



University of
St Andrews

Parental Leave

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	All staff
Applicability date	11/01/2023
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Approved date	11/01/2023
Approver	Deputy Director
Document owner	Human Resources Officer
School / unit	Human Resources
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Staff/Annual leave and other absence/Family friendly leave
Purpose	Provides information and guidance for employees to request unpaid leave to look after a child that they have (or expect to have) parental responsibility for.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.3	Amend broken link to application form.	Published.	Lisa Stewart HR	11/01/2023

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1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all employees of the University who meet the eligibility requirements outlined in [section 4](#).

2. Statement

- 2.1 This policy aims to support parents in balancing their work and family commitments. This leave should only be taken for the purpose of caring for a child.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 Parental leave gives parents the right to unpaid time off work to look after a child's welfare. Examples include (although not limited to), to spend more time with a child and/or children, to look at new schools, to settle a child into new childcare arrangements, to spend more time with extended family.
- 3.2 This policy does not cover instances such as taking time off to deal with an unexpected event involving a dependant. This leave is covered in the University's [Special Leave Policy](#). In addition, this policy should not be confused with [Shared Parental Leave](#) which enables parents to share maternity or adoption leave to care for their child in the first year following the birth or placement.

4. Eligibility

- 4.1 To qualify for parental leave, the employee must have:
- at least one-year continuous service with the University and;
 - parental responsibility for a child for instance, the employee is named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or they have or expect to have parental responsibility.
- 4.2 The University may request that the employee provides evidence of parental responsibility e.g. a full birth or adoption certificate.

5. Entitlement

- 5.1 Employees can take up to 18 weeks unpaid leave for each child and adopted child up to their 18th birthday. Each parent has the right to take parental leave for each child. If the University employs both parents, it would not be expected that both parents would take the same period of leave.
- 5.2 The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child. A week's parental leave is equal to the employee's weekly contracted hours. Parental leave must be taken as whole weeks rather than individual days unless the child is disabled.
- 5.3 The year will run from the date on which the employee became entitled to the leave.
- 5.4 Parental leave applies to each child and not to an individual's job therefore any leave taken with previous employers will count towards the employee's entitlement of 18 weeks. Current employees should therefore ensure that they notify [Human Resources](#) of any leave previously taken. The [Recruitment team](#) will also request this information via the reference process during the appointment stage.

6. Procedures

6.1 Request for parental leave

- 6.1.1 Any questions regarding the application procedure must be raised with the [HR Business Partner \(HRBP\)](#) of the School/Unit. They will ensure advice and guidance is provided to either party.
- 6.1.2 Employees can apply for parental leave using the [parental leave application form](#). All applications must be submitted to the Head of School/Unit for review and consideration. This document is available in an alternative format upon request by contacting the [HRBP team](#).
- 6.1.3 Employees must provide at least 21 calendar days' notice to the University prior to the intended start date where reasonably practical.
- 6.1.4 The Head of School/Unit (or appropriate delegate) will normally manage this request.
- 6.1.5 Once the Head of School/Unit (or appropriate delegate) has considered the request, they will confirm the decision with the employee. The Head of School/Unit (or appropriate delegate) may request to meet the employee to discuss the request before making a decision.

6.2 Decision

- 6.2.1 If the request is granted, the Head of School/Unit (or appropriate delegate) will notify the [Pay and Pensions](#) to ensure that the unpaid parental leave is accurately processed. The employee will be issued a letter confirming the details of the leave normally within 7 calendar days' of the original request.
- 6.2.2 There may be occasions whereby the University will have to postpone the leave e.g. if the leave would cause serious disruption to the University. If the Head of School (or appropriate delegate) is considering refusing a request for parental leave, they must discuss the matter with their [HRBP](#) before making a decision.
- 6.2.3 If the decision is taken to postpone the leave, the Head of School/Unit (or appropriate delegate) will meet with the employee to confirm the decision and the reason for the delay and this will be followed up in writing within 7 calendar days' of the original request. At this meeting, alternative parental leave dates will be jointly agreed with the employee. This leave must be taken within 6 months' of the intended start date.
- 6.2.4 Leave cannot be postponed if:
- this leave is being taken by the spouse, civil partner or partner of the person giving birth or primary adopter, who will share responsibility for the child's upbringing, immediately after the birth or adoption of a child;
 - it means an employee would no longer qualify for parental leave e.g. postponing it until after the child's 18th birthday.

7. Support and advice

- 7.1 If the employee is dissatisfied with any decision made in respect of this policy, they should contact an [HRBP](#) and/or their Head of School/Unit in the first instance.

7.2 [Appendix A](#) provides a list of additional internal support available to employees.

8. Version control

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Migration of policy to the Governance Zone.	Published	Lisa Stewart, Human Resources	13/06/2019
1.1	Change to review date	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	01/04/2021
1.2	Change to review date	Published.	Lisa Stewart HR	20/12/2021
1.3	Amend broken link to application form.	Published.	Lisa Stewart HR	11/01/2023

Appendix A: Recommended internal support contact details

Name of Department	Contact details	Service provided
Chaplaincy	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/chaplaincy/ chaplaincy@st-andrews.ac.uk 01334 462866	The Chaplaincy provides guidance and support to all students and staff regardless of their faith or philosophy of life.
Equality & Diversity	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/ diversity@st-andrews.ac.uk 01334 461649	Provides a confidential service of advice to members of the University community (staff, students, visitors) on any aspect of EDI.
Human Resources	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/ hr.general@st-andrews.ac.uk (general email enquiries) 01334 463096	Provide support to employees of University of St Andrews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR web and policy page • Dedicated HR Business Partner team for each School & Unit
Occupational Health	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/ehss/occupationalhealth/ 01334 462750 occhealth@st-andrews.ac.uk	Employees can refer themselves to OH for confidential health advice at any time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one consultation/appointments • Expert support and advice provided • Recommended adjustments to support the employee • Partnership with external health practitioners i.e. counselling services and CBT.
Trade Union Reps	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/workplace-wellbeing/	Trade union representatives are trained to deal and support employees with any workplace related matters of concern.