

Reference:	Parental Leave Policy
Author & Title:	HR Manager
Responsible Director:	Director of People Services
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Version history	
New policy	v1.0 4 March 2026 This policy considers day one right to be implemented in April 2026



Parental Leave Policy and Procedure

Equality and Diversity

This policy will be applied in a non-discriminatory way, in line with Liverpool Hope University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies. The University recognises and supports diverse family structures and aims to ensure that all staff with parental responsibility are able to access this policy fairly.

The University may monitor the uptake of parental leave to ensure equitable access across staff groups.

Aim

In line with our Mission, we welcome a diverse range of staff to the university. We aim to provide a healthy and safe working environment for our staff, looking after their physical and emotional wellbeing to ensure everyone can contribute to the best of their ability. This policy works to help staff balance their work and parental commitments.

The principles of the policy fulfil the statutory provisions for Parental Leave. The statutory framework for Parental Leave is set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996, Part VIII (sections 76–80), and the Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999. This policy reflects current statutory provisions relating to parental leave, including the entitlement introduced in April 2026 allowing eligible employees to take parental leave from the first day of employment.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The University is committed to providing a supportive environment to enable staff to integrate their working life with family responsibilities.
- 1.2 The Parental Leave Policy outlines the statutory entitlements to unpaid leave which may be available to members of staff who have, or expect to have, parental responsibilities.
- 1.3 Parental leave is offered in addition to other family friendly policies available within the University, such as maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, shared parental leave, and flexible working arrangements; these policies are available [here](#).

2.0 Parental Leave Defined

2.1 Parents have a statutory right to unpaid time off work to look after their child, up to their Eighteenth birthday, known as Parental Leave.

2.2 The reasons for the leave need not relate to the child's health.

Reasons may include but are not limited to;

- spend more time with them
- look after them during school holidays
- go to school open days or events with them
- settle them into new childcare arrangements
- Spend more time with family, such as visiting grandparents

2.3 Parents have a separate entitlement for each child.

3.0 Eligibility

3.1 Parental Leave is available to members of staff who have parental responsibility for a child. The parents of a child do not need to be living with the child to qualify for parental leave, but must be named on the child's birth or adoption certificate, or they have or expect to have parental responsibility. Parental leave is not normally available to foster parents, unless they have secured parental responsibility through the courts. Further information on parental responsibility is available [here](#).

3.2 Parental leave is available to all staff irrespective of length of service, but individuals must be employed at the University as members of staff to be eligible.

3.3 The child who is the subject of Parental Leave must be under the age of Eighteen.

4.0 Entitlement/Provisions

4.1 Members of staff are entitled to Eighteen weeks' leave for each child and adopted child, up to their Eighteenth birthday.

4.2 The right to parental leave is awarded per child. Consequently, in cases of multiple births (twins, triplets, etc.), leave can be taken separately and a member of staff is entitled to a separate eighteen-week entitlement for each child.

4.3 A total of four weeks per year may be taken in respect of each child, subject to the overall eighteen week maximum.

4.4 You must take parental leave as whole weeks (for example 1 week or

2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless your employer agrees otherwise or if your child is disabled. Leave should be taken in blocks of one week in accordance with statutory provisions, unless the applicable line manager agrees otherwise. This means that, ordinarily, where only one day of parental leave is taken, this will count as one full week.

- 4.5 For parents of children who qualify for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP), leave may be taken as single days. Applications for additional Parental Leave for parents of disabled children may be considered depending on the circumstances of an individual case. The University may ask for supporting evidence of DLA / PIP eligibility.
- 4.6 One week equates to the number of days a member of staff normally works in a week. For example, if a member of staff works three days in a week, 'one week' of parental leave equals three days. If any employee works irregular weeks the number of days in a 'week' is the total number of days worked in the year divided by fifty-two.
- 4.7 The leave can start once the child is born or placed for adoption.
- 4.8 Where more than one parent is employed by the University, both will be entitled to Eighteen weeks parental leave, per child.

5.0 Leave Carried over from a Previous Job

- 5.1 Parental Leave applies to each child, not to the parents' employment. For example, if a member of staff takes four weeks at their previous employer, they are still entitled to the remaining twelve weeks' parental leave, as long as they remain eligible.

6.0 Approving Parental Leave

- 6.1 The timing of parental leave will be subject to the approval of the applicable line manager considering individual circumstances and the needs of the department/school. The line manager will not unreasonably withhold approval.
- 6.2 Line managers should consider requests for parental leave fairly and consistently, considering both the needs of the employee and the operational requirements of the department.
- 6.3 Managers should:
 - consider each request on an individual basis;
 - discuss the request with the employee where operational difficulties may arise;
 - explore alternative dates where postponement may be necessary;

- ensure that decisions are reasonable, proportionate and applied consistently across staff;
- seek advice from People Services where there is uncertainty about the application of this policy.

6.4 Managers should not unreasonably refuse or delay parental leave requests and must ensure that any postponement complies with statutory provisions.

7.0 Delaying Parental Leave

7.1 The Line Manager must have a 'significant reason' for delaying the leave, for example it would cause serious disruption to the business. Such as critical operational periods, teaching or assessment deadlines, significant service delivery pressures.

7.2 In case of postponement the line manager must write to the employee explaining why within 7 days of the original request.

7.3 The period of any postponement will be discussed with the member of staff and new dates for Parental Leave must be agreed.

7.4 Any postponement cannot exceed a period of six months after the date that the member of staff originally wished to take the leave.

7.5 In cases of postponement the line manager cannot change the amount of leave requested.

7.6 Additionally, leave cannot be postponed if it means a member of staff would no longer qualify for parental leave e.g. postponing it until after the child's eighteenth birthday.

7.7 Parental Leave to be taken at the time of the birth of a child or on the placement of an adopted child cannot be refused by the Line Manager.

8.0 Procedure for Taking Parental Leave

8.1 The member of staff should give notice to their line manager and confirm their request for parental leave in writing by using the form Parental Leave - Record of Leave Form and provide at least twenty-one days' notice

8.2 To take parental leave straight after the birth or adoption of a child, the member of staff should give notice to their line manager and confirm their request for parental leave in writing by using the form Parental Leave - Record of Leave Form and provide at least twenty-one days' notice before the beginning of the expected week of child birth, placement or other circumstance. In cases where this may not be possible, they should give notice as soon as possible. For example, if a child is born prematurely or where less than twenty-one days' notice is given that a child is to be placed for adoption. This

notice requirement does not apply to parents of disabled children.

- 8.3 The line manager should normally respond to the request for Parental Leave within seven days to confirm whether the member of staff can have the leave, or whether it must be postponed to a suitable alternative time due to business needs. If leave is to be postponed the line manager must explain in writing why the leave should be postponed and suggest a new date within six months of the requested date and cannot change the amount of leave being requested. The line manager may initially require evidence of the child's age e.g. Birth Certificate, but this should not be necessary each time leave is requested.

9.0 Contractual Status During and After the Leave Period

- 9.1 During the period of Parental Leave, the member of staff is entitled to the benefit of all those contractual terms that would have been implemented had they not been absent, except for remuneration which shall be as outlined in this policy.
- 9.2 Pension contributions will normally only be payable during periods when you are receiving pensionable pay. However, where the rules of your pension scheme require pension contributions to continue during a period of unpaid leave, both employer and employee contributions will be made in accordance with those rules.
- 9.3 Where an unpaid period of leave is not pensionable, it will not count as pensionable service unless the rules of your pension scheme provide an option to buy back the lost pensionable service. Employees wishing to explore this option should contact the Payroll Department for further information.
- 9.4 Annual leave will continue to accrue throughout the period of Parental Leave.

10.0 Other related statutory leave

- 10.1 Parental Leave may be taken in addition to other statutory family-related leave that employees may be entitled to, including maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave, neonatal care leave, parental bereavement leave and shared parental leave.
- 10.2 Employees who are eligible for more than one type of statutory leave should consider which leave arrangement is most appropriate for their circumstances. In most cases, parental leave will normally be taken after any period of maternity, adoption, paternity, neonatal care leave, shared parental leave or parental bereavement leave has ended.
- 10.3 Employees should discuss their options with their line manager or People Services to ensure they understand the different leave

provisions available and how they may interact.

- 10.4 Where an employee wishes to take parental leave immediately following another period of statutory family leave, they should provide the required notice in accordance with this policy. Managers should consider requests reasonably, taking account of operational requirements and the statutory provisions governing parental leave.
- 10.5 If parental leave is requested at a later date following a period of family-related leave, the employee must provide the appropriate notice as outlined in this policy.
- 10.6 Line managers must notify People Services of any approved parental leave arrangements so that records can be updated on the HR system and payroll can be updated accordingly.

Leave type	Leave entitlement	Parental Leave entitlement
Maternity Leave	- Eligible employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks' maternity leave, consisting of 26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave and 26 weeks' Additional Maternity Leave. - Statutory Maternity Pay may be payable subject to eligibility criteria.	- Employees with parental responsibility are entitled to up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave per child, up to the child's eighteenth birthday. - Normally, up to four weeks may be taken in respect of each child in any one year.
Adoption Leave	- Eligible employees who adopt a child are entitled to up to 52 weeks' adoption leave, consisting of 26 weeks' Ordinary Adoption Leave and 26 weeks' Additional Adoption Leave. - Statutory Adoption Pay may be payable subject to eligibility criteria.	
Paternity	- Eligible employees can take up to 2 weeks paternity leave. - This leave must normally be taken within 52 weeks of the birth or placement.	
Shared Parental	- Eligible employees can take up to 50 weeks SPL between them. - Shared Parental Leave must be taken within 52 weeks of the birth or placement of the child.	
Neonatal Care Leave	Eligible employees whose child requires neonatal care may be entitled to additional neonatal care leave in accordance with the University's Neonatal Care Leave Policy and current statutory provisions.	

Parental Bereavement	- Eligible employees can take 2 weeks paid leave for each child who has died or was stillborn. - The leave must be taken within 56 weeks of the date of the death or stillbirth.	
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APPLICATION FOR PARENTAL LEAVE

Employee Details:

Full Name	
Department	
Staff Number	

Children's Details:

	Full Name	Date of Birth
Child 1		DD MM YYYY
Child 2		DD MM YYYY
Child 3		DD MM YYYY

If you are receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments for any of the children previously listed, and you are applying to take individual days of leave instead of Weekly Blocks, please state their name(s):

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Do you wish your pension contribution to be continued during the period of leave? (Tick)

YES	
NO	

IMPORTANT NOTE: No contributions towards your pension will be made when you are receiving no pay. If you are contributing to the pension scheme, then the paid period of your leave will count as reckonable service for the purpose of assessing pension benefits on retirement. Unpaid periods do not count as reckonable service. However, you do have the option to buy back this service if you wish at a rate based

on your normal monthly contributions. You should contact the Payroll Department for further details if you wish to pursue this option.

Employee's Signature:	
Date:	

You are entitled to a maximum of 4 weeks of leave per year for each child, to a maximum of Eighteen weeks in total up to each child's Eighteen birthday. Use the table below to complete your leave application request(s):

Child 1 Name	Date of Birth	Current Age	Leave Start Date	Leave End Date	Weeks Used to date	Weeks Applied for	Weeks Remaining if approved	Manager Approval
								Y N
								Y N
								Y N
								Y N
Child 2 Name	Date of Birth	Current Age	Leave Start Date	Leave End Date	Weeks Used to date	Weeks Applied for	Weeks Remaining if approved	Manager Approval
								Y N
								Y N
								Y N
								Y N
Child 3 Name	Date of Birth	Current Age	Leave Start Date	Leave End Date	Weeks Used to date	Weeks Applied for	Weeks Remaining if approved	Manager Approval
								Y N
								Y N
								Y N
								Y N

Manager Approval

Leave Approved by Line Manager:

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Line Manager Checklist

1. Ensure that the periods of leave are requested in blocks or multiples of one week.
2. Parents of disabled children may take leave in single or multiple days.
3. The amount of leave must not exceed four weeks in any one year, and eighteen weeks in total.
4. Return the original of the completed form to People Services Department.
5. Copy in the completed form to the member of staff.

People Services Checklist

1. Payroll informed and details of leave recorded on HR system
2. Action adjustment to pay in accordance with member's wishes in respect of pension contributions.