

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Brief Description (max 50 words)	<p>Our Parental Leave Policy is part of our suite of family friendly policies, which together are designed to recognise your caring responsibilities as well as your work commitments and to support a healthy work-life balance.</p> <p>This Parental Leave Policy applies to all staff who have parental responsibility for a child(ren).</p>
Version Number	2.1
Document Reference	POD038
Policy Dept	People and Organisational Development (POD)
Equality Impact Assessment Equality Impact Assessment	<p>This document has been assessed for equality impact on the protected groups, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. This Policy is applicable as outlined in the 'scope' irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage, or civil partnership.</p>

Amendment History

Version	Date	Reviewer Name(s)	Summary of changes
2.0	November 2024	Ataylia Clarke	Update of template
2.1	January 2025	Angie Smith	Updated Template

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1. Introduction

Our Parental Leave Policy is part of our suite of family friendly policies, which together are designed to recognise your caring responsibilities as well as your work commitments and to support a healthy work-life balance.

This Parental Leave Policy applies to all staff who have parental responsibility for a child(ren).

You are welcome to arrange to speak with a member of the POD team to discuss the policy and how you may benefit from it.

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

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- University of Suffolk employees

Should service conditions apply to any part of this policy, this will be detailed as relevant.

3. Eligibility for leave

You will be eligible to take parental leave if you have parental responsibility for a child (up to their 18th birthday); and

- you will be taking leave to care for your child/children; and
- have documentary evidence of parental responsibility e.g. original birth certificate

4. Leave entitlements

If you meet the above eligibility requirements, you will be entitled to parental leave. Parental leave is an unpaid entitlement. All other benefits, with the possible exception of pension scheme membership, continue to accrue during any period of parental leave. For part-time employees, entitlements continue to accrue pro-rata. See below for further details regarding pension scheme contributions.

You will be entitled to a total amount of 18 weeks' parental leave, (pro rata to your contracted hours over the same period if you work part time). The entitlement applies in respect of each child (up to their 18th birthday) for whom you have parental responsibility regardless of whether they are born/adopted at the same time or different dates.

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Parental leave, in normal circumstances, can either be taken as a block of one or more weeks up to a maximum of 4 weeks in any one year. This can be extended at the discretion of the Dean/Head of School/Department where there are exceptional circumstances. The period of leave can start on any day of the week. If you take parental leave in any one week but you take less than your normal working week's hours, this will be deemed to be a week's worth of your parental leave total.

The Time Off for Dependants Policy and Special Leave provides the opportunity to apply for leave to be taken as odd days or shorter periods for unexpected or sudden emergencies. The Flexible Working Policy also enables staff to work flexibly to manage their work and personal life responsibilities.

Parental Leave cannot be taken as odd days unless the child is disabled in which case the leave may be taken one day at a time.

You will not normally be entitled to contractual sick pay/leave whilst on parental leave unless a doctor's certificate is provided to cover the period of absence.

5. Pension contributions whilst on leave

You can maintain your scheme membership but you must continue to make contributions for each period of unpaid parental leave. Contributions will continue to be taken unless you inform the People & Organisational Development Team in writing or email to the contrary.

Or you may choose to stop your contributions each time you take parental leave, in which case the period of unpaid leave will be treated as Suspended Membership. Therefore, the period of unpaid leave will not count towards your total pensionable service. This will affect your benefits.

You will need to make a decision regarding your membership contributions each time you take parental leave as each period is treated separately.

If you wish to take advice before making a decision to continue or suspend membership, please contact the People & Organisational Development team in the first instance.

6. Notification of intention to take leave

You must notify your Line Manager of your intention to take parental leave, including your start and end dates, via the Completion of the form is deemed to be self-certification, which provides evidence of your entitlement to Parental Leave.

Notification must be given to your Line Manager at least 28 days before you wish your leave to commence. You may change your mind as long as your line manager is given at least a further 28 days' notice of the new date of commencement of your parental leave.

7. Parental leave immediately following the baby's birth/adoption

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In this case you will need to give at least 28 days' notice before the expected week of childbirth or beginning of the week in which the child is to be placed for adoption, or as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter. You must specify the expected week of childbirth or expected placement date and the duration of parental leave requested. If you are considering this arrangement, you may find it helpful to consider the provisions of the University of Suffolk's policies for maternity/paternity leave.

8. Postponement of leave

We will try as far as possible to accommodate your request for parental leave and recommend that you discuss your wishes with your line manager as early as possible.

Other than where Parental Leave is requested immediately following the birth or adoption of a child, a line manager may postpone a request for leave where they consider that granting the leave at that time would severely disrupt normal operation. In the event, that we are unable to grant your request for leave at the particular time requested, we will undertake to:

- Discuss with you why postponement is necessary
- Discuss viable alternative dates
- Arrange for a discussion to take place within 7 days of receiving your notice requesting leave
- Where specifically requested we can provide you with a written notice of postponement stating why the postponement is necessary and agreed alternative dates for you to take an equivalent period of parental leave within the next 6 months

No such postponement can take place if you are taking parental leave to coincide with the birth of the child, adoptive placement or emergency short term care.

9. Return to work

You are required to return to work on the day you specified (and we have agreed to) in your request for parental leave. If you do not attend for work on the date agreed, you may be deemed to be taking unauthorised absence which may lead to disciplinary action being taken.