

Parental Leave & Pay – Guidelines and Procedures

Summary

This document details the procedures to be followed to ensure that employees receive the benefits to which they are entitled, both statutorily and contractually. The subsequent procedures are part of Greener Ealing Limited's (GEL) Family Friendly Policy.

Scope

The benefits outlined in this document apply to all GEL employees except those covered by:

- An alternative agreement with a recognised trade union; or
- other arrangements as a consequence of joining the Company under the provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended at any time and the company may depart from it depending on the circumstances of any case.

Entitlement to parental leave will not be affected by whether or not employees decide to take shared parental leave.

Information for managers and employees

It will help both the employee and manager to discuss plans for parental leave from an early stage, as this will help everyone prepare for the employees' absence.

The purpose of parental leave is to assist an employee in the care of their child. Examples of the way parental leave might be used include:

- straight after maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- spending more time with a child in their early years
- time with a child during a stay in hospital
- looking at new schools
- settling a child into new childcare arrangements
- Allowing the employees family to spend more time together, for example, taking a child on an extended trip to visit relatives.

Parental leave can be taken immediately after maternity, paternity or adoption leave providing the employee gives the correct notice.

Parental Leave & Pay – Guidelines and Procedures

Eligibility

Employees will qualify for parental leave if they:

- have a child aged under 18 and have at least one year's continuous service with GEL
- are the parent named on the child's birth or adoption certificate
- have legal parental responsibility for a child under 18

If the employee is separated and does not live with their children, they have the right to apply for parental leave if they keep formal parental responsibility for the children.

Managers can ask for evidence that an employee is entitled to parental leave. This could be:

- the child's birth certificate
- papers confirming the child's adoption or the date of placement in adoption cases
- the award of disability living allowance for the child

Length of Parental Leave

Leave must be taken in blocks of full weeks. A week is based on the employees' usual working pattern. So, if they only work Mondays and Tuesdays, a week would be two days or if they work Monday to Friday, a week would be five days.

If their child has a disability, an employee can take time off in blocks of less than a week, so they could use parental leave for regular hospital visits.

Each parent cannot take more than four weeks' leave for any one child in a year.

For these purposes, a year starts when an employee becomes eligible for parental leave. This is either when they have worked for GEL continuously for one year or when their child is born, if this date is later.

An employee can apply to take a total of up to 18 weeks' parental leave for each child up to their fifth birthday.

If the child is adopted, the leave can be taken until the fifth anniversary of their placement with the employee or until their 18th birthday, whichever comes first.

If the child is disabled (that is, receiving disability living allowance) the leave can be taken until their 18th birthday.

Parental leave is an individual right and cannot be transferred between parents. For example, one parent cannot decide to take only ten weeks and the other parent take 26 weeks (18 weeks parental leave per parent).

Pay and benefits during parental leave

Whilst on parental leave employees will receive no pay, and no employer's contribution to their

Parental Leave & Pay – Guidelines and Procedures

National Insurance and Pension Scheme (if a member).

All benefits such as pension, company car/car allowance and contractual leave entitlement etc. are suspended for the period of parental leave; however, statutory annual leave will continue to accrue during any period of parental leave.

Notifying

An employee must give 21 days' notice in writing to their manager of when they want to begin their parental leave.

To take parental leave straight after the birth or adoption of a child, the employee should give notice 21 days before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth or placement. In cases where this may not be possible the employee should give notice to their manager as soon as possible. For example, if the child is born prematurely or where less than 21 days' notice is given that a child is to be placed with the employee for adoption.

If the employee has given the correct notice, their parental leave can start on the day their child is born or placed, even if that is earlier or later than the date given.

Postponing leave

A manager can postpone the leave for up to six months after the beginning of the leave period the employee originally requested. However, the leave cannot be postponed so that it ends after a child's fifth birthday (or 18th birthday in the case of adopted and disabled children).

A manager can only postpone leave if it would cause significant disruption to the business, e.g. if leave was requested:

- over a period of peak seasonal production
- at the same time as, other employees have requested leave
- and the employee's absence would unduly harm the business

Parental leave cannot be postponed where the employee wants to take it immediately after their child is born or placed with them for adoption. If a manager needs to postpone the employee's parental leave, they must consult the employee about a new date.

To do this, the manager must write to the employee within seven days of receiving the employee's notification explaining why the leave needs to be postponed and confirming the new start and end date.

Returning to work

If an employee is returning from parental leave of 4 weeks or less, they are entitled to return to the same job on terms and conditions (for example the salary, hours of their job) as if they had not

been away, unless a redundancy situation has arisen, in which case they are entitled to be offered a suitable alternative vacancy if available.

If an employee takes more than 4 weeks' parental leave, they are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions, but only if reasonably practicable. If not, they are entitled to return to a similar job on terms and conditions at least as good as their previous job.

Revision Status

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