



# St. Mary's Grammar School, Belfast

## PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

**April 2017**



**Aisling Award Winner**  
Outstanding Achievement in Education



# Policy on Parental Leave

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Parental leave is a statutory provision which entitles eligible staff to take unpaid time off work to look after their child or to make arrangements for their child's welfare. Members of staff can use parental leave to spend more time with their children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to outline eligibility and entitlement to parental leave and provide guidance to staff and management in terms of the procedure to be followed should a member of staff wish to avail of parental leave.
- 1.3 The policy applies to eligible members of staff who have completed one year's service with the school. For non-teaching staff, their line manager, the Director of Corporate Services, remains their point of contact.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY AND ENTITLEMENT

- 2.1 To qualify for parental leave, a member of staff must be the mother or the father of the child, have or expect to have adopted a child under the age of 18, or have or expect to have acquired formal parental responsibility for the child.
- 2.2 The parental leave entitlement for eligible members of staff is as follows:
  - 13 weeks leave in total for each child, up until the child's fifth birthday;
  - 13 weeks leave in total for each adopted child, to be taken during the five years after the date the child is first placed with the family for adoption (or until the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if that comes sooner); and/or
  - 18 weeks leave in total for each disabled child, up until his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child is regarded as 'disabled' if he/she is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.
- 2.3 As parental leave is provided for each individual child, if twins are born or more than one child is adopted at the same time, then the member of staff will be entitled to take 13 weeks leave for each child, or 18 weeks for each disabled child.
- 2.4 Parental Leave is taken in blocks of one week (except in the case of disabled children where leave may be taken in periods of one or more days at a time) up to a maximum of four weeks per year in respect of any individual child.
- 2.5 Normal terms and conditions of employment continue during parental leave, with the exception of 2.8 below).
- 2.6 After taking a single period of parental leave of four weeks or less, a member of staff is entitled to return to the same position under the same terms and conditions as previously.

- 2.7 If parental leave lasts more than four weeks, the member of staff will be entitled to return to the same position, or if that is not reasonably practicable, one with the same terms and conditions. This may also be the case if parental leave is taken immediately before or after maternity leave.
- 2.8 Parental leave is unpaid and non-pensionable. Members of staff may therefore wish to seek financial guidance before they take parental leave.

### **3. PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING PARENTAL LEAVE**

- 3.1 The member of staff should give as much notice as possible prior to the commencement of parental leave. In any event the member of staff must provide at least 21 days notice in writing before the date that he/she intends the leave to commence. This notice should be provided by completing a PL1 form (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The same period of notice is required where a member of staff wishes to take a period of parental leave following immediately after Ordinary or Additional Maternity Leave and Ordinary or Additional Adoption Leave.
- 3.3 On the first occasion a member of staff requests parental leave in respect of a particular child, he/she should provide with the PL1 form evidence of eligibility to parental leave, i.e. the child's birth certificate or adoption certificate and, where relevant, formal confirmation that the child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.
- 3.4 A member of staff's request for parental leave may be postponed by the school for up to six months, where work would be unduly disrupted if the leave were to be taken at the requested time.
- 3.5 Where the Principal/Director of Corporate Services postpones a request for parental leave, the reason for the postponement will be discussed with the member of staff and the reasons for the postponement will be given, in writing, within seven days of application.
- 3.6 The Principal/Director of Corporate Services will also reach an agreement with the member of staff on when the leave can be taken. The length of leave must be equivalent to the member of staff's original request.
- 3.7 The school cannot postpone parental leave when a member of staff gives notice to take it immediately after the birth of a child or when a child is placed for adoption.

### **4. MONITORING OF PARENTAL LEAVE**

- 4.1 The use of parental leave will be closely monitored by the Principal/Director of Corporate Services and any abuse of the policy will be subject to the school's disciplinary procedure.

### REQUEST FOR PARENTAL LEAVE FOR STAFF

Please ensure that you complete PL1 at the time of your request and hand it to the Principal/Director of Corporate Services.

**Part A To be completed by the staff member at least 21 days in advance of the date parental leave is to commence.**

Number of days' parental leave requested:

The date(s) on which parental leave is requested: From

To

Reason for request for parental leave including child it relates to (please note: if this is your first request for parental leave in respect of a particular child, please provide evidence of eligibility i.e. copy of birth certificate or certificate of adoption and, where relevant, formal confirmation that the child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance):

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Name

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B To be completed by the Principal / Director of Corporate Services and returned to staff member within seven working days of receipt of Part A**

Your parental leave has been approved / postponed (delete as appropriate).

Reasons for postponement (if applicable):

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part C To be completed jointly by the Principal / Director of Corporate Services and Staff Member if parental leave has been postponed.**

Agreed alternative dates for parental leave: From

To

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_