



RETURN TO WORK FROM FAMILY FRIENDLY LEAVE: GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS

Returning to work from a period of family friendly leave* can be daunting and employees can feel anxious and isolated trying to balance their role as a parent to a new child with work demands. As a manager, it can be easy to forget or perhaps not fully understand that employees need to be welcomed back and reintroduced into the team and possibly to new ways of working. This makes a big difference in creating a positive experience for the employee in feeling part of the team again and getting to grips with their shift back to their work duties and responsibilities.

To ensure a smooth transition back into the workplace and the team, it is important that the manager plans appropriately to support this. This should involve discussions with the employee leading up to the return to work.

Return to Work Plan

It is recommended that a re-induction or return to work plan is organised for the employee to be welcomed back to work. You can start by looking at a plan that you would put together for a new member of the team and tailor it accordingly.

It may be particularly helpful to consider the following, where applicable:

- A personal welcome back from the line manager
- Ensuring all IT access and re-set up is completed prior to the employee coming back to work
- The arrangements for the handover of work from other colleagues
- Updates on key projects/activities
- Any relevant developments/changes not already communicated
- One-to-one meetings with key colleagues/stakeholders
- Flexible working applications
- Breastfeeding arrangements and risk assessments (if applicable)
- Communications regarding the staff member's return prior to them coming back to work
- Training requirements, including the renewal of any compulsory training
- CDR objective setting

Phased Return

A phased return has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to get back into the swing of working. There are several ways that this can be achieved such as:

- Agreement for the employee to use KIT/SPLIT days towards the end of their leave to come in and do some work.
- Accrued holidays can be used to temporarily allow for part-time working after your employee's official return to work. This can be mean working for only part of the week or working shorter days across the week.

It is best to discuss the options with your employee as everyone's needs will be different.

Flexible Working

Your employee may wish to request an alternative working pattern for their return to work. Flexible working enables greater employee wellbeing, job satisfaction and retention and managers are encouraged to be open to the prospect of flexible arrangements. A flexible working request should be considered in line with the School's [Flexible Working Policy](#).

Useful Documents

The [Family Friendly Leave Checklist](#) is a useful tool to help you keep on top of the things that you need to do to prepare for the employee's return to work.

[NCT's Pregnancy, maternity and returning to work: An employer's guide](#) is a comprehensive guide with great advice for all managers that can be applied accordingly for all types of family friendly leave.

It is also important to remember that your employee has a new child and will probably be very tired during the first few weeks and perhaps a bit overwhelmed. Regular catch ups and one-to-ones with your employee will help to ensure that the lines of communication are open and that you best understand how to support them.

*Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave or Shared Parental Leave