

## PARENTAL LEAVE GUIDE

This guide is intended to provide information to employees regarding parental leave and any entitlements available.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Parental leave is a provision which allows employees to take unpaid leave for the purpose of caring for a child and is available to those with parental responsibility.
- 1.2 In order to qualify for parental leave an employee must:
- be named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or have or expect to have parental responsibility.
  - not be a foster parent (unless they've secured parental responsibility through the courts)
  - have a child that is under 18 years of age.
- 1.3 This guide is for information only. It is not a complete or authoritative statement of the law nor does it form part of your contract of employment. HR can provide advice and information about any of the contents in this guide, [hrqueries@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:hrqueries@rvc.ac.uk).

### 2 ENTITLEMENT

- 2.1 From 1 April 2026, all staff employed on a permanent or fixed term contract will be entitled to the following:
- Parents are entitled to a total of 18 weeks' unpaid leave per child. This is a total entitlement regardless of whether an employee has changed employer.
  - Employees can take parental leave at any time up to the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
  - A maximum of four weeks can be taken in any one year and leave cannot be taken in blocks of less than one week unless the child is disabled. Parents of a disabled child may take leave in individual days rather than a block of a week.
  - Leave may be taken straight after the birth or placement of adoption.

### 3 APPLYING FOR PARENTAL LEAVE

- 3.1 Requests for parental leave should be made in writing to [hadministration@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:hadministration@rvc.ac.uk), enclosing evidence of parental responsibility such as child's birth/adoption certificate.
- 3.2 The application for parental leave must be made at least 21 days before the intended date of leave and must specify the dates for the leave to begin and end. The line manager via Human Resources will then give written authorisation for the leave.

### 4. POSTPONEMENT OF PARENTAL LEAVE

- 4.1 On receiving the application for parental leave, the line manager will consider the needs of the service and the ability to grant leave at that particular time. If granting of parental leave at that time would unduly disrupt the service, the manager may postpone the leave to a later date.

4.2 If the leave is to be postponed, the manager must write to the employee within 7 days of the original request, explaining why it is being postponed, together with suggestions for alternative dates. Leave cannot be postponed if it is required at the time of birth, or at the time of adoption. It can also not be postponed if it would prevent the employee from taking the leave before the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The new postponement start date must be within 6 months of the original requested start date.

## 5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5.1 All terms and conditions other than pay will continue to apply during parental leave.

5.2 During parental leave, contractual annual leave will continue to accrue.

5.3 Employees returning to work having taken 4 weeks or less of parental leave are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions as if they had not been absent, or if not reasonably practicable to a very similar job.

5.4 During parental leave all statutory rights in respect of redundancy, including the right to contractual notice period are retained.

## 6 PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

6.1 The entitlement to parental leave is 18 weeks per child regardless of whether an individual has changed employer during this time. On receiving an application for parental leave, previous employers may be contacted to determine the amount of parental leave that has been granted in relation to a child.

### Document Control

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