corporation.

LGPS EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS

Details of the **five discretions** available are as follows (there are **also two other discretions** for employers but these relate specifically to members who left before 1 April 2014):

1. Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC) - Regulation 16 (2)(e) and 16 (4)(d)

Note: Where an active member pays Additional Pension Contributions by regular or lump sum contribution to purchase extra annual pension, an employer can choose to voluntarily contribute towards the cost of purchasing that extra pension through a SCAPC.

POLICY STATEMENT

Notre Dame does not consider contributions towards additional pension contributions to be an essential part of its employment strategy. However, the College will consider applications made under these specific provisions having regard to the College's general policy from time to time, on the employee pay strategy and the particular circumstances surrounding each case.

It is likely that decisions will be made on the merits of each case having particular regard to:

- i. the College's ability to meet the cost of granting such a request; and/or
- ii. the member's personal circumstances.

2. Awarding Additional Pension - Regulation 31

*Note: An employer can choose to grant additional pension up to the maximum allowed by the scheme rules provided that the member is active **or** is within 6 months of leaving **for reasons of redundancy or business efficiency or** whose employment was terminated by mutual consent on grounds of business efficiency.*

Employers may wish to use this Regulation as an aid to recruitment, an aid to retention or to compensate or reward an employee who is retiring.

*Employers should also consider provisions of this Regulation, in particular Regulation 31(4), if they decide to exercise their power under **Section 1 (general power of competence) of the Localism Act 2011**.*

POLICY STATEMENT

Notre Dame will consider applications made under this Regulation having regard to the particular circumstances surrounding each case. Decisions will be made on the merits of each case having particular regard to the following:

- i. the member's personal circumstances;
- ii. the interests of the College;
- iii. the additional contributions due to the Fund by the College in respect of the exercise of this discretion;
- iv. any potential benefits or savings to the College arising from the exercise of this discretion;

- v. other options that are, from time to time, available under the College's severance arrangements;
- vi. the funding position of the College within the Fund;
- vii. the ability of the College to meet the cost of granting such an award.

3. Flexible Retirement - Regulation 30(6)

Note: this provision in the Regulation allows the employer to consent for a member who has attained the age of 55 to draw all or part of their retirement benefits (both pension and lump sum) whilst continuing in employment and Fund membership provided that:

- a) there has been a reduction in hours, or*
- b) a reduction in grade.*

An employer may agree to waive in whole or in part any actuarial reductions that would be required (see below: Regulation 30(8)).

POLICY STATEMENT

Notre Dame will consider applications made under this Regulation having regard to the particular circumstances surrounding each case. Decisions will be made on the merits of each case having particular regard to:

- i. the operating requirements of the College;
- ii. the College's ability to meet the cost of granting such a request;
- iii. whether any demonstrable cost saving in excess of potential savings available under any severance arrangements in place from time to time can be made;
- iv. the member's personal circumstances;
- v. whether to permit the member to choose to draw all, part or none of the pension benefits they have built up after 1 April 2008.

4. Waiving actuarial reductions - Regulation 30(8)

Note: An employer may agree to waive in whole or in part the actuarial reductions that would be required:

- a) all of the reductions in respect of pre 1 April 2014 benefits but only on compassionate grounds (paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 of the LGPS Transitional Regulations 2014);*
- b) all or some of the actuarial reduction in respect of post 1 April 2014 on any grounds.*

Where 85 year rule protections exists and the member has full or tapered protection the employer can waive all of the reductions but only on compassionate grounds for the service up to the date the 85 year rule protection ends (31 March 2016 (full) or 31 March 2020 (tapered)).

POLICY STATEMENT

Notre Dame will consider applications made under this Regulation having regard to the particular circumstances surrounding each case. Decisions will be made on the merits of each case having particular regard to:

- i. the College's ability to meet the cost of granting such a request;
- ii. whether any demonstrable cost saving in excess of potential savings available under any severance arrangements in place from time to time can be made;
- iii. the member's personal circumstances.

Applications for the payment of unreduced benefits for service before 1 April 2014 on the grounds of compassion will be granted if:

- 1) in the College's sole opinion, the special extenuating circumstances surrounding the application, along with the supporting evidence provided, justify approval; and
- 2) the College can meet the cost of granting such a request.

5. Switching on the 85 rule – Regulation 1(1)(c) of the LGPS Transitional Regulations 2014

Note: An employer can decide whether to “switch on” the 85 year rule to allow members who have protections under old regulations, and who choose to voluntarily draw their benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60 to receive benefits either unreduced or with a smaller reduction to their 85 year rule date. The employer will be responsible for meeting any strain costs relating to benefits being paid before age 60. If the employer does not “switch on” the 85 year rule the member’s benefits will be reduced to age 60 or the date they meet the 85 year rule if later.

POLICY STATEMENT

Notre Dame will consider applications made under this Regulation having regard to the particular circumstances surrounding each case. Decisions will be made on the merits of each case having particular regard to:

- i. the College's ability to meet the cost of granting such a request;
- ii. whether any demonstrable cost saving in excess of potential savings available under any severance arrangements in place from time to time can be made;
- iii. the member's personal circumstances.

Further discretions under the LGPS Regulations 1997 and the LGPS Benefits Regulations 2007

There are also two other discretions for employers but these relate specifically to members who left before 1 April 2014.

Whilst the LGPS Regulations 2013 repeals the LGPS Regulations 1997 and the LGPS Benefits Regulations 2007 (in so far as they had not already been repealed), Regulation 3(1) of the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 allows for the LGPS Regulations 1997 and the LGPS Benefits Regulations 2007 to still have effect in so far as they relate to certain member benefits before 1 April 2014. As such, the other discretions still available for certain members only, are as follows:

1. Early Payment of Deferred Pensions for members who left before 1st April 2014 – Regulation 2 of the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014, Regulation 30(2) and 30(5) of the LGPS Benefits Regulations 2007 & Regulation 31(2) and Regulation 31(5) of the LGPS Regulations 1997

Note: From 14 May 2018, all deferred members may voluntarily elect for early payment of their deferred benefits prior to their Normal Retirement Date. An employer can decide on compassionate grounds whether to waive any actuarial reduction to benefits paid before age 65. An employer can decide whether to 'switch on' the 85 year rule where a member has taken voluntarily early payment of deferred benefits from age 55.

POLICY STATEMENT

Notre Dame will consider applications made under this Regulation having regard to the particular circumstances surrounding each case. Decisions will be made on the merits of each case having particular regard to:

- i. the College's ability to meet the cost of granting such a request;
- ii. the member's personal circumstances.

Applications for the payment of unreduced benefits on the grounds of compassion will be granted if:

- 1) in the College's sole opinion, the special extenuating circumstances surrounding the application, along with the supporting evidence provided justify approval; and
- 2) the College can meet the cost of granting such a request.

N.B. Deferred members who left the Scheme before 1 April 2008 can still make application for the early payment of their deferred benefits after age 50 under LGPS rules. However, under HMRC rules such payments would be classed as 'un-authorised' and would be subject to a punitive tax charge.

2. Early Payment of Deferred Pensions for members who left before 1st April 2014 and have ceased to be entitled to a tier 3 ill benefit - Regulation 2 of the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014, Regulation 30A(3) and 30A(5) of the LGPS Benefits Regulations 2007.

Note: An employer can decide whether to grant early payment to members who have ceased to be entitled to a tier 3 ill health benefit and who are over the age of 55. An employer may on compassionate grounds agree to waive any actuarial reduction to. An employer can decide whether to 'switch on' the 85 year rule where voluntary early payment of suspended tier 3 ill health pension is taken.

POLICY STATEMENT

Notre Dame will consider applications made under this Regulation having regard to the particular circumstances surrounding each case. Decisions will be made on the merits of each case having particular regard to:

- i. the College's ability to meet the cost of granting such a request;
- ii. the member's personal circumstances.

Applications for the payment of unreduced benefits on the grounds of compassion will be granted if:

- 1) in the College's sole opinion, the special extenuating circumstances surrounding the application, along with the supporting evidence provided justify approval; and
- 2) the College can meet the cost of granting such a request.