

## Parental Leave Guidelines

### What is Parental Leave?

The following Guidelines set out the rights for employees established by the Maternity & Parental Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2001, and introduced in January 2002.

The right to parental leave entitles all eligible employees who have completed one year's qualifying service to take a period of unpaid leave to care for their children. The right applies to mothers and fathers and to a person who has obtained formal parental responsibility for a child under the Children Act (or its Scottish equivalent).

Parental leave is available to give parents of children, including adopted children, the right to take a period of time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare. Parents can use it to spend more time with children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments.

In some cases the entitlement of parents of a disabled child are different, and in the context of this policy, a disabled child is a child who qualifies for disability living allowance.

In all cases, part- time employees will have pro- rata rights.

### What provisions apply?

There are key elements of Parental Leave which apply in every case:

- **Length of Service:** parents must have completed one year's continuous service with the University of East Anglia;
- **Amount of Parental Leave:** 13 weeks' parental leave in total for each child, or 18 weeks' leave if the child is disabled. A maximum of 4 weeks parental leave can be taken in a year in respect of each child;
- **Length of Parental Leave:** Employees must take parental leave in multiples of one week (if a shorter period is taken it will be counted as a week). Parents of disabled children may take leave in multiples of one day;
- **Period Over Which Parental Leave May be Taken:** Parents may take parental leave up to the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday; parents of adopted children may take parental leave up to five years from the date of placement; and parents of disabled children may take parental leave up to the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday;
- **Employment Status:** The employee remains employed while on Parental Leave and is guaranteed the right to return to the same job as before (a statutory right if the leave is for 4 weeks or less), or if that is not practical, a

similar job with the same (or better) terms and conditions as the old job.

### **What are the arrangements for taking Parental Leave?**

- Requests for leave should be made in writing to the line manager who will, in most cases, approve the leave (see below); the line manager must then inform the Human Resources Division, in writing, giving the dates of the requested leave together with their agreement to the individual's request to take unpaid Parental Leave. The Human Resources Division will then confirm the arrangements to the individual in writing.
- 21 days' notice must be given. Employees can choose to take Parental Leave at any time (subject to notice requirements).
- The line manager, after consultation with the Human Resources Division, can postpone the leave for up to 6 months where the work of the department concerned would be particularly disrupted if the leave were taken at the time requested.
- Leave cannot be postponed if a father wants to take it immediately after the birth of a child or if an adopter wishes to take it immediately after a placement for adoption.
- Both mothers and fathers can take parental leave.

### **Pensions contributions whilst on Parental Leave**

If employees are members of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) or the UEA Staff Superannuation Scheme (UEASSS) they will have the option of maintaining their contributions to the relevant scheme during a period of unpaid Parental Leave. The employee should contact the Pensions Office on extension 2676 or extension 1081 to discuss the options available to them.

### **Sick Leave and Parental Leave**

There will be no entitlement to contractual sick pay whilst on parental leave.

### **Records of Parental Leave**

Managers should keep records of Parental Leave taken as part of the standard process for recording absence. The Human Resources Division must be notified as soon as the request has been approved in order that they can inform the Salaries Office in good time to ensure that the necessary salary deductions are made. When an employee changes jobs within the University records of Parental Leave already taken should be made available to the new manager although the Human Resources Division will maintain a record on an individual's personal file.