



Parental Leave Policy

Purpose

This policy will provide information regarding entitlements and procedures for employees eligible to take parental leave.

Scope

The School believes in supporting employees with their parental commitments. The School aims to provide an environment of respect and does not condone any discrimination or detriment towards an employee due to these commitments.

Entitlement

Parental leave is unpaid. Employees are entitled to 18 weeks' leave for each child up to their 18th birthday. There is a limit of 4 weeks' leave per year. A 'year' will start from the date on which the employee first becomes eligible for parental leave, regarding that specific child. Each successive period of 12 months will begin on the anniversary of that date. This also applies to parents of a child with additional needs or an adopted child.

Eligibility for Parental Leave

For an employee to be eligible for parental leave they must meet the following requirements;

- Be an 'Employee' with a contract of employment. Agency, Self-employed Contractors and Casual workers may not be eligible
- Have 1 year's completed service with the School
- Be named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or they have / expect to have parental responsibility
- The child is under 18 years of age

This does not apply to Foster Parents unless they have secured parental responsibility through the courts.

Either parent can be eligible for parental leave. The amounts of parental leave cannot be shared between parents. For example; a father cannot take 9 weeks parental leave and the mother to then take 17 weeks parental leave.

An employee will also have to produce evidence as to his/her entitlement. For example: paperwork, which demonstrates parental responsibility, or expected responsibility for the child in question; the child's date of birth or date on which placement for adoption began. An Employee who is exercising a right in relation to a disabled child will need to provide details of the child's entitlement to Disability Living Allowance.



Parental leave cannot be taken in blocks of less than one week, except if taken in relation to a child who is disabled. As the leave is per parent per child, any parental leave taken with a previous employer would count towards the total 18 weeks.

Notice of Parental Leave

Employees must give 21 days' written notice before their intended start date. This written notice must also state the start and end date of the proposed leave.

The employee should provide written notice of any period of parental leave they are proposing to take. This notice must be given to the School at least 21 days before the date on which the leave is to start. This notice must also state the dates on which the period of leave is to begin and end.

If the employee is the father of the child, in respect of whom the leave is to be taken, and he requests for parental leave to begin when his child is born, his notice must specify the expected week of childbirth and the duration of the period of leave. The employee must give this notice at least 21 days before the expected week of childbirth.

Where the parental leave is for an adopted child and is to begin on the date of the placement, the employee's notice must be given to the School at least 21 days before the beginning of the week in which the child is to be placed for adoption, or as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter. It must specify the week in which the placement is expected to occur and the duration of the period of parental leave requested.

Delaying Parental Leave

The School may postpone a period of parental leave (other than where parental leave has been requested immediately after childbirth or immediately after placement for adoption) where the School considers that its business would be unduly disrupted if the employee were to take leave during the period requested.

The School will give notice in writing within 7 days of the original request stating

- the reason for postponement
- suggested dates for the employee to take parental leave within 6 months of the requested date

Employment Terms and Conditions during Parental Leave

The employee's employment rights and obligations will continue during Parental Leave, including;

- Notice periods
- Annual leave
- School disciplinary and grievance procedures



- Redundancy entitlements
- Right to return to a similar job

Employees must also ensure the following are continued:

- Notice periods
- Disclosure of confidential information
- The acceptance of gifts or other benefits
- Participation in any other businesses

If an employee is found to have taken parental leave for purposes not relating to parental responsibilities, this will be regarded as an act of gross misconduct and could result in any disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Returning to Work

An employee is entitled to return to the same job provided the leave was for a period of four weeks or less, and the leave was not taken immediately following additional maternity or additional adoption leave.

If the period of parental leave was longer than four weeks or was taken immediately following additional maternity or additional adoption leave, the employee is entitled to return to the same job if practicable. If this is not practicable, they will be entitled to return to a similar job with similar terms and conditions.

The Impact of Equal Opportunities

Employees who have parental commitments will have equal opportunities for job promotions, vacancies and all other aspects of the employment relationship.

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