

## PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Eligible employees can take unpaid parental leave to look after their child's welfare, which could include, but is not limited to, settling children into new childcare arrangements, to spend more time with their children and/or with family, to look at new schools, or to look after their children. Parental leave can be taken for each child born or adopted.

#### 1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the principles that apply to requests for parental leave.

#### 1.2 Scope

**1.2.1** Employees are eligible for parental leave if the following criteria are met:

- they are named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or have obtained legal parental responsibility (through the courts) for the child
- they have or expect to have [parental responsibility](#) for the child
- the child is under 18 years old

**1.2.2** For leave taken prior to 6 April 2026 the employee must also have one year's continuous service with the University.

**1.2.3** This policy applies to all staff regardless of sex or gender.

**1.2.4** Depending on the circumstances of an individual case, the University may give sympathetic consideration to applications for parental leave from staff with informal responsibility for looking after a child.

### 2. POLICY

#### 2.1 Length of leave and when/how it can be taken

**2.1.1** Eligible employees can take up to a maximum of 18 weeks (in total) unpaid parental leave for each child up to their 18th birthday. The leave can start once the child is born or placed for adoption subject to the notification requirements set out below.

**2.1.2** Eligible staff who apply for parental leave will not be disadvantaged if they work part-time or irregular hours, although the length of time they are eligible to take is pro-rated to their normal working hours.

**2.1.3** Normally, parental leave is taken in blocks or multiples of one week, with the exception that parents of disabled children can take leave in multiples of one day. Normally, up to a maximum of 4 weeks' parental leave per qualifying child can be taken in any year (i.e. rolling 12-month period), by agreement with their line manager.

## **2.2 Applying for Parental Leave**

**2.2.1** Applications for parental leave should be made on the Parental Leave Form, along with a copy of documentary evidence that the member of staff is the parent or the person legally responsible for the child. The Parental Leave form should be completed in the Self-Service Portal, People Services tile, Leave and Work-Life Balance. Queries may be directed to [people.support@keele.ac.uk](mailto:people.support@keele.ac.uk).

**2.2.2** Normally, the member of staff is required to give at least 21 days' notice that they wish to take parental leave and must confirm the start and end date of the period of leave. Following the staff member completing the Parental Leave form, the line manager will receive a workflow request which needs to be authorised in good time and in advance of the leave being taken to ensure the period of leave is recorded within the relevant timeframe, and the individual's pay is adjusted accordingly.

**2.2.3** It may be necessary for parental leave to be postponed if the manager considers the member of staff's absence will disrupt, unduly, the operation of that Unit. The manager must suggest a new start date which must be within 6 months of the original requested start date. Parental leave cannot be postponed if it means the employee would no longer qualify for parental leave, e.g. postponing it until after the child's 18th birthday.

**2.2.4** Written notice of postponement and the reasons for it must be given within 7 days of the member of staff giving written notice that they wish to take parental leave. Parental leave cannot be postponed when the member of staff gives written notice to take it immediately after the child is born or is placed with the family for adoption.

## **2.3 Status of the Contract of employment**

The member of staff will remain employed while on parental leave and the employment contract will continue to apply (for example, some terms and conditions of employment, such as contractual notice, redundancy terms and disciplinary and grievance procedures will still apply and the member of staff will be entitled to receive the customary annual increment on their salary with effect from the normal incremental date), unless the contract is terminated by the employer or member of staff.

### **2.3.1 Annual Leave**

A member of staff's entitlement to annual leave will accrue as usual during the period of parental leave.

### **2.3.2 Pension**

During a period of unpaid parental leave, the University will continue to pay employer and employee pension contributions, and the member of staff's pensionable service will also continue, as long as the member of staff has agreed to return to work.

### **2.3.3 Returning to Work**

At the end of parental leave a member of staff has the right to return to the same job as before, or, if that is not practicable, to a similar job which has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the old job. Where the leave taken is for a period of 4 weeks or less, the member of staff will be entitled to return to the same job.

## **2.4 Keeping Records**

Employers are not required to keep statutory records of parental leave taken, however, through completing the Parental Leave Form a record will be created and retained on the individual's Keele People record. Should a member of staff change jobs, other employers can make enquiries of a previous employer or seek a declaration from the member of staff about how much parental leave they have taken. Where such enquiries are made, People and Organisational Development can support with the provision of this information.

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**3.1** For the avoidance of doubt, where a role title, department, faculty or professional service area is named and it is no longer in existence, it should be read as the equivalent role or department, faculty or professional service area. Should individuals remain uncertain, clarification can be sought from a senior member of staff within the management line.

### **3.2 Employee:**

- a) To ensure requests for parental leave are submitted as soon as is practically possible, and in any event in line with the timescales specified in the policy.

### **3.3 Manager:**

- a) To ensure the relevant workflows are completed promptly and People and Organisational Development are notified, in advance of an individual taking a

period of parental leave so that their record can be updated, and their pay adjusted accordingly.

### **3.4 People and Organisational Development:**

- a) To provide further guidance on the application of this policy as required.

## **4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- a) Maternity Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure
- b) Adoption Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure
- c) Paternity/Partner Leave Policy
- d) Shared Parental Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure
- e) Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure

## **5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION**

**5.1** As a general principle, the policy will be reviewed by People and Organisational Development, in consultation with recognised Trade Unions after three years or where operational and/or legislative requirements change. Any revisions will be approved in accordance with UEC and Council procedures, where applicable.

**5.2** This policy is not contractual and is not intended to be incorporated into individual terms and conditions of employment. It may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

**5.3** This policy will be published on the University policy zone web page and will also be accessible via the People and Organisational Development web pages.

**5.4** Equality issues have been taken into account during the development of procedure and all protected characteristics have been considered as part of the Equality Analysis undertaken.

## **6. ANNEXES**

None.

## **7. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION**

<b>Document Name</b>	Parental Leave Policy
<b>Owner</b>	Chief People Officer
<b>Version Number</b>	1.3
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<b>Date for Next Review</b>	06 April 2029

<b>Related University Policy Documents</b>	Maternity Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure Adoption Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure Paternity/Partner Leave Policy Shared Parental Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	Parental, caring