



Parental Leave Policy

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“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

1. Policy and Guidance on Parental Leave

- 1.1. All employees with at least 1 years' continuous service (including service with a previous employer) shall be entitled to 18 weeks' unpaid leave, (pro rata for part-time employees). This leave entitlement is subject to a maximum of 4 weeks per annum and ceases on the 18th birthday of the child.
- 1.2. In the case of a parent of a child with a disability, the 18 weeks entitlement may be taken at any time up to the child's 18th birthday.
- 1.3. The leave is unpaid.

2. Arrangements for the taking of leave

- 2.1. The 4 weeks of leave must be taken in 1 week blocks, but may be used in block, subject to the needs of the school/service. (Parents of disabled children may take leave in periods as short as a day).

3. Notice Requirements

- 3.1. A minimum of 21 days' notice is required irrespective of the length of time off being requested.

4. Postponement of time off requests

- 4.1. Line managers may postpone/delay requests where there are school/service considerations. Consideration will also be given to the impact of requests in respect of other staff leave/training commitments. The impact on job sharers may also influence the timing of leave.

5. Leave Requests and supporting documentation

- 5.1. Requests should be submitted to the responsible line manager in writing and on the first request should be accompanied by either a birth certificate, court agreement or other evidence of parental responsibility (Parents are defined as those with parental responsibility under the Children's Act 1989 or who are registered as a father under the Births and Deaths Registration Acts).
- 5.2. Requests will be considered within 1 week of the submission and, in the event of refusal/postponement, may be referred by the employee to the Chief Executive. When turned down, reasons for refusal/postponement will be given in writing within 7 days of the original request.

6. Circumstances in which requests will not be approved

- 6.1. Requests for Parental Leave will not normally be approved where formal meetings are pending or monitoring arrangements are in place in connection with the Trust's employment procedures (e.g. conduct, capability or sickness).
- 6.2. Where requests for Parental Leave are postponed, the postponement shall be for a maximum of 6 months. This may mean that leave is postponed beyond the 18th birthday of the child.

7. Sickness during Parental Leave

- 7.1. An employee who falls sick during a period of Parental Leave shall be regarded as being on sick leave (and therefore paid as such) if certified by a G.P. as sick for a period in excess of seven days.

8. Impact on Annual Leave

- 8.1. As with other unpaid leave, any contractual annual leave will not accrue during periods of authorised parental leave.

9. Effect on Superannuation

- 9.1. The period of unpaid absence will be classed as “non-pensionable” service and no employee or employer pension contributions will be made.
- 9.2. You can buy extra pension to cover the period by undertaking to pay an Additional Pension Contribution (APC) over a period of time or by paying a one-off lump sum.
- 9.3. For further information please contact your respective Pension Provider (LGPS or TPS).

10. Parental Leave and Adoptive Parents Leave

- 10.1. Employees who adopt children are entitled to the same post Maternity Leave provisions as women who take Maternity Leave.
- 10.2. 4 weeks Parental Leave may be taken in addition to the entitlement to Adoptive Parents Leave.

11. Parental Leave and Maternity Leave

- 11.1. Employees who take Maternity Leave may add up to 4 weeks of Parental Leave to any unpaid Maternity Leave that is taken. Parental Leave will not count towards the 3 months’ service requirement associated with the payment of Occupational Maternity pay (12 weeks half pay).

12. Special Circumstances

- 12.1. Unpaid leave provisions do allow for up to 12 months' unpaid leave, which may in exceptional circumstances be granted for family reasons (i.e. long term illness of a child).

13. Policy and Guidance on Time off for Dependants

- 13.1. All employees have the right to take a reasonable period of unpaid time off work to deal with emergencies involving a dependant. The new right is intended to cover unforeseen circumstances. If employees know in advance they are going to need time off arrangements, it is expected that annual leave or special leave will be taken.
- 13.2. In the event of unexpected or sudden problems occurring, time off may be taken to enable any necessary longer term arrangements to be made.
- 13.3. Some examples include:
- If a dependant falls ill, is injured or assaulted;
 - To make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured;
 - To deal with the death of a dependant (if not eligible for paid bereavement leave);
 - To deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements for a dependant e.g. where a child minder or nurse fails to turn up;
 - To deal with an incident involving an employees' child during service hours e.g. unexpected school closure.

14. Who counts as a dependant?

- 14.1. A dependant is the partner, child or parent of the employee, or someone who lives with the employee as part of their family. For example, this could be an elderly aunt or grandparent who lives in the household. It does not include tenants or boarders living in the family home, or someone who lives in the household as an employee, for example, a live-in housekeeper.

- 14.2. In cases of illness, injury or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance e.g. a parent who does not live in the same household.

15. How much time off must be allowed?

- 15.1. There is no set limit to the amount of time off which can be taken. In most cases, the amount of leave will be 1 or 2 days at the most, but this will depend on individual circumstances and is at the discretion of the line manager.
- 15.2. As is currently the case with hospital and dental appointments (for which there is no entitlement to paid leave) there may be circumstances where short periods of time off are required (i.e. less than half a day). Line managers may, subject to service needs, allow employees to work up lost time.
- 15.3. There is no statutory definition of what is a 'reasonable' amount of time off but guidance from the Government suggests that the leave should be enough to help the employee cope with crisis, visit the doctor or make alternative care arrangements. The factors that are recommended to be considered include: the time needed for a task, the time that an employee has already taken off for whatever reason and the level of disruption to the school/service.

16. Notice Requirements

- 16.1. There are no statutory notice requirements and the very nature of emergencies makes them impractical. Employees are expected, as soon as possible to inform the office about their absence, the reason for it and how long they expect to be away from work.

17. Can requests be refused?

- 17.1. If line managers consider that a reason does not fall within the scope of the provisions, requests may be refused. The Trust would encourage any employee who thinks they have been unreasonably refused time off to raise it, in the first instance, with their line manager. Employees have the option

of submitting a grievance via the grievance procedure if they still feel they have been treated unreasonably.

18. Leave Requests and Supporting Documentation

- 18.1. Requests – wherever possible - should be made in writing to line managers and details of any absence indicated on attendance returns.