



## Policy on Time-off for Dependants

### 1. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all employees of the University.

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to:

- Outline the statutory entitlement to Time Off for Dependants
- Outline the University policy on payment for Time Off for Dependants
- Ensure managers<sup>1</sup> are aware of their responsibilities to employees who are covered by this policy

### 2. The Right to Time-Off and Entitlement to Paid and Unpaid Time Off

Employees have a statutory right to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with emergencies involving 'dependants'. This could be an employee's spouse or partner (including same-sex relationships), child, parent, or anyone living in the employee's household as a member of the family.

Whilst there is no statutory provision for paid time off to deal with emergencies, the University provides for time off with full pay of up to 10 days per calendar year (i.e. 1 January to 31 December), pro rata for part time employees, to deal with emergency situations involving dependants.

If, exceptionally, an employee has exhausted their entitlement to paid time off under this policy, and further time off is required, Managers should speak to their local College / Support Group HR Team for advice on how best to handle the situation.

Any provision for time off in excess of 10 days would normally be on an unpaid basis. However, with the manager's agreement, it may be possible for employees to use some paid annual leave provision to deal with emergency situations that last more than a few days.

The types of emergencies covered by this policy include:

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy the term 'manager' will be defined so as to include the nominated or line manager or another designated person of suitable seniority and responsibility within the relevant work unit or group

- Time off to make alternative arrangements when normal childcare arrangements have unexpectedly broken down
- The illness of a dependant where the employee needs to attend hospital in an emergency situation, or to provide immediate care for the dependant before longer term arrangements are put in place
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving the employee's child, where a child is suddenly taken ill, has been injured or has been excluded from school, for example

This is not an exhaustive list. Managers should contact their local College/ Support Group HR Team for advice if they are unsure as to whether leave should be granted in specific circumstances not listed above.

The provision for paid time off under this policy is not intended to be a long term arrangement. Employees will normally be expected to take no more than one or possibly two days off to deal with each specific emergency. For example if a child is taken ill with chickenpox, paid time off will be granted to deal with the immediate crisis, including for example taking the child to the doctor and making arrangements for longer term care. An employee would not be entitled to paid time off for the duration of the child's illness.

Additionally, if a situation requiring the employee to be absent from work is planned or foreseen, then it would not be classed as an emergency.

There is no statutory right to time off to deal with emergencies involving people who are not classed as dependants, and consequently this policy does not provide for time off in such circumstances. The University will consider requests for unpaid time off work to deal with non-emergency situations as set out under Section 4 of this policy.

### **3. Notification**

Time off under this policy will only be granted because of an emergency situation, and therefore there are no formal requirements for the timing of notification of the request.

However, employees should notify their manager as soon as possible that time off is required, confirming the reason the time off is / was needed.

### **4. Additional Time Off**

Employees of the University have the opportunity to request unpaid time off work in a number of other circumstances, for example, non emergency situations not related to dependants or to look after their dependants in non-emergency situations.

Employees should speak to their managers if they require further time off work in these circumstances, normally on an unpaid basis, to ascertain if their request can be accommodated.

## **5. Rights during Time Off for Dependants**

Continuity of employment is maintained during time off taken under this policy, which means there is no break in service during the employee's absence from work.

All terms and conditions of employment remain in force during an employee's period of time off except for those terms relating to pay where time off is given as unpaid leave.

Employees are entitled to continue to receive all non-cash benefits applicable to them during authorised periods of time off for emergencies granted under this policy, such as childcare vouchers and accrual of annual leave. This may not be the case where employees take unpaid time off under other University policies, and as such employees should seek advice from their College / Support Group HR Team if any clarification is required.

## **6. Record Keeping**

Heads of School or Support Departments should keep a record of each request received and leave granted.

## **7. Policy History and Review**

This policy was approved by CJCNC on 16 March 2012 and takes effect from 16 March 2012. It replaces/supersedes the document 'Family Leave Policy' which ceases to apply from the same date.

In the event of any significant change to the legal position on Time Off for Dependants, any relevant statutory requirements or any other related matter, this policy will be subject to immediate review in consultation with the Trade Unions. In the absence of such a change, the policy will be reviewed by December 2013. The Policy was reviewed in March 2015, with no amendments required. In August 2017 there was a minor amendment to section 2, 'same-sex relationships' was added to clarify the definition of partner. The Policy will be reviewed again by December 2018.

## **8. Alternative Formats**

If you require this document in an alternative format please email [UHRS@ed.ac.uk](mailto:UHRS@ed.ac.uk) or telephone 0131 650 8127.