



## Time off for dependants' policy

### Purpose

Employees have a statutory right to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with emergencies involving their dependants from day one of their employment. This policy sets out the Company's stance on permitting employees to take time off for this purpose whilst ensuring the Company's operations are not unduly affected. The term 'dependant' is prescribed in law and replicated in this policy. The policy also sets out areas of flexibility that the Company may adopt in order to support employees. Employees will not be subject to detriment for taking time off for dependants.

Employees who use time off for dependants for reasons other than that for which the statutory right is intended may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

### Entitlement

You are entitled to take a reasonable (see below) amount of unpaid time off to take action in relation to unforeseen events involving a dependant, defined as follows:

- spouse/civil partner
- child
- parent
- person who lives in the same household but is not a tenant, lodger, boarder or employee
- those who reasonably rely on you for the provision of care or for assistance if they fall ill. This could be, for example, an elderly neighbour.

The right to take time off extends only to that needed to make arrangements in the event of an emergency. Therefore, it is anticipated that no more than one or two days will be appropriate on each occasion. However, we recognise it is not possible to define what a reasonable amount of time is because this will depend on the specific circumstances in question. The same event may require varying amounts of time off for different people, or if it happens more than once on different occasions. Arrangements to cover any time off needed in excess of a couple of days, as a result of an emergency, will need to be discussed with your line manager and HR.

The Company recognises that people other than those listed above in relation to whom the statutory right applies may depend on you for assistance. Requests for unpaid time off in relation to these people should be made to your line manager.

### Events covered by this policy

An unforeseen emergency, for the purposes of this policy, can cover various events in an employee's life, for example:



- to help when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted (including mental illness or injury)
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured
- when a dependant dies
- to cope with the unexpected breakdown of arrangements for caring for a dependant (such as a nursing home or nursery closing unexpectedly or a childminder or carer not turning up), and
- to deal with an incident involving a child of the employee which occurs unexpectedly during school hours or in circumstances where the school has responsibility for the child (for example, if the child is injured on a school trip or suspended from school).

Time off for emergencies not involving a dependant e.g. a flood at home, is not covered by this policy, or you need time off for situations you knew about beforehand e.g. taking your child to hospital for an appointment (although you may be entitled to parental leave instead). If you need time off in these circumstances, you should speak to your line manager who will seek to agree alternative arrangements for time off with you.

There is no legal obligation on the Organisation to pay employees for time off for dependants so time off for this purpose will be unpaid.

## **Notification**

As soon as is reasonably practicable, you must contact your line manager to inform them of your need to take time off for dependants. If you are in work at the time the need arises, you must make reasonable efforts to inform your line manager in person of the need to leave work. If your line manager cannot be located, you should contact HR. If you are out of work when the need to take time off arises, you should notify your line manager by telephone or, in exceptional circumstances where a telephone call is not appropriate, by email.

The notification for your absence/the need to leave and the expected duration must be provided. Failure to do this may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. Your line manager may ask you for evidence of the need to take time off.

## **Other policies**

Employees should read our policies on Parental Bereavement Leave and Compassionate Leave which also offer entitlements in respect of the death of a dependant.

Employees who wish to make a request for parental leave to care for a child should read our Parental Leave Policy.

*This policy is noncontractual*

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