

# Parental Leave

## What is Parental Leave for?

The University recognises that employees with dependant children may wish to take time off, in addition to paid annual leave, to look after a child or to make arrangements for the child's welfare.

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
- look after a child during school holidays

## Entitlement to Parental Leave

To be eligible for Parental Leave, an employee must have at least 1 year's continuous service and must have formal parental responsibility for the child.

The employee is entitled to take up to a total of 18 working weeks of unpaid parental leave for each child or adopted child under 18 years. This entitlement is linked to the child and not to an individual's job. Therefore if an employee has taken any parental leave with a previous employer, those weeks are included in the 18 weeks of entitlement per child.

In the case of part-time employees, the right will be pro-rated based on the number of days worked per week, e.g. an employee who works 2 days per week will have the right to 36 days' (18 working weeks') parental leave.

The parent doesn't have to be living with the child to qualify, but must have retained formal parental responsibility.

A maximum of 4 weeks' Parental Leave may be taken in any calendar year.

Whether Parental Leave is taken in blocks of one week or as individual days is at the discretion of the employee's line manager and approved by the Head of School/Function or equivalent.

## **Evidence of Entitlement**

On the first request for each child, the line manager reserves the right to ask an employee to produce evidence to show that:

- the employee is the parent of a child;
- the employee has parental responsibility for the child;
- the child is below the age at which the right to Parental Leave ceases;

## **Notification of Parental Leave**

The employee must provide at least 21 days' notice before their intended start date for Parental Leave.

The employee must notify the University at least 21 days before their Maternity or Adoption Leave ends if they want to take Parental Leave immediately after the end of their Maternity or Adoption Leave.

## **Notification of Parental Leave immediately after childbirth, adoption, or becoming parents through surrogacy**

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 (or after becoming a parent through surrogacy and a Parental Order), they must give 21 days' notice of the expected week of placement. In rare cases where this is not possible, an adoptive parent should give notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## **Postponement of Parental Leave**

Every effort will be made to meet an employee's request for Parental Leave, but the employee's line manager may postpone a request for up to 6 months if the employee's absence would have a significant effect on the business, for example at peak times of activity. Any postponement will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 7 days of their request and will state the reason for the postponement.

The exception to this is when a request is made to take Parental Leave directly following the birth of a baby; or, in the case of adoptions or becoming a parent following a Parental Order, directly following the placement of the child; or where an employee would no longer be eligible to take Parental Leave as a result of postponement (for example the child will have had their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday). Such requests will not be postponed.

## **Other Information**

Parental Leave entitlements do not affect entitlements to Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave, or Childbirth/Adoption Support Leave, which are covered separately. The University's family leave policies can be viewed on the [Family Leave webpage](#).

Parental Leave is unpaid. 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.

Requests for Parental Leave should be made using the Parental Leave (unpaid) Request Form.

These guidelines outline the University's approach to handling Parental Leave.

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

Version Control:

Date of review	Details of any update	Reviewed by
7 October 2020	Annual review. No updates required.	HSL
20 September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarification that parental leave taken with a previous employer counts towards the 18 weeks of entitlement per child</li><li>• Clarification that parental leave cannot be postponed in cases where postponement may result in the employee no longer being eligible for this type of leave</li><li>• Removal of hyperlinks to individual policies.</li><li>• Link to Family Leave page for policy information</li></ul>	HSL