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Guide to Employee Benefits

2025-26



Hills Road
Sixth Form College
Cambridge

INTRODUCTION

The College values the contribution made by its employees and recognises that without your efforts, enthusiasm and commitment Hills Road would not be as successful as it is today.

The benefits detailed in this guide have been developed to help you feel valued, remain healthy, achieve a good work life balance and enjoy social time with your colleagues.

	CONTENTS	PAGE
1	FINANCIAL BENEFITS	
1.1	Career Average Pension Scheme	3
1.2	Pre-Retirement Workshops	3
1.3	Camshare	3
1.4	Cyclescheme	3
1.5	Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice and Charging Points	3
1.6	TOTUM Membership	4
1.7	Education Staff Blue Light Card Entitlement	4
1.8	O2 Open	4
1.9	Local Discounts	4
2	FACILITIES	
2.1	Car Parking	6
2.2	Bicycle Parking	6
2.3	Staff Room	6
2.4	Catering Services	6
2.5	Library Access	6
2.6	Staff Quiet Room	6
2.7	Prayer Room	6
3	HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	
3.1	Counselling and Workplace Support	7
3.2	Sports and Tennis Centre	7
3.3	Subsidised Classes	7
3.4	Eyecare Vouchers	7
3.5	Botanic Gardens	8
3.6	Discounted Room Hire	8
3.7	Adult Education Discount	8
3.8	College Wellbeing Commitment - Staff	9-11
4	PAY AND LEAVE	
4.1	Sick Pay	13
4.2	Maternity	13
4.3	Adoption	13
4.4	Paternity/Maternity Support Leave	13
4.5	Shared Parental Leave	14
4.6	Fertility Treatment Leave	14
4.7	Special leave	14
4.8	Sabbatical	14
4.9	Flexible Working	14
4.10	Annual Leave	14
	CONTACTS LIST	16

1. FINANCIAL BENEFITS

1.1 CAREER AVERAGE PENSION SCHEME

The College offers two types of pension schemes that have similar benefits and employee contribution rates. They are:

- Teachers' Pension Scheme for teaching staff (TPS)
- Local Government Pension scheme for support staff (LGPS).

As a member of staff you automatically join a pension scheme when you start at the College which means:

- you receive a guaranteed income in retirement which is index linked, and the option to take a tax-free lump sum;
- if you become too ill to work you may be able to receive your retirement benefits early and possibly with an enhancement to service;
- your pension can give your family an income in the event of your death before or after retirement;
- you may be able to boost your pension benefits by making extra contributions;
- life insurance of three times your salary should you die in service.

For more information on the pension schemes please visit their websites at:

<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk>
<http://pensions.cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

1.2 PRE-RETIREMENT PLANNING

If you are approaching retirement you may wish to increase your awareness of the issues surrounding retirement and pension benefits by attending a workshop and/or through seeking some independent financial advice. There are courses aimed at helping you plan your retirement and cover leisure and managing change, healthy living, state benefits, financial planning etc. Please speak to the HR Department who might be able to suggest a provider. HR are unable to offer financial advice.

1.3 CAMSHARE

Sign up to our countywide car-sharing network, with strong links to the national Liftshare database. It is free and has been built and designed for every possible user. Whether you are a driver, passenger, or if you would simply be interested in finding an alternative way of getting about, then this is the site for you. For more information visit www.camshare.co.uk.

1.4 CYCLEScheme

The College operates the Tax-Free Cycles for Work Scheme. For staff who cycle regularly to work, you may be eligible to purchase a new bicycle and equipment under the Government's cycle scheme. This is a salary sacrifice scheme in which you could take advantage of reductions in your income tax, national insurance and VAT. The scheme consists of the College giving the staff member a twelve-month loan of the selected bike/ equipment. After that point, the staff member is entitled to buy the bike/equipment from the College for a Fair Market Value (around 5% of the RRP).

1.5 EV SALARY SACRIFICE AND CHARGING POINTS

The College now offers an Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice programme through Octopus

Energy. For further details please speak to Chris Lovisa, Director of Human Resources. The College has 5 EV charging points on site available for use by staff, following registration on the Monta app. Please contact the Estates team for further details and to get registered.

1.6 TOTUM MEMBERSHIP

TOTUM is the new name for the NUS Student Discount Scheme. As the College is now a TOTUM associate, all College staff can access the same online discounts as students, for free. Additionally, you can become a TOTUM+ member which can help you save on your everyday shopping, eat & drink out for less with a free Tastecard and Coffee Club membership, get discounted travel, discounted subscriptions and memberships, make savings at thousands of locations all over the world - and much, much more!

You can now register for a TOTUM membership directly at totum.com in a [few simple steps](#) - please see a summary of the full range of benefits which are available with a TOTUM membership [here](#).

1.7 EDUCATION STAFF BLUE LIGHT CARD ENTITLEMENT

As of August 2024 Blue Light Card now welcomes teachers and support staff to its list of eligible services. Educators will now be able to access thousands of discounts in recognition of the important role that they play in shaping future generations. Blue Light Card provides those in the NHS, emergency services, social care sector, armed forces and now the teaching profession with discounts online and in-store. Small and large companies across the UK support the Blue Light Community with over 15,000 partner brands, in sectors ranging from leisure to technology, insurance to retail. Membership is £4.99 for two years so it is a great benefit for colleagues to make use of as education staff. For more information, please visit <https://teachers.bluelightcard.co.uk/>.

1.8 O2 OPEN

College employees can join O2 Open, an employee perks scheme, for free. The scheme provides discounts on O2 Airtime Plans. For O2 Airtime Plans with 3GB or more data a month, you can get a 25% discount on the Airtime Plan. For Airtime Plans with less than 3GB data a month, you can get a 15% discount on the Airtime Plan. The code for registering with O2 Open is 'TEACH', and you will need a recent payslip. There is also a 20% discount on accessories in store at O2 – you will need to provide evidence of your employment in store. Further information can be found [here](#).

1.9 LOCAL DISCOUNTS

Cambridge Bike Tours:

Cambridge Bike Tours offers a fun and leisurely way to explore this beautiful and fascinating city. Discover hidden gems with one of their knowledgeable guides. Use your College Staff Lanyard and receive 20% off the City and Grantchester Tours with Cambridge Bike Tours. If booking online, select a student ticket and take your lanyard with you, or contact them directly on info@cambridgebiketours.co.uk



Scudamore's Punting:

Scudamore's Punting offer concession rates saving you 20% on self-hire punts, canoes and kayaks for College staff when they show their College Staff Lanyard. If booking online, select a concession self-hire rate and take your lanyard with you.



Better Centres Membership:

College staff can sign up for a Better Health Community Network membership using proof of employment at the College such as Staff lanyard, payslip, or blue light card, saving you 20% off the standard membership rate. This membership provides access to Gym, Swimming, Fitness Classes, Better Health Suite, and discounts on other activities and services. Purchase of a 'Partnership' membership provides access to all facilities in Cambridge, including Jesus Green Lido.



CambsCuisine:

The College has partnered with CambsCuisine which is a local award winning business with eight unique Pubs and Restaurants, including The Cock at Hemingford Grey, The Cambridge Chop House, Millworks and The Astronomer. Click [here](#) to find out more about CambsCuisine. The partnership provides all College employees with 15% off their food bill for tables of 6 or less, and is on offer from January 2025. To access the discount, please take your staff lanyard with you and show it to a member of staff when you ask for your bill.



2. FACILITIES

2.1 CAR PARKING

If you come to work by car, you can request a PIN code to park in the free staff car park. The staff car park is at the back of College off Purbeck Road for which you will need a pin to work the barrier. Should you wish to make use of the College car park, please contact Human Resources for further details and to obtain your PIN. The College has 5 EV charging points on site available for use by staff, following registration on the Monta app. Please contact the Estates team for further details and to get registered.

2.2 BICYCLE PARKING

There is a staff bicycle park at the front of the College, to the right before you go through the archway and Centenary Gates. The combination to the lock is available from Reception or from the caretakers, whose office is situated next to the bicycle shed. There is additional bicycle parking for staff at the north side of The Colin Greenhalgh Building.

2.3 STAFF ROOM

In April 2023 we opened our brand-new Study Centre here at the College. This includes a lovely new and very modern College Staff Room and roof terrace for you to enjoy. We also have a wonderful new Café located off the main quad which you can also make use of.

2.4 CATERING SERVICES

Our catering facilities offer a range of foods, drinks and services at affordable prices. We have a new Café which is located in the Hub and will serve grab-and-go hot pastries, sandwiches, wraps, salads and confectionery. To make it quicker and easier for you to buy food and drink the College operates a cashless catering facility using your photo ID badge and WisePay. For more information, please contact the Finance Department.

2.5 LIBRARY ACCESS

All members of staff are automatically added to the library's register of borrowers as they join the College. Your photo ID badge acts as your library card. The online Library catalogue allows you to search and reserve material, and there is also JSTOR access.

Staff are not charged fines on overdue books but are asked to renew items as they become overdue. Library items should not be kept for long-term teaching use.

2.6 PRAYER ROOM

Hills Road Sixth Form College respects your rights to freedom of religious belief and makes available a multi faith prayer room for staff and students between 8.00am to 6.00pm every weekday.

3. HEALTH AND WELL – BEING

3.1 COUNSELLING AND WORKPLACE SUPPORT

The College provides impartial and non-judgmental counselling and workplace support to staff using qualified counsellors. Confidentiality is a priority and is discussed and agreed with each member of staff before they begin their sessions. Should you wish to speak to the College Staff Wellbeing Advisor, please email www.staffwellbeing@hillsroad.ac.uk or speak to a member of the Human Resources Team.

Additionally, Hills Road staff can access Qwell, a new online counselling and wellbeing platform launched by MIND. It is completely free of charge, and offers BACP accredited counselling via anonymous chat, community peer forums, and online resources. Find out more [here](#).

3.2 SPORTS AND TENNIS CENTRE

All employees are entitled to free use of the Hills Road Sports and Tennis Centre (which includes a fully equipped gym, four indoor and six outdoor tennis courts, a multi-purpose sports hall, an indoor cricket hall and a squash court) between the hours of 7.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, including College holidays. Members' rates will apply at other times and days of the week. Staff are able to book facilities seven days in advance.

Due to the high demand for indoor tennis courts, staff can book one free indoor tennis session per week, seven days in advance. Any additional advance bookings will be charged at member rates. Staff partners and/or members of their immediate family are also entitled to member rates at the Centre. Please contact the Sports Centre on ext. 400 (internally) or 01223 500009 (externally) for more details. Alternatively, further information can be found on our website at www.hillsroadsportscentre.co.uk.

Additionally, as part of the Staff Wellbeing program, the College offers subsidised Sports/Remedial Massage Treatments at the Sports and Tennis Centre. Deep tissue massage can help with neck/back pain, headaches, tight muscles, Circulation, improve mood and aid sleep, and increase range of movement. Even though it's called Sports massage it can also benefit those struggling from being on your feet all day, sat at a screen too long, returning from injury and much more. Due to the subsidy provided by the College, these sessions cost £10 per 30 mins. Please contact Paul Risdon for further information or to book a session.

3.3 SUBSIDISED CLASSES

The College also offers subsidised classes throughout the academic year such as Pilates, which currently runs on Tuesday evenings. Further details can be obtained from Viv Brownlee (vbrownlee@hillsroad.ac.uk) and payment should be made via the Finance Department.

3.4 EYECARE VOUCHERS

Regular Visual Display Unit (VDU) users (the majority of staff) are entitled to a free **Specsavers** eye test and, if it is identified that glasses are required solely for VDU use, you will be entitled to select a pair of glasses from the £50 range. If you choose to opt for a pair from the £100+ range, you will be entitled to a contribution of £70. Please see [here](#) for further details. If you require a voucher, please contact HR.

3.5 BOTANIC GARDENS

The College has an annual subscription with the Cambridge Botanic Garden that enables staff to use the garden free of charge, including on bank holidays and weekends. The tickets are available to be signed out at the Bursary. Please remember to return them after your visit so that others can also make use of them.

3.6 DISCOUNTED ROOM HIRE

Rooms within the College are available for hire. HRSFC members of staff receive discounted rates. Please email roombookings@hillsroad.co.uk for more information.

3.7 AE DISCOUNT

The College runs a substantial Adult Education (AE) programme for which staff members, their partners and/or members of their immediate family are entitled to a 20% discount. AE prospectuses are available at Reception or from the AE office, in the Sports and Tennis Centre. Further details can be found on the website adultEd@hillsroad.ac.uk or by contacting Adult Education on extension 480 (internally) or 01223 278002 (externally).

3.8 COLLEGE WELLBEING COMMITMENT - STAFF

Introduction

Through its Wellbeing Commitment, Hills Road Sixth Form College aims to create an environment for its students and staff which enables all members of the College community to feel confident, healthy, safe, emotionally resilient and personally fulfilled. There are seven key strands to this commitment, which are explained below. Those in blue are detailed further in the document 'College Wellbeing Commitment - Students'.



*Adapted from 'Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing – a whole school and college approach',
Public Health England and Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition' 2015*

Leadership and Management

Commitment to the strategy by the senior leadership team is essential to ensure practices in support of emotional health and wellbeing are embedded in all aspects of the College's work. This is evidenced in a number of ways, including:

- creating and sustaining a supportive, nurturing ethos throughout the College
- advocating the holistic needs of staff within the context of wider strategic planning
- regularly undertaking research into effective support and improvement strategies, particularly for those suffering from poor mental health, and incorporating relevant references and actions within policies and development plans
- seeking to create a culture in which people feel more able to disclose mental health problems and address them productively at an early stage
- ensuring key personnel have responsibility for staff wellbeing and for developing relevant expertise in this area, identifying issues and making referrals
- demonstrating capacity for continued improvement, for example, by developing partnerships with other colleges, external agencies and the community

- ensuring robust systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating the strategy's effectiveness.

Ethos

The environment in which staff spend a high proportion of every week will inevitably affect their physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Key features of the Hills Road ethos include:

- shared values, trust and mutual respect
- strong, supportive relationships which help to engender a sense of belonging
- an enjoyable, challenging and stimulating environment in which to work and study
- equality of opportunity and valuing of diversity
- open and honest communication enabling concerns to be identified and addressed at an early stage.

Staff Development and Support

The College seeks to improve the quality of working lives and to prevent work associated ill-health (this includes physical, mental and social health) and recognises that colleagues' personal and professional development and the way in which their roles are organised contribute to their overall wellbeing at work. Features of the College's wellbeing culture include:

- effective recruitment, staff development and training
- clear and effective communication of roles, responsibilities and expectations
- ensuring all staff have access to the College's staff development programme which includes a range of activities to promote good work-life balance
- the recognition of skills and the encouragement of personal and professional development
- implementing policies designed to improve working lives such as those relating to work-life balance, flexible working, family leave and absence management
- recognising and assessing work-related stress and, when appropriate, implementing support mechanisms to reduce anxiety and prevent harmful stress
- access, if appropriate, to specialist support and advice including that provided by HR officers, counsellors and occupational health specialists
- ensuring safety at work by rigorously implementing health and safety policies and procedures
- effective management of change including the enhancement of coping strategies and the creation of a flexible working environment
- implementing effective return to work procedures following staff absence.

Curriculum

Our aim is to ensure that all teaching, learning and support activities take place within an environment that:

- promotes mutual respect and inclusiveness
- discourages discrimination and inequity and promotes positive behaviours
- is characterised by open and honest communication and successful relationships

Targeted Support

The College seeks to identify staff at risk of experiencing poor mental health at an early stage so that issues do not escalate. These individuals are offered a range of support measures, where appropriate, including:

- access to trained counsellors, either arranged internally or externally, with requests managed via the staff wellbeing advisor
- access to specialist services obtained through partnerships with external agencies
- access to drop in and longer-term wellbeing support provided by the College Wellbeing Service
- the provision of clear and consistent information about the opportunities available to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns; paying due regard to appropriate protocols, for example in relation to confidentiality

For full details of the Whole College Wellbeing Commitment please also see the document 'College Wellbeing Commitment – Students'

4. PAY AND LEAVE

The College operates generous sickness, pay and leave schemes that go beyond the minimum statutory requirement. A brief breakdown of some of these policies are detailed below. To read the full policies please visit the Policies Section on SharePoint.

4.1 SICK PAY

The College recognises that from time to time an employee may be prevented from attending work through ill health.

Provided the appropriate conditions are met, a member of staff absent from duty because of illness (which includes injury or other disability) shall be entitled to receive sick pay as follows:

TEACHING STAFF	
During the first year of service	Full pay for 25 working days, and after completing four calendar months service, half pay for 50 working days
During the second year of service	Full pay for 50 working days and then half pay for 50 working days
During the third year of service	Full pay for 75 working days and half pay for 75 working days
During fourth and subsequent years	Full pay for 100 working days and half pay for 100 working days
SUPPORT STAFF	
During the first year of service	1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months' service) 2 months' half pay
During the second year of service	2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
During the third year of service	4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
During fourth and fifth years of service	5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
After 5 years' service	6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

The full Staff Sickness Absence and Ill Health Policy and Procedure is available to view in SharePoint.

4.2 MATERNITY, PATERNITY, ADOPTION, SURROGACY, PARENTAL LEAVE

The College is committed to supporting our employees in balancing their work and family life. We recognise the importance of providing comprehensive and equitable leave entitlements for new parents and guardians, whether they are expecting a child through birth, adoption, surrogacy, or other arrangements. Please see our MATERNITY, PATERNITY, ADOPTION, SURROGACY, PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY for further details.

4.3 FERTILITY TREATMENT LEAVE

Employees are entitled to up to two days' paid time off in any one academic year to attend medical appointments for fertility treatment.

4.4 SPECIAL LEAVE

Special or compassionate leave may be granted for a number of reasons including:

- moving house
- graduation
- study leave
- marriage
- religious ceremonies
- job interviews
- jury service
- armed forces duties
- public service (eg. governors meeting, prison visitors, magistrates etc)
- union duties

Additional leave, with or without pay, may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the College.

4.5 SABBATICAL

The College understands that some staff may wish to take time out from work to pursue a professional and personal development in order to enhance career opportunities and their contribution to the College, while maintaining security of employment. It is recognised that such breaks can benefit both the College and the member of staff. Therefore, employees with at least five years' continuous employment may wish to be considered for a sabbatical. The College will consider applications that meet the eligibility criteria. Such leave will be unpaid. Full details can be found in the Sabbatical Policy in SharePoint.

4.6 FLEXIBLE WORKING

The College recognises that employees may need to work flexibly to ensure a good work-life balance and to support their well-being. All employees have a legal right to request flexible working and the College will give due consideration to requests received. Applications are carefully reviewed considering both the request and the needs of the College and all possible reasonable options.

The full Flexible Working Policy is available to view in SharePoint.

4.7 ANNUAL LEAVE

Full year support staff (52-week contract) are entitled to the following annual leave (pro rata for part time staff):

Minimum leave	- 24 working days
After 5 years' continuous service	- 27 working days

Up to 5 days' annual leave not taken during the leave year may be carried forward into the next leave year. For further details on your annual leave entitlements please refer to your contract of employment or speak with Human Resources.

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