

Parental Leave Policy

People, Digital & Policy

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Introduction

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.

We are committed to supporting a positive work-life balance for all our employees and recognise that time with children is important. If you are eligible (see below), you can take ordinary parental leave to care for your child - this may be to look after your child during school holidays, be with them when they are unwell, or enjoy more quality time with them.

This type of parental leave may be particularly useful if you require time off to care for your child but have used up, or are not entitled to, other types of family-friendly leave (see below).

The policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

Scope

This policy covers all employees including centrally employed teachers but excludes staff on the complement of locally managed schools for whom a separate policy applies. In the absence of a policy agreed locally by individual schools the principles of this policy should be followed.

Other types of family-friendly leave

Ordinary parental leave should not be confused with:

- [maternity](#), [paternity](#) and [adoption and surrogacy](#) leave; or
- [shared parental leave](#), which enables employees to end their maternity or adoption and surrogacy leave early, and share the untaken balance with their partner.

Requests for leave of can be made in accordance with the [Annual Leave](#), [Flexitime Scheme](#), or unpaid leave provisions as listed in the [Time Off Policy](#).

You may wish to make a [flexible working](#) request to support your work life balance.

Who can take ordinary parental leave

You can take ordinary parental leave to care for your child if you have, or expect to have, parental responsibility for the child.

From 6 April 2026, the qualifying service requirement is removed. This means that all employees have the right to take ordinary parental leave, regardless of their length of service, provided that the leave begins on or after that date.

To exercise your right to take ordinary parental leave, you must comply with the notification procedure set out below.

If you are unsure whether you are entitled to ordinary parental leave, please contact the Absence Team.

Amount of ordinary parental leave you can take

You can take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child, subject to a maximum of four weeks' leave for each child in anyone-year period.

You must take ordinary parental leave in blocks of at least one week. However, if your child has a disability, you can take the leave one day at a time (please speak to the Absence Team to arrange this).

Your entitlement to ordinary parental leave carries over from your previous employment. This means that, if you have taken ordinary parental leave with a previous employer:

- you can take the balance with our organisation; and
- we will ask you about the amount of ordinary parental leave already taken for your child with your previous employers.

If you are unsure how much ordinary parental leave you can take, please contact the Absence Team.

Notice to take ordinary parental leave

To take ordinary parental leave, you must give your line manager and the Absence Team at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the date on which the leave is to start. Your notice should set out the dates on which you intend to take the leave.

You should inform your manager and the Absence Team by completing the application form [Parental Leave Application Form 2020](#) or through [My View](#) via My Forms.

Fathers or others who will have parental responsibility - leave starting at birth

If you want your leave to begin when your child is born (whether the birth is earlier or later than expected), you must give your line manager and the Absence Team at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the start of the expected week of childbirth.

Your notice should set out the expected week of childbirth and the length of leave you wish to take.

Adopters - leave starting on child's placement

If you want your leave to begin when the child is placed with you for adoption (whether the placement is earlier or later than expected), you must give your line

manager and the Absence Team at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the beginning of the week in which the placement is expected to occur.

If 21 days' notice is not possible, please give us notice as soon as you can.

Your notice should set out the week in which the placement is expected to occur and the length of leave you wish to take.

You should inform your manager and the Absence Team by completing the application form [parental-leave-application-form.docx](#) or through [My View](#) via My Forms.

Paternity leave

If you are considering taking ordinary parental leave on the birth of your child (or if you are an adopter, the placement of the child with you for adoption), you should bear in mind that you may also be entitled to take up to two weeks' paid paternity leave - please see our separate [Paternity Leave](#) policy.

Evidence to take ordinary parental leave

The Absence Team will ask you for evidence to support your request for ordinary parental leave. They will normally ask to see evidence of your child's birth certificate or certificate of adoption.

Public/Bank holidays

If a period of parental leave incorporates a Bank Holiday, the Bank Holiday will be unpaid and cannot be accrued and taken later.

Postponing your ordinary parental leave

While our aim is to agree to your request for ordinary parental leave, there are circumstances in which we may need to postpone the start date. We will do this only if your absence would cause undue disruption to our organisation and will give you written notice of the postponement no more than seven days after we received your request.

However, we will never postpone your period of ordinary parental leave if the leave starts on the birth of your child or your child's placement for adoption.

If we postpone your period of ordinary parental leave, your line manager will discuss alternative dates with you to take that period of leave within six months of the first day the postponed leave was due to start.

While you are on ordinary parental leave

During your leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract, except normal pay, will continue and your continuity of employment is not affected.

This means that, while sums payable by way of salary will cease, all other benefits will remain in place. Annual leave will continue to accrue in the normal way.

During your leave, you continue to be bound by the terms and conditions of your employment. In particular, you should remember that you must not disclose any confidential information and are required to obtain our written consent before working for any other employer.

Returning to work after ordinary parental leave

If you take an isolated period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less, you are entitled to return to the same job you were doing before your absence.

You can also return to your previous job if you take a period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less following on immediately from a period (or consecutive periods) of maternity, adoption, paternity and/or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the same child) that did not last more than 26 weeks.

You are entitled to return to your previous job or, if that is not practical for our organisation, to another job that is both suitable and appropriate in the circumstances if you:

- take a period of ordinary parental leave of more than four weeks; or
- take a period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less following on immediately from a period (or consecutive periods) of maternity, adoption, paternity and/or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the same child) that lasted more than 26 weeks.

If you are taking ordinary parental leave, and are unsure where you stand on your return, please contact your line manager or the Absence Team.

Data protection

When dealing with ordinary parental leave, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our data protection policy and privacy notice. In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

Abuse of the Parental Leave policy

Any abuse of the scheme will be dealt with under the Council's [Disciplinary procedure](#) Examples of abuse include:

- Taking leave for purposes other than for caring for a child. This will generally be in circumstances where someone other than the employee is taking primary responsibility for the child.

- Making a false statement as to entitlement to parental leave, for example the age of the child, the relationship with the child or the amount of parental leave taken with a previous employer.

Dual or Multiple Contracts

Where an employee has more than one job with the Council there is not a separate parental leave entitlement for each job, i.e. the total parental leave entitlement remains 18 weeks.

Should an employee wish to take two weeks parental leave from only one job and remain working in the other(s), this represents a two-week reduction from their total parental leave entitlement.

However, where an employee wishes to take parental leave from all jobs and subsequently one (or more) line manager(s) wishes to postpone leave, this will have the effect of postponing leave for all posts.

On such occasions it is the responsibility of the line managers to determine an alternative time for parental leave to be taken but this must be within three months of the original request.

Appeals

If an employee considers that they have had a legitimate request for parental leave turned down or that leave has been unjustifiably postponed, they can use the [Grievance procedure](#) to resolve the matter.

Ensuring equality of opportunity

Everyone must adopt a positive, open and fair approach and ensure the Authority's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) is adhered to and applied consistently to all irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, language, disability, religion and belief or non-belief, age, sex, gender reassignment, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, maternity, parental, marital or civil partnership status.

If you have any equality and diversity concerns in relation to the application of this policy and procedure, please contact a member of the People Management Team who will, if necessary, ensure the policy/procedure is reviewed accordingly.

If you require this publication in an alternative format, please contact People Services by emailing CHR@carmarthenshire.gov.uk