

# PARENTAL LEAVE



## What is Parental Leave?

Parental leave is a right 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. An employee is entitled to take 13 weeks leave in respect of each child and 18 weeks in respect of each disabled child. The leave is unpaid.

## Who can take parental leave?

- Employees who have a baby or adopt a child on or after 15 December 1999 and have completed one year's continuing employment with the Students' Union by the time the leave is due to be taken.
- Employees who had a bay or adopted a child between 15 December 1994 and 14 December 1999 and who have completed one year's continuous employment either with the Students' Union or with a previous employer during December 1998 and 9 January 2002.
- Both mothers and fathers are eligible.

## When does parental leave have to be taken by?

- **Children born or adopted on or after 15 December 1999:** Either by the child's fifth birthday or in adoptive cases, by five years after the child is first placed with the family for adoption (or until the child's 18th birthday, which ever is sooner)
- **Children born or adopted between 15 December 1994 and 14 December 1999:** By 31 March 2005
- **Children with a disability:** By the child's eighteenth birthday (for the purposes of parental leave, a disabled child is one for whom a disability living allowance has been awarded).

## Procedure for Applying.

All requests for parental leave must be made to the General Manager

## **Key Elements.**

- Leave may be taken in blocks of one week upwards (one week's parental leave is equal to the length of time that an employee is normally required to work in a week, eg. If an employee normally works Monday and Tuesday, two days is equal to one week). This minimum period does not apply to a child with disabilities).
- A minimum of 21 days notice must be given.
- The University College has the right to postpone leave for up to six months where the work of the University College would be particularly disrupted should the leave be taken at the time requested.
- Employees may not take more than four week's leave in respect on any individual child during a particular leave year.
- Employees will be required to provide evidence of eligibility for the entitlement.

## **Returning to Work Following Parental Leave.**

At the end of parental leave, an employee is guaranteed the right to return to the same job as before if the leave was for a period of four weeks or less; if it was for a longer period the employee is entitled to return to the same job, or, if that is not reasonably practicable, a similar job which has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the old job.

When parental leave follows maternity leave, the general rule is that a woman is entitled to return to the same job she had before the leave. If at the end of additional maternity leave, this would not have been reasonably practicable, and it is still not reasonably practicable at the end of parental leave, she is entitled to return to a job which has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the old job.

### **Note:**

Parental leave is to look after a child, which includes making arrangements for the good of the child. If the employee uses the leave for some other purpose, then he or she would be acting dishonestly and will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.