



Controlled Document

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DEPENDANTS LEAVE POLICY

Purpose and Scope

All employees with dependants can take reasonable unpaid time off to deal with unforeseen emergencies. This is unlikely to amount to more than a day or two a year.

This policy covers all instances where you may need to take unplanned absence to attend to urgent or serious situations affecting your dependants and where no alternative provision is available.

Parental leave is designed to provide carers with the opportunity to make alternative arrangements for the care of dependants. The Emergency leave policy is not intended to be used to allow carers to look after dependants on an ongoing basis.

Key aspects to consider when it comes to leave for dependants:

Types of Leave:

- Maternity Leave: Time off granted to mothers after childbirth.
- Paternity Leave: Time off granted to fathers or partners following the birth or adoption of a child.
- Adoption Leave: Time off for parents who are adopting a child.
- Parental Leave: A more general term that can refer to leave granted to either parent (mothers or fathers) to care for their child during illness or injury.

Maternity Leave

Maternity leave is an employment right and is outlined in the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999.¹ The employee must reach qualifying criteria as set out in the Green Book. They can take a maximum of 52 weeks maternity leave and may be entitled to maternity pay.

Paternity Leave

Paternity leave is a period of time that a father is allowed to take off from work following the birth of a child. It is meant to enable the father to support the mother during the early days of the child's life, bond with the newborn, and take care of necessary family responsibilities. The specifics of paternity leave vary depending on the country, employer, and specific workplace policies. Some key points about paternity leave include:

1. **Duration:** Paternity leave can range from a few days to several weeks. This will be agreed with the Clerk/Chairman.
2. **Paid or Unpaid:** Paternity leave is full pay for 2 weeks.
3. **Eligibility:** To qualify for paternity leave, a father may need to meet certain conditions, as specified in the Green Book.
4. **Flexibility:** There is the possibility of using flexible paternity leave, allowing fathers to take the leave in multiple blocks or staggered days, while others may require it to be taken all at once. This can be discussed with the clerk.

Paternity leave is increasingly seen as an important policy to promote gender equality and family well-being, allowing fathers to be more involved in childcare and supporting a more balanced distribution of parental duties.

¹ [The Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999](#)

Adoption Leave

Adoption leave is granted to employees who are adopting a child. It provides time off work for parents to bond with and care for the newly adopted child. The length and pay for adoption leave varies. In many places, the leave duration can be similar to maternity or paternity leave, offering several weeks of paid or unpaid time off. Adoption leave is designed to support the well-being of both the child and the adoptive parent(s) during the transition.

Parental Leave

Parental leave is granted to parents/guardians if they need time off for example a hospital appointment or important school meeting. This can be paid or unpaid. To be discussed with your manager.

Dependants include parents, husband, wife, partner, civil partner, children or individuals living as part of the family for whom you are the main carer or an individual who depends on you for care, e.g. an elderly neighbour.

Emergency parental leave is only intended to cover unplanned absence to attend to urgent or serious situations affecting your immediate family or dependants. It is impossible to provide a complete list of circumstances that are covered under the policy; however, the most common circumstances are as follows: -

- to provide assistance on an occasion when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured,
- as a result of the death of a dependant,
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant, or
- to deal with an incident which involves a child of the employee and which occurs unexpectedly when the child is at school

As soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, contact the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) by telephone to explain the circumstances, and if possible, an indication of the length of time-off you are likely to need in order to make alternative arrangements. If the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) is unavailable you must contact another councillor (preferably a member of the staffing committee) instead.

If you are able to, working from home or another location may be a suitable option. If however, it is not and you need to stay and care for a dependant, you can agree with the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) to take annual leave or time off in lieu; or where you have insufficient annual leave/ hours owed to take a period of unpaid leave.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed case by case.

