

# Parental Leave Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. LSE aims to recruit, retain and motivate the best possible employees and, as part of this objective, wants to support employees to combine work with family commitments. As part of this commitment, parental leave is available to all eligible employees within the diverse School community, including LGBTQ+, same-sex families and those who have a surrogacy arrangement.
- 1.2. This policy uses the following key terms:
  - Birth parent / mother: the individual who gives birth to a child. They can be male, female or of a non-binary identity.
  - Partner: the child's biological father or the partner of the birth parent / mother / adopter. This can be a spouse, civil partner, or a partner who is living in an enduring relationship with the birth parent / mother and the child. Partners may be male, female or trans (including individuals of a non-binary identity).
  - Adopter: the person who is eligible for adoption leave and/or pay. Adopters may be male, female or trans (including individuals of a non-binary identity)
  - Parents: the child's biological parents or individuals that, although not biological parents, have parental responsibility for the child (ie, named on the child's birth certificate, on the adoption certificate, on the parental order, a legal guardianship). Parents may be male, female or trans (including individuals of a non-binary identity).

## 2. Policy aims

- 2.1. The aim of parental leave is to allow employees the opportunity to take time off to care for a child. Reasons why an employee may wish to take unpaid parental leave include wanting to:
  - spend more time with their children and achieve a better balance between their

work and family commitments

- spend more time with the wider family, i.e. visiting grandparents
- be with the child during the initial stages of new childcare arrangements
- accompany a child during a planned hospital stay.

- 2.2. There are other policies in place for absences for reasons other than parental leave for example, compassionate, or 'time off' for family and dependents.

### 3. Policy principles

- 3.1. Parental leave differs from paternity/partner's leave. Paternity/partner's leave is paid leave (twenty working days, pro rata for less than full-time employment) to be taken before and around the time of childbirth or adoption, or within a reasonable time period afterwards. It also differs from 'shared parental', maternity or adoption leave.

### 4. Eligibility requirements

- 4.1. Parental leave, which is unpaid, is a legal entitlement for employees who are the parents of children aged up to 18.
- 4.2. Parental leave can be applied for by an employee who, by the time of the proposed start of the parental leave, has completed a year's continuous service and:
- is a named parent on the birth or adoption certificate; or
  - has or expects to have formal parental responsibility; or
  - is a step-parent (where parental responsibility has been agreed between all parents)
- 4.3. In the case of multiple births or the adoption of more than one child as part of the same placement, the employee has a statutory right to take unpaid parental leave in respect of each child.
- 4.4. Foster parents are not eligible for parental leave<sup>1</sup>.

### 5. Amount of parental leave

- 5.1. Employees are entitled to up to a maximum of 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child, up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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<sup>1</sup> A foster parent is the person who cares for a child as part of their family.

- 5.2. The maximum amount of parental leave that may be taken in any one year<sup>2</sup> in respect of a child is four weeks. According to statutory provisions, this is to be taken in blocks of not less than one week, except where the child is disabled, in which case it may be taken one day at a time<sup>3</sup>.
- 5.3. As part of LSE's positive support of employees who are working parents, employees who are eligible for parental leave can request the following:
- one complete block of four weeks
  - several one-week periods
  - shorter working weeks.
- 5.4. If the dates requested for taking a block of leave would substantially prejudice the School's work, then the employee may be required to postpone the leave but not indefinitely and not usually for more than six months. Managers cannot postpone parental leave requested to immediately follow childbirth or adoption.

## 6. Change of employer

- 6.1. An employee's total entitlement to parental leave is limited to 18 weeks per child, irrespective of whether they change employer. If, for example, an employee has taken four weeks' parental leave (out of a total entitlement of 18 weeks) during their current employment, the employee will have 14 weeks' parental leave outstanding on moving to new employment. According to the statutory provisions, the employee will, however, have to work for a full year with the new employer before becoming eligible to take any of their entitlement.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this policy, a year is the period of 12 months beginning when the employee first becomes entitled to parental leave in respect of the child in question, and each successive period of 12 months beginning on the anniversary of that date.

<sup>3</sup> A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over seven days.

# Parental Leave Procedure

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The procedure provides information on the steps that qualifying employees are required to follow to be eligible for parental leave.

## 2. Notification requirements

- 2.1. The statutory requirements are that employees must give at least 21 days' notice before their intended start date. The notice must be given in writing and confirm the dates on which the period of parental leave is to begin and end.
- 2.2. An employee who wishes to take a period of parental leave beginning when their child is born, must give at least 21 days' notice before the expected week of childbirth, and must specify the expected week of childbirth and the duration of the period of parental leave requested. It is requested that such notice is given together with notice of the intention to take paid Paternity/Partner's leave.
- 2.3. Similarly, when parental leave is requested to begin on an adopted child's placement, the employee's notice must be given at least 21 days before the beginning of the week in which the child is to be placed for adoption, or as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter. The notice must specify the week in which the adoption placement is expected to occur and the duration of the period of parental leave requested.
- 2.4. In cases where it is not possible to give notice of 21 days, e.g. if the child is born prematurely or where less than 21 days' notice is given that a child is to be placed with the employee for adoption, then the employee should give notice as soon as practicable.
- 2.5. It is the responsibility of the employee and the manager to keep a record of any leave requested, agreed and taken. A copy of the record should be sent to the relevant [HR Adviser](#) so that employees receive the correct salary payments and future requests for parental leave are properly managed. These records will also be used to respond to requests by other employers about how much parental leave an employee/ex-employee has already taken, although there is no legal duty to provide such information.

## 3. Postponing parental leave

- 3.1. If the dates requested for taking a block of leave would substantially prejudice LSE's work, the leave may be postponed but not indefinitely and not usually for more than six months. Employees and managers are encouraged to discuss the request in an attempt to reach an agreement on alternative time or times when the leave could be taken. Where they are unable to agree, and the employee is an academic member of staff, the matter shall be referred to the Vice-Chair of the Academic Board for a decision within ten working days.

- 3.2. Parental leave cannot be postponed if:
- There is no significant reason to delay this
  - It is requested to be taken immediately follow the birth or adoption of a child
  - It means an employee would no longer qualify for parental leave (i.e. postponing it until after the child's 18th birthday)
- 3.3. If parental leave is postponed, managers must write to the employee within seven days of the original request explaining the reason(s) and proposing a new start date. The new start date must be within six months of the requested start date. Managers cannot change the amount of leave being requested.

## **4. Documentary evidence of eligibility**

- 4.1. A line manager may, at their discretion, request documentary evidence from an employee to support a request for parental leave. This might be:
- the child's birth certificate, in order to ascertain that the child is under 18 years old
  - the adoption certificate;
  - evidence of the child's entitlement to Disability Living Allowance, where the employee is exercising a right in relation to a disabled child
- 4.2. A line manager may also wish to check whether an employee requesting parental leave has previously taken any periods of parental leave while working for a previous employer and, if so, how many weeks' leave were taken. Line managers should note, however, that there is no legal duty on employers to provide this information.

## **5. Return to work**

- 5.1. The notice of the intention to take parental leave must confirm the dates on which the period is to begin and end. Following the end of parental leave, the employee is expected to return on the next working day.; there is no requirement for additional notice of return.
- 5.2. Return to work to the same job is guaranteed following a standalone period of parental leave. If parental leave of any length is taken immediately after additional maternity leave, additional adoption leave or additional paternity leave, and it is not reasonably practicable for a return to the same job, then suitable alternative work with the same status and on terms and conditions which are no less favourable than the original job may be offered

## **6. Contract of employment**

- 6.1. During parental leave, the employee's contract of employment continues in force and the same terms and conditions apply. Employees are entitled to receive all their contractual benefits, except for salary, contractual holiday entitlement and pension contributions.

## **7. Annual leave**

- 7.1. During parental leave, an employee continues to accrue their statutory paid holiday entitlement during parental leave, but not their contractual paid holiday entitlement. Employees and managers should seek advice from their HR Adviser concerning any related queries.

## **8. Pension contributions**

- 8.1. Pension contributions will not be made during periods of unpaid parental leave. Should the employee wish, they can continue to make pension contributions during their period of unpaid leave in line with the pension scheme rules.

## **9. Advice**

- 9.1. An employee considering/taking parental leave is encouraged to contact their manager to discuss their request. Employees and managers may wish to contact their HR Adviser, HR Partner or trade union representative for further advice.

## Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
3	September 2026	

## Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	November 2017	JNICC	
2	January 2023	JNICC	

## Links

Reference	Link
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## Contacts

Position	Name	Email	Notes
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## Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	<b>Yes</b>
Will training needs arise from this policy	<b>Yes</b>
If Yes, please give details	
Guidance and training on the amended policy will be offered to line managers via the 'LSE Manager: Bringing Policy to Life' sessions.	