



Ordinary Parental Leave Policy

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1. Introduction

At Strathclyde, we're committed to supporting better work-life balance. We want to support you, so we'll always try to be flexible and allow you to take unpaid time off to care for your child/children and their welfare. This is called Ordinary Parental Leave (OPL).

In this policy, you'll find out about how to request OPL and how much time off is available. Separate arrangements to take emergency time off for dependants are found within our [Emergency Time off for Dependants Policy](#).

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#).

2. Who is Covered by this Policy?

This policy applies to all employees of the University.

You can take OPL if, having at least one year's continuous service with the University at the date you wish OPL to start, you:

- Are the parent of a child and your child is under the age of 18.
- Have - or expect to have - parental responsibility for your child, including foster carers with a permanence order.

You don't need to be living with your child to qualify for OPL and, where both parents are employed by the University, both are eligible for OPL.

3. What Time Off is Available?

You can take:

- Up to 18 weeks' OPL for each child up to their 18th birthday.
- Up to four weeks' OPL for each child in any rolling year, so if you have two children, for example, you can take up to eight weeks OPL in any one year.
- Your leave at any time after your child is born or placed for adoption with you. This includes immediately at the end of maternity, maternity support, adoption, and surrogacy leave or shared parental leave, provided you give at least 21 days' notice.

A 'week' means your normal working week and if you work part-time, a 'week' is the same as your normal - or average - working week.

You should take your OPL in whole weeks because, if you were to only take a part week and/or single days, then a full week will be deducted. Just so you're aware, if your child is disabled, you can take OPL in part weeks and/or single days and your remaining entitlement will be deducted based on the number of days taken, and not a full week.

The reason for the leave should be to spend time with your child.

3.1. Postponing Leave

If you request to take your OPL immediately after your child is born or is placed with you for adoption, then this will always be approved.

We will also always try to approve your requests to take OPL at other times. However, sometimes - due to potential impacts on business needs - your leave may need to be postponed. For example, we may not be able to approve your OPL request if:

- It was over a period of peak seasonal demand.
- If OPL was requested at the same time as other employees have requested or are on leave (of any description).

We can postpone OPL for up to 6 months after the beginning of the OPL period you originally requested. However, we cannot:

- Refuse or completely cancel OPL.
- Postpone leave beyond your child's 18th birthday.

If your request is not approved, your manager will discuss this with you and try to agree alternative dates. Your manager will then write to you within 7 days of your request to:

- Explain why the leave needs to be postponed.
- Give other suitable dates.

3.2. Evidence of Entitlement

Your manager may ask you to provide appropriate evidence to demonstrate your eligibility, for example:

- Your child's birth certificate.
- Documentation confirming your child's adoption or the date of placement for adoption.
- A parental order for surrogate parents.
- A permanence order for foster carers.
- In the case of a disabled child, a record of [Child Disability Payment](#) for your child (this is relevant if requests for time off is to be taken in part weeks and/or single days).

4. During your Ordinary Parental Leave

During OPL, your contract of employment continues, and - apart from OPL being unpaid - your terms and conditions remain the same as if you were still at work. You will continue to accrue annual leave and will receive any pay awards or increments during this time.

If you are a member of a pension scheme, you should contact our [Pensions Team](#) about the pension implications of taking a period of unpaid leave. Different conditions apply depending on which scheme you're a member of.

5. What Do I Have to Do?

If you're a member of staff, you are expected to:

- Familiarise yourself with this policy.
- Talk to your manager and tell them what time off you'd like to request.
- Complete and submit the request in writing to your manager using the [Ordinary Parental Leave Request Form](#) (staff login required).
- Where possible, give us at least 21 days' notice before you would like your OPL to begin. You should include the start and end dates of the leave period you would like to take. If you're requesting to take OPL at the end of another type of family leave, for example, maternity leave, you should give 21 days' notice before the end of the family leave.

If you're a manager, you're expected to:

- Consider the request and complete the form, approving the request as appropriate.
- If the request will have a detrimental impact on business needs, meet with your team member to explain why and agree alternative dates.

- Forward the request form with the agreed dates to your HR Team (staff login required), to ensure the appropriate payroll deductions are made.

6. Further Information and Support

If you have any queries about this policy, please talk to your manager or contact [Human Resources](#).

7. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please refer to our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.