



Parental Leave Policy & Procedures

1 Introduction

Employees with children up to the age of 18 can take periods of unpaid parental leave:

What is parental leave for?

Parental leave must be taken to care for the child. This means looking after the welfare of the child and can include making arrangements for the good of the child. For example an employee might take parental leave to:

- spend more time with the child
- accompany the child during a stay in hospital
- check out new schools
- help settle the child into new childcare arrangements
- enable a family to spend more time together, e.g. taking the child to stay with grandparents

2 Entitlement to Parental Leave

Employees are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave:

- For each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday.
- If they have or expect to have parental responsibility for the child

The parent doesn't have to be living with the child to qualify.

3 Evidence of Entitlement

You may ask for evidence to show that:

- The employee is the parent of the child
- The employee has parental responsibility for the child
- The child is below the age at which the parental leave ceases

This evidence could be:

- The child's birth certificate
 - Papers confirming a child's adoption or the date of placement for adoption
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The request for evidence must be reasonable e.g. it is not necessary to check the employee's entitlement on every occasion when leave is requested.

4 Notification of parental leave

Employees must give at least 21 days notice before a period of parental leave begins, of both the start and end dates of the leave period they intend to take. This does not have to be in writing.

An employee must notify 21 days before their maternity/adoption leave ends if they want to take parental leave immediately after the end of their maternity or adoption leave.

5 Notification for parental leave immediately after childbirth or adoption

If an employee wants to take parental leave immediately after the birth of a child, they must give 21 days notice before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth.

If an employee wants to take parental leave immediately after the adoption of a child they must give 21 days notice of the expected week of placement. If this is not possible they should give notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.

As long as the right notice is given the parental leave will start on the day on which the child is:

- born – regardless of whether the child is born early or late
- placed for adoption

Parental leave may be granted without the required notice in special circumstances at the discretion of the School.

6 Postponement of parental leave

Leave can be postponed for up to six months after the beginning of the leave period originally requested. However it cannot be postponed so that it ends after the child's 18th birthday.

Leave can only be postponed if it would cause significant disruption to service delivery e.g. if leave was requested:

- over a period of peak seasonal production
- at the same time as other employees have requested leave
- and the employee's absence would unduly harm your business

Leave cannot be postponed if it's requested to be taken immediately after the child is born or placed for adoption. If an employee's parental leave needs to be postponed you must consult the employee about a new date. This should be done in writing within 7 days of receiving the employee's notification explaining why you need to postpone their leave and confirming the new start and end date. The employee must be allowed to take the same amount of parental leave as they originally applied for.

7 How long can parental leave last?

A maximum of 4 weeks can be taken in any year in respect of any individual child. Therefore an employee with twins could take up to eight weeks in any one year.

A period of leave can be taken immediately after the end of normal maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

Periods of leave must be taken in multiples of one week - unless the child is disabled, in which case it may be taken as individual days.

What is a week's leave?

One week's parental leave is equal to the length of time that an employee is normally required to work in a week.

8 Irregular working weeks

If an employees working pattern varies from week to week, you must calculate an average working week as a fraction of the period for which the employee is required to work in a year.

For example, if the employee works three days a week for 30 weeks, four days a week for 18 weeks and two days a week for four weeks, you would calculate the number of days leave in their average week by dividing the total number of working days in these periods by 52.

If an employee takes leave in blocks of less than one week, a week is only deducted from their overall entitlement to 18 weeks when the short periods of leave add up to what would be a normal or average working week

9 Terms and Conditions during Parental Leave

Time taken as parental leave shall be treated as continuous service for the purpose of Part 2 Paragraph 14 of the Green Book.

Employees who fall sick during a period of parental leave and give the relevant notification shall be entitled to pay under the sickness scheme and this period shall not count towards their parental leave entitlement.

10 Returning from Parental Leave

Employees return to work to the same post they held when the parental leave first started.

11 Time off to deal with emergencies involving dependants

All employees have the right to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant.

A dependant is a spouse, partner, child or parent or a person who lives with the employee (but not a lodger). However it could also be someone else who reasonably relies on the employee for care e.g. an elderly neighbour.

The amount of time should allow the employee to deal with the immediate problem and put any other necessary care arrangements in place

12 Childcare Advice

For **free** advice on childcare provision, please contact the Families Information Service, on 0800 783 4645 or email fis@southtyneside.gov.uk

13 Equality and Diversity Statement

The School is committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity. An equality check for this policy was carried out in 2017. No equality implications were identified in this policy.

Policy approved by Governors:	Nov 2020
Date of next review by Governors:	Nov 2021