

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.

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 a child.

The employee is entitled to up to a total of 18 working weeks of unpaid parental leave for each child or adopted child under 18 years. .

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 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;
- in the case of a disabled child, the child is entitled to disability living allowance.

Notification of Parental Leave

The employee 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.

The employee must notify the University 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 for 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. Such requests will not be postponed.

Parental Leave entitlements do not affect entitlements to [Maternity Leave](#), [Adoption Leave](#), or [Childbirth/Adoption Support Leave](#), which are covered separately.

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.

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

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

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

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