

## **Ordinary Parental Leave Policy and Procedure**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Parental Leave is defined as pre-arranged unpaid leave taken to look after a child or to make arrangements for the good of a child's welfare. This policy aims to support parents to balance their work and family commitments.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. The policy enables all eligible employees to take unpaid leave up to their child's 18th birthday.
- 2.2. The policy does not form part of the employee's contract of employment and the University may amend it at any time. The policy states that:
- Parental leave is for a maximum of 18 weeks.
  - Parental leave is unpaid.
  - The right to ordinary parental leave arises in respect of each child.
  - An employee must have completed at least one year's continuous service with the employer to be eligible.
  - Parental leave is available for parents of all children up to the age of 18 years.
- 2.3. Employees who work part-time will receive a pro-rata amount of parental leave.
- 2.4. The reasons for the leave need not be connected with the child's health and is intended to provide time off for parents for matters that can be foreseen. There is a separate right to take leave when there is an emergency involving the child (see Time Off for Dependants Leave).
- 2.5. This policy applies to all employees, including those on a Fixed Term Appointment.

## **3. Eligibility**

- 3.1. Both parents, whether they are the natural or adoptive parents, can qualify for parental leave. They must either:
- Be named on the child's birth certificate or,
  - Have, or expect to have parental responsibility under the law for the child.
  - Be someone other than a natural or adoptive parent, such as a guardian, who has acquired under the law, parental responsibility for the child.
- 3.2. The parents of a child do not have to be living with the child in order to qualify for parental leave.
- 3.3. To qualify for Ordinary Parental Leave, you must have completed one year's continuous service with the University by the time you want to take the leave.

## **4. Evidence**

- 4.1. Evidence will not normally be required to support an application for Ordinary Parental Leave. However, if there is reason to doubt the validity of the claim the Line Manager can ask to see

supporting evidence. The evidence may take the form of information contained in the child's birth certificate, papers confirming a child's adoption or the date of placement in adoption cases.

- 4.2. If you have changed jobs, the University has the right to make enquiries of your previous employer, or to seek a declaration from you, to establish how much parental leave you have already taken. Where the full entitlement has not been taken the employee may apply to take any remaining balance.

## **5. Notifying an intention to take Ordinary Parental Leave**

- 5.1. Employees should give at least 21 days' notice of an intention to take parental leave and should specify the dates they wish the period of leave to begin and end.
- 5.2. Applications for parental leave should be made in writing to the Dean of Faculties/ Head of Service or in the case of a Senior Manager to the relevant line manager. Employees may be required to provide evidence of their responsibility for the child and the child's age.
- 5.3. Employees are encouraged to discuss with their line manager at the earliest opportunity any plans that they may have for taking Parental Leave to enable any absence to be planned for.
- 5.4. The line manager will normally meet with the employee to discuss their request and confirm their decision within 10 working days.
- 5.5. If parental leave is granted, the line manager will confirm the period of unpaid leave in writing and inform HR and Payroll.
- 5.6. If the request is rejected, the line manager will meet with the employee to inform them of the decision and also confirm the decision and the reasons for it in writing. A copy of the reasons should be provided to HR.

## **6. Appeals**

- 6.1. This policy provides an employee with the right to appeal the decision of the line manager within 10 working days of it being notified to them; the grounds of appeal should be put in writing to the Dean of Faculty/Head of Service.
- 6.2. The Dean of Faculty/Head of Service will review the case and decide on the outcome of the appeal in writing within 10 days of receiving the appeal. A copy of the outcome should be sent to HR.

## **7. Taking Ordinary Parental leave**

- 7.1. Ordinary parental leave may be taken in blocks or multiples of one week, up to a maximum of four weeks in any one calendar year for each child.
- 7.2. An employee may not take parental leave in blocks of less than one week unless the child has been awarded disability living allowance, in which case leave can be taken in blocks of a single day or more.
- 7.3. One week's parental leave is equal to the employee's contracted hours per week.
- 7.4. Ordinary parental leave is an individual right and cannot be transferred between parents.

## **8. Postponing Ordinary Parental Leave**

- 8.1. The University reserves the right to postpone a period of parental leave requested for up to six months. Postponement may be necessary where the University could not cope with the absence of an employee at the time requested. Postponement will be confirmed in writing no later than seven days after the employee's request to take parental leave has been received. The letter will state the reason for the postponement and set out suggested new dates of parental leave. No requests for parental leave will be unreasonably postponed. If the postponement means delaying the Ordinary Parental Leave beyond the age at which the right to take Department Parental Leave ceases, an extension will be allowed. All requests will be dealt with sympathetically and sensitively.
- 8.2. Where an employee applies to take Ordinary Parental Leave immediately after the birth or adoption of a child the University cannot postpone Parental Leave.

## **9. Conditions during Ordinary Parental Leave**

- 9.1. Normal terms and conditions of employment will apply (except for pay) and an employee will continue to accrue annual leave.
- 9.2. The employee and the University will continue to pay pension contributions.
- 9.3. At the end of the ordinary parental leave, the employee will be entitled to return to the same job, provided that the leave was for a period of four weeks or less (and did not follow on immediately from a period of maternity, adoption or shared parental leave).

## **10. Sick leave during Ordinary Parental Leave**

- 10.1. There is no entitlement to sick pay once a period of Ordinary Parental Leave has begun, until the employee ends the period of Parental Leave.
- 10.2. If an employee falls ill while on Ordinary Parental leave they must send in medical evidence in the normal way so that Statutory Sick Pay can be considered.
- 10.3. Employees whose intention was to resume work at the end of a period Ordinary Parental Leave but are unable to do so due to illness must submit medical evidence of sickness before the end of the Ordinary Parental Leave. The absence should then be converted to sick absence from the end of the Ordinary Parental Leave and the normal sick absence provisions will apply.

## **11. Keeping in touch arrangements**

- 11.1. Keeping in touch arrangements should be established and maintained during the period of Ordinary Parental Leave. Arrangements should be put in place so that employees receive information about promotion exercises, recruitment exercises and vacancy information. In addition, the employee should be notified of any publications or changes which may affect them.

12.Returning to Work

12.1. An employee who returns to work after a period of ordinary parental leave is entitled to return to the job in which they were employed prior to the absence if it was an isolated period of leave lasting four weeks or less. If the period of parental leave followed on immediately from another period of statutory leave (maternity, paternity, adoption leave etc), you have the right to return to the same job unless it is not reasonably practicable for the University to allow this, in which case you have the right to suitable alternative employment on terms and conditions which are as favourable as those which applied if you had not been absent.

13.Unpaid Leave

13.1. Employees who require additional time off over and above the parental leave entitlement should refer to the ‘Unpaid Leave’ or ‘Annual leave’ policies.

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