

Parental Leave Policy

The Company is committed to ensuring that as far as possible employees are able to combine their career and family responsibilities. The Company recognises that parenthood brings additional responsibilities. This policy sets out the company's policy for complying with this and allowing employees their full rights.

The Company recognises the need to assist those with parental responsibilities to balance the needs of their work and their family. The Company observes the requirements of the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999 (as amended).

Eligibility

Parental Leave is open to:

- Employees with parental responsibilities* for children, born or adopted, on or after 15 December 1999 with one year's continuous service.
- Employees who had a baby, or adopted a child, between 15 December 1994 (15 December 1981 in the case of a disabled child) and 14 December 1999 and with at least one year's continuous service (including a previous employer) between 15 December 1998 and 9 January 2002.

Leave Entitlement

Eligible employees are entitled to 13 weeks unpaid parental leave for each child, which must be taken before the child's fifth birthday or until five years have elapsed following placement in the case of adoption. The leave must be taken in blocks of one week to a maximum of four weeks in any year. A year is defined as a 12 month period from the date of childbirth or adoption. A weeks leave is defined as a normal working week as stated in the employee's contract of employment. For employees who are contracted to work variable hours in any one-week, a week's leave is calculated by using an average of the amount of time worked per week.

Child with Disabilities

A disabled child is defined as a child for whom disability living allowance is awarded. Parents of disabled children are permitted to take 18 weeks leave up until the child's 18th birthday and if required have the right to take the leave in a more flexible way, i.e. a day at a time, or longer than four weeks in a year.

Application for Parental Leave

You must put a request for parental leave in writing, giving 21 days notice of your intention to take Parental Leave, specifying the dates of leave to your Line Manager.

Your Line Manager will advise HR of your request and the Company will respond in writing within 7 days either to confirm or postpone your request.

Postponement

The Company may postpone parental leave for up to six months where it is considered that your non-attendance will cause 'substantial disruption' to the business.

Postponement may not be used when an employee gives notice to take parental leave immediately after a child is born or is placed with their family for adoption.

Notice of postponement will be given within seven days of the request for leave being submitted.

In the event of postponement, the Company will confirm in writing, after discussion with you, substitute dates for the parental leave to be taken, which will be equivalent to the length of leave originally requested.

Extension of Maternity Leave

Parental Leave may be taken at the end of maternity leave. Terms and conditions will remain the same as those stated in the Maternity Policy.

If an employee wishes to extend her Maternity Leave by a period of Parental Leave, the notice requirements still apply.

Right to Return

Following parental leave of 4 weeks or less, you are entitled to return to the same job in which you were employed prior to commencing parental leave. Should longer periods of leave be agreed, where it is not reasonably practicable to return to the same job you will be entitled to any suitable alternative position that may exist. These provisions will not apply if a redundancy situation has arisen.

Contractual Benefits

All terms and conditions of employment will be preserved during a period of parental leave, with the exception of pay.

Employment Rights

You will not be subject to any detriment by the Company because you took or sought to take parental leave.