



University of
St Andrews

Parental Leave

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Scope (applies to)	All staff
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Approver	Deputy Director of Human Resources
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School / unit	Human Resources
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Key terms	Staff/Annual leave and other absence/Family friendly leave
Purpose	This policy sets out the circumstances where employees who have parental responsibilities may take unpaid time off work to look after their children who are under 18.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.5	Amending a broken link only.	Published.	Lisa Stewart HR	23/04/2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to supporting a positive work-life balance for all our employees and recognise that time with children is important. Eligible employees can take a period of parental leave to care for their child. Examples include (although not limited to), looking after the child during school holidays, settling a child into new childcare arrangements, enjoying more quality time with their child.
- 1.2 Parental leave should not be confused with other family leave provisions such as maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.
- 1.3 This policy does not cover instances such as taking time off to deal with an unexpected event involving a dependant or taking time off due to carer responsibilities. These leave types are covered in the University's [Special Leave webpage](#).

2. Scope and eligibility

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the University who meet the eligibility requirements outlined below.
- 2.2 To qualify for parental leave, the employee must have:
 - At least one-year continuous service with the University and;
 - (or expect to have) parental responsibility for a child (birth or adopted) under the age of 18.
- 2.3 The University may request that the employee provides evidence of parental responsibility (e.g. a full birth or adoption certificate).

3. Entitlement

- 3.1 Employees can take up to 18 weeks unpaid leave for each child (up until their 18th birthday). If the University employs both parents, it would not be expected that both parents would take the same period of leave.
- 3.2 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 request this information via the reference process during the appointment stage.

4. Procedures

4.1 Request to take a period of parental leave

4.1.1 Employees can apply for parental leave using the [parental leave application form](#). All applications must be submitted to the line manager for review and consideration. The line manager should then notify the Head of School/Unit for awareness.

4.1.2 Employees must provide reasonable notice to take a period of parental leave of at least 21 calendar days' prior to the intended start date.

Note: Wherever possible, it is encouraged that employees inform their line manager of their intention to take family leave as early as practicable in order to provide appropriate time for the line manager to organise and plan how they will cover the workload during the period of leave.

4.1.3 Once the line manager (in conjunction with the Head of School/Unit/or appropriate delegate) has considered the request, they will confirm the decision with the employee. The line manager/Head of School/Unit (or appropriate delegate) may request to meet the employee to discuss the request before making a decision.

4.2 Decision

4.2.1 If the request is granted, the line manager will submit the parental leave form to [Pay and Pensions](#) for processing. The employee will be issued a letter confirming the details of the leave (normally within 7 calendar days' of the original request).

4.2.2 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 line manager or 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.

4.2.3 If the decision is taken to postpone the leave, the line manager 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.

4.2.4 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).

4.3 During the leave

4.3.1 All terms and conditions of employment, except normal pay, will continue and continuity of employment is not affected.

4.3.2 The employee will continue to be bound by the terms and conditions of the employment contract.

4.4 Returning to work

4.4.1 Employees have the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable prior to the parental leave.

5. Support

5.1 Any questions employees have about matters raised in this policy should be raised with their [HRBP](#). Any work-related issues should be addressed directly with their line manager.

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

6. Version control

6.1 This policy is non-contractual and may be amended at any time.

6.2 This document will be reviewed periodically in conjunction with the University's recognised Trade Unions. Any feedback on the policy content should be directed in the first instance to the [HRBP team](#) or via the [HR Feedback Form](#).

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
1.4	Minor policy review: Line manager to receive the parental application form.	Published.	Lisa Stewart HR	11/09/2023
1.5	Amending a broken link only.	Published.	Lisa Stewart HR	23/04/2024

Appendix A: Internal support

Name of Department	Contact details	Service provided
Chaplaincy	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/chaplaincy/ chaplaincy@st-andrews.ac.uk 01334 462866 or 462492	Offers pastoral care and support for any employee, regardless of religion or belief (including non-belief). This includes sympathetic, confidential listening and a safe place to talk to someone about any issues affecting health and wellbeing.
Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/ diversity@st-andrews.ac.uk 01334 461649	Provides support to members of the University community (staff, students, visitors) on EDI, in liaison with the HR Business Partner or Student Services as appropriate.
Human Resources	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/ hr.general@st-andrews.ac.uk (general email enquiries) 01334 463096	Provides 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 and Unit
Mediation	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/mediation/ mediation@st-andrews.ac.uk	The Mediation Service is a service for all staff and students and members of the public who are connected to the University who want to resolve disagreement informally.
Occupational Health	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/ehss/occupationalhealth/ 01334 462750/2752 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 • Recommended adjustments to support the employee • Partnership with external health practitioners i.e., counselling services and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
OSDS	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/osds/ 01334 467198 osds@st-andrews.ac.uk	Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS) is the University's central provider of professional development for all University staff and is also responsible for a wide range of organisational development projects and initiatives.
Trade Union Representatives	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.
Wellbeing Officer/Director (Schools) Wellbeing Champion (Units)	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/wellbeing-officers/ wellbeingforstaff@st-andrews.ac.uk	The Wellbeing Officer/Director, or Champion can signpost available resources, services and activities to colleagues. The role is not intended to act as a health/wellbeing practitioner or to tackle individual health/wellbeing issues.