

# SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

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## PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY



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## 1. Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to enable employees to take 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.

## 2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all employees who are parents of children aged up to 8 years old (or up to five years after the placement date of an adopted child) or up to age 18 if the child is disabled. In addition, they must meet the following criteria:

- have one year's continuous service at the time of taking parental leave,
- have children born or adopted on or after 15th December 1999,
- have children born or adopted between 15th December 1994 and 14th December 1999
- and have completed one year's continuous service either with local government or with a previous employer between 15th December 1998 and 9th January 2002,
- meet the definition of a "parent "

## 3. Is Parental Leave Paid?

Parental leave will usually be unpaid.

Paid leave will only be granted, at the Executive Officer's discretion, where there are compelling compassionate grounds for doing so.

## 4. Who Can Take Parental Leave?

In order to take parental leave, employees must meet one of the categories below:

- Mother or father of the child whether they are birth or adoptive parents. (They must either be named on the child's birth certificate or have, or expect to have, parental responsibility under the law for the child)
- A guardian
- The person responsible for the upbringing of the child e.g. grandparents, stepparents.

Foster parents do not have rights to parental leave.

## 5. How Much Time Can Be Taken?

The Parental Leave Scheme gives an entitlement to a maximum of 13 weeks unpaid leave per child. This entitlement is extended to 18 weeks unpaid leave for parents of a child entitled to Disability Living Allowance.

The entitlement includes time taken with any other employers.

Parental leave is expected to be taken in blocks of one week or multiples of one week for a period of between one and four weeks in any one year. If a child has a disability time off can be taken in days instead of weeks so that parental leave can, for example, be used for regular hospital visits.

## 6. How Is Parental Leave Reported and Authorised?

At least 21 days' notice must be given in writing to the employee's line manager, copied to the Executive Officer.

The leave can be postponed by up to six months if it is felt it would disrupt the business of the Parish Council. Postponement does not apply to a request for parental leave that will follow immediately after birth or adoption providing that notice requirements and the qualifying period are met.

## 7. What Is the Effect on Terms and Conditions of Employment?

The contract of employment continues during the leave period, annual leave continues to accrue, and the employee is guaranteed the right to return to the same job as before, where the leave is for a period of four weeks or less.

For those in the Local Government Pension Scheme the rules governing unpaid leave and pension contributions are contained in the West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme booklet or can be accessed through the West Sussex Pensions Scheme porthole, and are as follows:

- If you are granted unpaid leave of absence for less than 31 days, you must pay your contributions on the pay you would have received had you not been on such leave; and
- If you are granted unpaid leave of absence for a period of more than 30 days, you can elect to pay contributions for the whole period (up to a maximum of 36 months) to maintain your full pension benefits.