



Parental Leave (unpaid) Policy

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1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees. It has been subject to consultation with Trade Unions. It does not form part of anybody's contract of employment and may be varied.

2. Introduction

There will be occasions when working parents wish to take time off work to care for or spend time with their child or children.

Unpaid Parental Leave is not the same as Shared Parental Leave. Shared Parental Leave enables mothers/adopters to commit to ending their maternity or adoption leave and pay at a future date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as Shared Parental Leave and Pay with their partner, or to return to work early from maternity/adoption leave and opt in to Shared Parental Leave and Pay at a later date. Please see separate Shared Parental Leave Policies for Birth and Adoption.

3. Eligibility

Parental Leave is available to employees who have been continuously employed for a period of 12 months and who meet one of the following conditions:

- they are the parent of a child who is under 18 years of age
- they have adopted a child under the age of 18
- they are the stepparent of a child who is under 18 years of age and have parental responsibility agreed by both biological parents
- they have legal parental responsibility for a child who is under 18 years of age.

You must be taking the leave to spend time with or otherwise care for the child.

Employers can ask for proof (like a birth certificate) as long as it's reasonable to do so.

4. Amount of Parental leave

If you are eligible for Parental Leave, you will be entitled to up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave per child, which can be taken up until the child's 18th birthday. If you work part time, your entitlement to leave will be pro rata to the weekly hours or days worked.

Employees may take up to four weeks' leave in respect of any individual child in any year.

Employees must take parental leave as whole weeks (e.g., 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless your child is disabled. You do not have to take all the leave at once.

5. Notice of Intention to take Parental Leave

To apply for Parental Leave, you must provide at least 21 days' notice of the period of leave that you propose to take. Where the request is due to having a baby or adopting, it is 21 days before the week the baby or child is expected. This notice must specify the dates on which the period of leave is to begin and end.

We may postpone a period of unpaid parental leave where it considers that its business would be unduly disrupted if the employee were to take leave during the period requested. In such a case, we will allow the employee to take an equivalent period of unpaid parental leave beginning no later than six months after the commencement of the period originally requested. We will give notice in writing of the postponement stating the reason for it and specifying suggested dates for the employee to take parental leave. Such notice will be given no more than seven days after the employee's notice was given to us.

There are instances where we cannot postpone a period of unpaid parental leave. This is where parental leave has been requested immediately after childbirth, immediately after placement for adoption or where the postponement would mean that the employee is no longer eligible e.g., the postponement would take the leave until after the child's 18th birthday.

Unpaid parental leave is not intended to be used for emergencies or unexpected events where you need to take time off to care for your child. You should refer to the Dependant Leave policy in these situations.

6. Entitlement on Return from Parental leave

On return from unpaid parental leave you are entitled to return to the same role, with the same terms and conditions of employment. You should not be disadvantaged, treated unfairly, or dismissed as a result of taking unpaid parental leave.

7. Keeping Records

Employers are not required to keep statutory records of parental leave taken; however, it is advisable that Headteachers may wish to record requests for parental leave and the amount of parental leave taken. It is open to employers to make enquiries of a previous employer or seek a declaration from the employee as to how much parental leave, they have taken.