

1. Introduction

Paternity leave refers to time off to manage the responsibilities associated with the birth, adoption and care of a child. Employees taking paternity leave may be of any gender so long as they meet the eligibility requirements in section 3.

Unite Students recognises the importance of family friendly initiatives that provide time away from the workplace for parents and support an appropriate work/life balance. As a result, this policy is intended to provide clear guidelines for employees and Line Managers in relation to employment rights and the procedure they should follow in the event that an employee wishes to take time off to manage the responsibilities associated with the birth, adoption and care of a child.

2. Roles & Accountabilities

Employees

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its provisions
- Responsible for notifying their Line Manager and HR Admin Team, in writing, of any request for leave, any change in dates and their confirmed return date by completing the paternity leave form available from the intranet

Line Managers

- Responsible for acknowledging any request for leave under this Policy and considering such requests in line with business needs and authorising the appropriate forms and forwarding to HR Admin Team / Payroll
- Responsible for maintaining appropriate and reasonable levels of contact with the employee during leave
- Responsible for making arrangements in respect of an employee's return from leave under this policy

Payroll Department

- To process changes in pay, including any Statutory Paternity Pay due, as instructed by HR Admin Team

3. Eligibility for paternity leave:

- If due to childbirth, the employee must be the biological father of the child, or the husband or partner/civil partner (male or female) of the child's mother, and expect to have responsibilities for caring for the child.
- If adopting the child, the employee must be either married to, or the partner of the person adopting the child, and expect to have the main responsibility, along with the person adopting the child, for the upbringing of the child.

- If due to surrogacy, the employee must be in a couple and expect to have the main responsibility, along with the person adopting the child, for the upbringing of the child.
- The employee must have successfully completed their onboarding
- The employee must continue to work for Unite Students until the day the baby is born, or in the case of adoption, from the matching week to the date of the child's placement.

If an employee does not qualify for paternity leave but wishes to take leave to be at the birth of their partner's baby or placement of their adopted child then they must utilise their holiday entitlement.

The Line Manager may ask an employee to produce evidence to show that they are eligible to take paternity leave and/or sign a declaration to that effect and we expect full co-operation with this.

Eligibility for paternity pay whilst on leave depends on meeting the criteria set out in section 5.

4. The Stages of the Process

If an employee is eligible for paternity leave, they can take either 1 week or 2 consecutive weeks' leave. Leave cannot be taken in odd days or separate weeks. The amount of leave is the same even if the leave is for a multiple birth/adoption.

4.1 Requesting Paternity Leave

If an employee would like to take paternity leave in respect of a newborn child or a newly adopted child they must complete a paternity leave form and submit it to their Line Manager either:

- Before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or
- Within 7 days of the date they are told that they have been matched with a child if adopting.

The Unite Students' Paternity Leave Form can be found on the intranet and must be forwarded to HR Admin Team once completed.

4.2 Commencing Paternity Leave

An employee can amend the start date but will not usually be allowed to change the date less than 6 weeks before their leave is due to start.

Paternity leave cannot commence before the child is born/placed, but an employee can choose to start their paternity leave on the actual date of the child's birth or adoption placement or within 56 days of the child's birth or adoption placement.

If the baby is born early, paternity leave can be taken any time between the actual date of birth and the end of the 56 days running from the day after the Sunday of the week the baby was originally due.

If an employee is taking paternity leave in respect of a newly adopted child from overseas, the earliest their leave can begin is the date on which the child enters the United Kingdom, and the leave must be taken during the period of 56 days from that date.

4.3 Provisions for Attending Antenatal Appointments and Adoption Appointments

An employee is entitled to attend two antenatal classes, or two adoption appointments with their partner, for up to 6.5 hours per class/appointment. The Line Manager will authorise reasonable paid time off to attend antenatal classes, based on length of time required to travel to the class and the duration of the class. If the employee would like to take more time than is deemed reasonable, then a proportion of leave may be unpaid.

5. Pay

Employees entitled to paternity leave will receive their normal pay during their leave. This payment will include any entitlement to Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP). If an employee does not qualify to receive SPP, HR Admin Team will provide an SPP1 Form for information purposes only.

An employee's holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during their leave, inclusive of public holidays. In the event that the company's holiday year ends whilst the employee is on leave, they will not be entitled to carry any unused holiday entitlement forward into the next holiday year.

6. Link to Other Policies

- Flexible Working Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Parental Leave Policy
- Special Leave Policy

7. Further Information & Support

The Employee Assistance Programme (LifeWorks)

LifeWorks provide a 24/7, 365 days a year telephone support line to help all employees who need support. The 24/7 telephone support line from LifeWorks provides access to a range of information and services. They are an independent external organisation, who works to a robust professional code of strict confidentiality.