

## **Parental Leave Policy**

### **1. Overview**

- 1.1. Eligible employees can take unpaid parental leave to look after their child's welfare, e.g. to:
  - 1.1.1. spend more time with their children
  - 1.1.2. look at new schools
  - 1.1.3. settle children into new childcare arrangements
  - 1.1.4. spend more time with family - e.g. visiting grandparents
- 1.2. Their employment rights (like the right to pay, holidays and returning to a job) are protected during parental leave.
- 1.3. The child must be under 5 (or 18 in special circumstances). The entitlement is for each child. This means that, for each child, a parent can take a total of 18 weeks up to the child's 5th birthday.
- 1.4. For each adopted child a parent can take 18 weeks up to child's 18th birthday or 5th anniversary of their adoption, whichever comes first.
- 1.5. For each child who qualifies for Disability Living Allowance a parent can take 18 weeks up to the child's 18th birthday.
- 1.6. The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child (unless the employer agrees otherwise).
- 1.7. Parental leave must be taken as whole weeks (e.g. 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless your employer agrees otherwise or if your child is disabled. You don't have to take all the leave at once.

### **NOTES**

Parental leave applies to each child not to an individual's job.

### **Example**

An employee is entitled to 18 weeks. They've used 10 with a previous employer. They can use up to 8 weeks with their new employer if they're eligible.

### **2. Eligibility**

- 2.1. Employees qualify if all of these apply:
  - 2.1.1. they've been in the company for more than a year
  - 2.1.2. they're named on the child's birth or adoption certificate
  - 2.1.3. they have or expect to have parental responsibility
  - 2.1.4. they're not self-employed or a 'worker' - e.g. an agency worker or contractor
  - 2.1.5. they're not a foster parent (unless they've secured parental responsibility through the courts)
  - 2.1.6. the child is under 5 (or 18 in special circumstances)

- 2.2. Employers can ask for proof (like a birth certificate) as long as it's reasonable to do so - e.g. they can't ask for proof each time an employee requests leave.

### 3. Notice period

- 3.1. Employees must give 21 days' notice before their intended start date. If they or their partner are having a baby or adopting, it is 21 days before the week the baby or child is expected. Employees must confirm the start and end dates in their notice.

### 4. Delaying leave

- 4.1. Leave can't be postponed (delayed) if:
  - 4.1.1. the employer doesn't have a 'significant reason' - eg it would cause serious disruption to the business
  - 4.1.2. it's being taken by the father or partner immediately after the birth or adoption of a child
  - 4.1.3. it means an employee would no longer qualify for parental leave - e.g. postponing it until after the child's 5th birthday.
- 4.2. If it's postponed, the employer:
  - 4.2.1. must write explaining why within 7 days of the original request
  - 4.2.2. suggest a new start date - this must be within 6 months of the requested start date
  - 4.2.3. can't change the amount of leave being requested