

# Emergency Leave to Care for Dependents

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

A dependant is a spouse, partner, parent, child or any other person who lives in the same household (but not a lodger) and relies on the employee for care in an emergency situation. It could also be someone else who reasonably relies on the employee for care, e.g. an elderly neighbour.

Types of emergency circumstances could include the following:

- Assisting a dependant who falls ill, or is injured or assaulted – including mental illness or injury, e.g. emotional distress;
- Supporting a dependant who goes into labour (This leave does not cover planned leave after the birth of the baby - please refer to [Childbirth/Adoption Support Leave](#) and/or [Parental Leave](#) if appropriate);
- Arranging for an ill or injured dependant to be cared for;
- Arranging longer-term care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- Making alternative arrangements when existing care arrangements for a dependant unexpectedly break down, e.g. your registered childcare provider is unexpectedly unavailable;
- Dealing with an incident, involving a dependant child, during school hours, e.g. suspension from school or involved in a fight/bullying scenario;
- Making arrangements following the death of a dependant (see also Compassionate Leave within [Unplanned Absence](#)).

The amount of time off should only be what is immediately necessary to deal with the situation. This type of leave should not be used for longer-term care situations. For example, an employee would not be entitled to take two weeks off to care for a sick child, but they could take one or two days off to take the child to the doctor and arrange for someone else to look after him or her.

During any period of absence employees must always follow the [absence reporting procedure](#). Failure to follow this procedure could result in disciplinary action. See [Unauthorised Absence](#) for further details.

Other types of emergency situation may arise that mean an employee may not be able to attend work but which do not necessarily involve a dependent, e.g. a burglary, flood, fire, other domestic emergency, etc. In such circumstances, this absence should be treated as [Unplanned Absence](#).

## Payment during Absence

There is no statutory right for Emergency Leave to Care for Dependants to be paid and in most circumstances such leave will be unpaid. Employees are not generally expected to cover this leave by using their paid annual leave entitlement, although the use of annual leave may be appropriate in some circumstances and an employee may request this.

Whether this leave will be paid or unpaid, whether the employee will be allowed to take the time from their annual leave entitlement, or given the opportunity to make up the time by working additional hours on another day within a reasonable timeframe, will be at the discretion of the Head of School or equivalent, in conjunction with the relevant HR Partner/Adviser if appropriate.

You should be aware that any periods of unpaid leave will affect your Pension contributions. Where possible and in advance of taking a period of unpaid leave you should contact the Pensions Office for further advice.

**Line Managers should record all unplanned leave locally. Unpaid leave must be reported to HR Operations using an [Unpaid Leave Form](#).**

These guidelines outline the University's approach to handling Emergency Leave to Care for a Dependant.

Please refer to your HR Partner/Adviser if you require further advice.