

## **Staff support leave (including parental leave and leave for family emergencies).**

### **Policy Statement**

Staff can apply for the following support leave:

Unpaid parental leave to look after a child or make arrangements for a child's welfare. The purpose of the leave is to encourage parents to achieve a healthy work life balance.

Paid emergency leave for crisis incidents affecting a dependant e.g. illness or injury; unexpected breakdown of care arrangements; birth; death; an incident during school hours or on a school trip

The above types of leave are separate from paid paternity and compassionate leave. Subject to eligibility, ten days of paid paternity leave can be taken before and around the time of childbirth or adoption, or within a reasonable time period afterwards. Discretionary compassionate leave can usually be agreed either for the care of a close relative where no other nursing arrangements can be made, or the terminal illness of such a family member. Requests for compassionate leave for other reasons can be considered however, in these circumstances managers are advised to consult Human Resources.

### **Eligibility**

Parental leave. On completion of a year's continuous service, parental leave can be applied for by a member of staff who:

- is a named parent on the birth certificate of child aged under the age of eight (unless the child is entitled to a disability living allowance, in which case the cut-off age is eighteen years);
- or
- had adopted a child (the cut-off point for this is the fifth anniversary of the adoption or whenever the child reaches the age of eighteen, whichever is the earlier except in the case of a child entitled to disability living allowance);
- or
- has formal parental responsibility under the Children Act 1989 or Children (Scotland) Act 1995;
- or
- is the step-parent of a child aged under the age of eight (unless the child is entitled to a disability living allowance, in which case the cut-off age is eighteen years) and is living with that child.

Emergency leave. The main carer for the dependant (defined as the individual's parent, partner, child or someone who lives as a family member) can apply for emergency leave. Also, leave can be agreed for care of a person who is not a dependant but relies on the member of staff if suddenly ill or injured.

### **Amount of leave**

Parental leave. A total of thirteen weeks' (pro rata if part-time) unpaid leave may be taken for each child up to the age of eight years (or eighteen years if this is applicable).

Each parent can request leave as follows:

- one complete block;
- several short block periods;
- shorter working weeks;

If the dates requested for taking a block of leave would substantially prejudice the schools work, then the leave may be postponed but not indefinitely and not usually for more than three months. The School cannot postpone parental leave requested to immediately follow childbirth or adoption.

Emergency leave up to two paid days a year for circumstances not covered by compassionate leave. Requests for additional unpaid leave can be made.

Copies of the Department of Trade and Industry's "Time Off for Dependants – A guide for employers and employees" (URN 99/1186) are available from Human Resources. The guide provides information on the statutory right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies and to make any longer term arrangements.

### **Notification requirements**

A person who wishes to take parental leave must give at least twenty-one days' notice in writing specifying when the leave will begin and end.

Where there is a wish to take parental leave immediately after the end of the entitlement to paternity leave, notice of the intention to take parental leave shall be given together with notice of the intention to take paternity leave.

Where a person wishes to take parental leave immediately after a child is placed with him or her for adoption, notice shall be given twenty one days before the week when placement is expected to occur or, if that is not possible, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Where a person's manager is not agreeable to allow him or her to take parental leave at the time or times notified, the parties shall attempt to reach agreement on an alternative time or times when leave will be taken. Where they are unable to agree, the matter shall be referred to the Vice-Chairman of the Academic Board for a decision within ten working days.

Emergency leave can be agreed at the discretion of the manager. A request for emergency leave must be made to the manager at the start of the working day and followed by a brief written explanation.

It is the responsibility of the person and the manager to keep a record of any leave agreed and taken.

### **Return to work**

Return to work to the same job is guaranteed if the leave is for a period of four weeks or less. If the leave is for a longer period, and it is not reasonably practicable to go back to the same job, then the return may be to a similar, alternative job with the same or better status, terms and conditions that is both suitable and appropriate.

### **Application of terms and conditions during leave**

The School is entitled from the employee of the usual application of terms and conditions about notice of termination, disclosure of confidential information, receipt of gifts or benefits, and participation in any other business. The employee can expect the School to meet its obligation of trust and confidence, and terms and conditions about notice of termination, redundancy compensation, and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

## **Pension contributions**

Staff who wish to maintain the full level of pension contributions should advise the Superannuation Officer as in advance of the leave period as possible. In such circumstances, the School shall also make pension contributions.

## **Advice**

Advice is available to managers and staff from Human Resources (Gail Keeley, Lisa Morrow and Fran Hannan)