

Parental Leave Policy

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Author	V Gavin	Date Issued	June 2026

Document Control	
Title	Parental Leave Policy
Date	June 2026
Related Policies/Guidance	Employment Rights Act 1996, Employment Relations Act 1999, Employment Act 2002, Work and Families Act 2006, other “family friendly” policies, Attendance Management Policy, Equalities guidance
Review	Every 2 years
Amendments	Removed: <i>Employees must have at least one year’s continuous service with the school or local authority in order to be eligible to take Parental Leave.</i> Parental leave is now a day 1 right.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Scope	4
3. Parental Leave.....	4
4. Eligibility.....	4
5. Notification for leave	4
6. Fall back scheme	5
7. Right to return to work.....	5
8. Continuous service	5
9. Pension.....	5
10. Further advice	5
11. Relevant Associated Policies	6
Appendix A - Request form for Parental Leave	7

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Parental Leave is the right for an employee to take time off in order to take care of the employee's child or make arrangements for their welfare.
- 1.2 Parental Leave is a separate entitlement to time off to deal with emergency situations which may arise in relation to a child. For time off regarding this please see the trust's Leave of Absence Policy.
- 1.3 Parental Leave should **not** be confused with Shared Parental Leave, which employees may be eligible for and is a separate right. For more information please see the trust's Shared Parental Leave Policy.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff who are parents to children under the age of 18 and who have qualifying service with the school or local authority (see [paragraph 4](#)).

3. Parental Leave

- 3.1 Parental Leave must be used in order to look after the welfare of a child, and can include making arrangements such as speculative school visits, spending time with the child during hospital stays or enabling the child to spend more time with family.
- 3.2 Eligible employees can take up to 18 weeks parental leave for each child under the age of 18.
- 3.3 Parental Leave must be taken in blocks of at least one weeks' leave. The exception to this is that parents of disabled children may take leave in blocks of less than one week in order to care for their children if requested.
- 3.4 Employees cannot take more than 4 weeks parental leave per child in any one year of entitlement, starting from the date of the first entitlement.
- 3.5 One week's parental leave is equal to the length of time that a staff member is usually required to work within a week.
- 3.6 There is no statutory entitlement to pay for periods of Parental Leave and therefore, **any period of Parental Leave will be unpaid.**

4. Eligibility

- 4.1 Parental Leave is available to all employees who have parental responsibility (either natural or adoptive parents) for a child as defined under the Children Act 1989.
- 4.2 Parents are not required to live with their children, however they must have caring responsibilities in order to be eligible for parental leave.
- 4.3 Foster parents are not eligible for Parental Leave.

5. Notification for leave

- 5.1 Employees must provide at least 21 days' notice in writing of their request to take Parental Leave (a request form is provided at [Appendix A](#)).
- 5.2 Employees must provide information relating to the start and end dates of the leave and confirm their eligibility to take Parental Leave against the criteria set out above.

- 5.3 The Headteacher may ask to see evidence that the employee is the parent of a child or has parental responsibility for the child. Evidence might take the form of information contained in the child's birth certificate, papers confirming a child's adoption or the date of placement, or in the case of a disabled child, the award of disability living allowance for the child. The Headteacher's request must be reasonable; it would be seen as unreasonable to check on the employee's entitlement each time parental leave is asked for.

6. Fall back scheme

- 6.1 Each request for Parental Leave will be considered carefully and wherever possible, the employee will be authorised to take Parental Leave on the dates requested.
- 6.2 Where the Headteacher considers that the employee's absence would unduly disrupt the efficient running of the school, then the leave may be postponed for up to a maximum of 6 months after the start date originally sought by the employee. If this situation arises, advice should be sought from the central team and or HR helpdesk.
- 6.3 Headteacher's should discuss the postponement with the member of staff and in the event of postponement must give notice in writing no later than 7 days after the individual's request to take leave was submitted. Reasons for postponement should be fully and objectively justified. The Headteacher's postponement notice should give the reason(s) for the postponement and set out the new dates of parental leave. The length of the leave should be equivalent to that in the employee's original request.
- 6.4 If an employee applies to take parental leave immediately after the birth or adoption of a child, then the Headteacher **cannot** postpone the leave. The employee must give 21 days' notice before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth or the expected week of placement for adoption.

7. Right to return to work

- 7.1 Employees have the right to return to the same job, if they take less than four weeks parental leave.
- 7.2 If an employee is, in exceptional circumstances, permitted to take more than 4 week's leave, or an employee takes parental leave immediately before or after adoption or maternity leave, they are entitled to return to the same job unless it is not reasonably practicable, in which case the employee is entitled to another job which is suitable and on terms which are not substantially less favourable. In these circumstances the Headteacher should take HR advice.

8. Continuous service

- 8.1 Continuous service is unaffected by periods of parental leave. With the exception of salary, all terms and conditions of employment remain in force during periods of Parental Leave.

9. Pension

- 9.1 **Parental Leave is unpaid** and therefore does not count towards pensionable service in the assessment of retirement benefits.

10. Further advice

The Headteacher (or nominee) should seek advice from the central team or HR if they have any queries about the content or implementation of this policy.

The school must ensure that all relevant documentation is provided in a timely manner to the CFO so that the payroll provider can make the necessary adjustments.

11. Relevant Associated Policies

- ✓ Leave of Absence Policy
- ✓ Maternity Leave Policy
- ✓ Paternity Leave Policy
- ✓ Shared Parental Leave Policy

Appendix A - Request form for Parental Leave

Employee Name	
School	
National Insurance Number	

Child's Date of Birth or date of placement of the child/children:	
Is this the first request for ordinary parental leave? (attach a copy of the birth/placement certificate).	
If this is not your first request provide dates of any previously taken parental leave (including any taken with a previous employer). A maximum of 4 weeks per year per child up to the age of 18.	From: To: From: To: From: To: From: To:

Leave Request Details:

(Leave may be taken in blocks of one week (maximum of four weeks in any one year) at any time up to the child's 18th birthday).

Dates Requested	From: To:
(please note you must give at least 21 days' notice)	From: To:
	From: To:
	From: To:

Declaration: (You must be able to tick all three boxes below to be eligible for parental leave).

- ☐ I will have parental responsibility for caring for the child/children.
- ☐ I am requesting unpaid parental leave to look after the child's/children's welfare.

Signed

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Date

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