



# Parental Leave

## Policy

### 1. Introduction

The College is committed to supporting staff to achieve a balance between work and family that works for them.

This policy applies to all employees of the University and in all partnerships regardless of gender identity and sexual/romantic orientation.

Royal Holloway recognizes that people of all genders can give birth; terminology such as “maternity” or “paternity” leave are only used in line with language from the UK government on statutory leave.

The Parental Leave Policy should not be confused with Shared Parental Leave which enables parents to share a birth partner’s/lead adopter’s maternity/adoption leave and pay entitlement to care for their child in the first year following its birth/placement.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of the statutory Parental Leave scheme is to enable employees to take **unpaid** time off work to spend with their child prior to their 18th birthday.

More specifically, the purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to:

- Outline the statutory entitlements for Parental Leave
- Outline the notification steps employees must take to apply for Parental Leave and book time off
- Ensure managers are aware of their responsibilities to employees who are covered by this policy.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

#### Employee

- In order to access the benefits outlined in this policy, employees must meet the formal requirements including the various notification procedures.
- Engage and communicate with managers as requested
- Submit a request for parental leave at least 21 days before the leave is due to be taken and complete the application form.
- Notify line manager if unable or not intending to return to work.
- Employees unable to return to work as a result of sickness should contact HR for clarification on their entitlements.

#### **Line Managers**

- Manage all cases in a timely and supportive manner.
- Review requests for parental leave including employee eligibility and the 18 week entitlement for each child up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Notify HR of employees' intention to take parental leave.
- Discuss and agree arrangements for contact during parental leave with employee, where necessary
- Record periods of parental leave in MyView.

#### **Human Resources**

- Manage all cases in a timely and supportive manner.
- Provide advice or guidance where requested.
- Respond to requests for parental leave in writing.

### **4. Eligibility**

Employees are entitled to up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave if they:

- Have at least one year's continuous service with the College at the date they wish ordinary parental leave to commence
  - Have a child or have a child who was adopted or is a surrogate parent and the child is under the age of 18
  - Have (or expect to have) parental responsibility for the child.
- A parent need not necessarily be living with the child to qualify for Parental Leave.

Parental Leave can start once the child is born or placed for adoption with the employee or as soon as the employee has completed a year's continuous service, whichever is later.

### **5. Evidence of Entitlement**

The College will ask an employee to produce evidence to show that:

- The employee is the parent of a child, e.g. as stated on the birth certificate
- The employee has parental responsibility for the child
- The child is below the age at which the right to parental leave ceases

The College retains the right to refuse Parental Leave if insufficient evidence is produced.

If eligible, staff can apply for Parental Responsibility [here](#).

## **6. Entitlement**

Where the employee meets the eligibility requirement, they are entitled to take 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child up to their 18th birthday.

Employees can take a maximum of four weeks leave in any year in respect of any individual child. Periods of leave must be taken in multiples of one week. If less than a week is taken then, this will class as one week in terms of deduction from the overall entitlement though salary will only be deducted for the days absent.

If the child has disabilities, leave may be taken as individual days and entitlement deducted accordingly.

Parental Leave applies to each child, not to an individual's job, so any leave taken with previous employers will count towards the employee's total entitlement of 18 weeks.

An employee can take a period of Parental Leave immediately after the end of normal maternity, paternity, adoption leave or shared parental leave subject to qualifying conditions and providing the required level of notice.

## **Process**

### **7. Requesting Leave**

Employees must give at least 21 calendar days' notice of the period of leave they wish to take. Parents wishing to take less than one working week's leave to spend time with a child with disabilities must give at least 7 calendar days' notice.

An employee should submit the request in writing using the appropriate form to their line manager, attaching proof of eligibility for Parental Leave.

If the request can be granted then the line manager should forward the request to HR who will write to the individual outlining details and provide a copy to the Payroll in order that they deduct salary for the relevant period. A record will be retained in the individual's personal file.

### **8. Postponing Leave**

Parental Leave may be postponed for no longer than six months where, for good business reasons, it cannot be granted when requested.

The College cannot postpone leave where the employee wishes to take it immediately after their child is born or placed with them for adoption.

Where the College wishes to postpone Parental Leave, then the employee will be advised in writing, including the reason for the postponement and an alternative commencement date sought.

## 9. Rights during Parental Leave

Continuity of employment is maintained during Parental Leave, which means there is no break in service during the employee's absence from work.

All terms and conditions of employment remain in place during an employee's period of Parental Leave except for those terms relating to pay. However, employees will receive all pay awards and increments that apply during their Parental Leave.

During unpaid Parental Leave, neither the employee nor the College make pension contributions. The employee's membership of the pension scheme is suspended and the period of unpaid Parental Leave does not count as pensionable service.

The employee must contact the Pensions team via e-mail to seek advice and discuss any pension implications, in advance of the leave period.

## 10 Linked Policies

Details on other family friendly policies can be found on the HR webpages, including:

- Maternity Leave and Pay
- Adoption and Surrogacy
- Paternity
- Shared Parental

<b>Policy Schedule</b>	
Policy Title	<b>Parental Leave</b>
Policy Owner	<b>HR Ops</b>
Policy Lead Contact	<b>S Kayani</b>
Consultation with College Unions	<b>UCU, UNITE, GMB</b>
Approving Body	<b>EB</b>
Date of Approval	<b>September 2021</b>
Review Interval	<b>2 years</b>