



Ordinary Parental Leave Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Ordinary Parental Leave (OPL) is the right for an employee with parental responsibility for a child to take time off work to look after the child or make arrangements for their welfare. Parents can use it to spend more time with children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments.
- 1.2 An employee is entitled to take 18 weeks leave in respect of each child up to child's 18th birthday.
- 1.3 Ordinary parental leave is unpaid.
- 1.3 The employee will remain employed while on OPL. Where up to four weeks leave is taken in a year, they are entitled to return to their job.
- 1.4 Note that ordinary parental leave is different from shared parental leave in which eligible parents can share any maternity leave and pay not taken by the mother. Please see the Shared Parental Leave policy for full details. Parents may be eligible for both ordinary and shared parental leave.

2.0 Eligibility and conditions for ordinary parental leave

- 2.1 Any employee who has parental responsibility for a child is eligible for OPL. The term 'Parental Responsibility' is defined in the Children Act 1989 and includes both birth and adoptive parents, and legal guardians.
- 2.2 To qualify the employee must have completed at least one year's continuous employment with the Union by the time the leave is due to be taken.
- 2.3 Up to 18 weeks' leave can be taken at any time up to the child's 18th birthday.
- 2.4 The entitlement is given for each child. For example, if the employee has two children under 18, two periods of up to 18 weeks can be taken.
- 2.5 Leave must be taken in blocks of one or more weeks. Note that one week's OPL is equal to the length of time that an employee is normally required to work in a week, e.g. if an employee normally works only Monday and Tuesday, two days is equal to one week.
- 2.6 This minimum period of one week does not apply to a child with disabilities. In this case single days or blocks of days may be taken.
- 2.7 Employees may not take more than four weeks' leave in respect of any individual child during a particular leave year.
- 2.8 OPL may be taken as an extension to maternity, paternity, adoption leave or shared parental leave, or any leave taken to care for the needs of a child.

3.0 Procedure for applying

- 3.1 All requests for OPL must be made in writing to the Finance & Resources Manager.
- 3.2 A minimum of 21 days' notice must be given.
- 3.3 Employees will be required to provide documentary evidence of eligibility for the OPL entitlement.
- 3.4 The Union has the right to postpone OPL where our work would substantially disrupted if the leave were to be taken at the time requested. OPL can be postponed for up to six months, but cannot be postponed so that the leave ends after the child's 18th birthday. Where the Union needs to postpone a request for leave, we will first discuss this with the employee. Within seven days, we will give a written explanation and the dates on which the leave can be taken.

4.0 Employees' Rights

- 4.1 Whilst the employee is on OPL, they are entitled to benefit from their normal terms and conditions of employment, except for pay. They are considered to be continuously employed for the purposes of notice, redundancy terms etc.
- 4.2 The employee will continue to build up their equivalent contractual holiday entitlement, including any bank holidays that fall within the leave period.
- 4.3 The employee is expected to continue to act in good faith and abide by their obligations as set out in their contract of employment.
- 4.4 Where leave is taken for a period of four weeks or less, employees will be entitled to go back to the same job. If the period of ordinary parental leave was longer than four weeks (or followed on immediately from a period of additional maternity, paternity or adoption leave), then the employee will be entitled to return to the same job or, if that is not practicable, to a similar job that has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the previous job.

5.0 Further Information

- 5.1 Further details are available from the Finance & Resources Manager.

Approved by Board of Trustees: March 2017

Date of Review: March 2020