

Parental Leave Policy



Policy

Monkey Puzzle Day Nurseries is committed to supporting employees with caring responsibilities and enabling them to balance work and family life. This policy outlines the entitlement to statutory unpaid parental leave and the process for requesting and taking this leave.

Employees are entitled to Parental Leave from their first day of employment, in line with employment legislation.

This policy applies to all nursery employees and should be read alongside the following related policies:

- Maternity Leave Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Adoption Leave Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Time Off for Dependants Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Absence Management Policy

This is a non contractual policy and may be amended at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, regardless of role or hours worked. It does not apply to agency workers, volunteers, contractors or self employed individuals.

Eligibility

Employees are entitled to statutory unpaid parental leave if they:

- are named on the child's birth certificate or adoption placement documentation, or
- have parental responsibility for the child under UK law, and
- are taking leave to care for a child up to their 18th birthday.

Employees qualify for Parental Leave from their first day of employment, with no previous service required. This entitlement applies per child, not per employment contract.

Entitlement

Employees may take:

- Up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave per child, up to their 18th birthday
- A maximum of 4 weeks per year, per child
- Leave in blocks of one week or more (unless the child is disabled, in which case leave may be taken in single days)

If multiple children are born or adopted at the same time (e.g., twins), entitlement applies per child. Parental Leave is unpaid.

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Purpose of Parental Leave

Parental Leave must be used to care for the child. Examples include:

- Settling a child into a new school, setting or childcare arrangement
- Attending medical appointments or assessments
- Spending more time with a child during critical developmental stages
- Managing family transitions such as changes in care arrangements
- Supporting a child with additional needs or disabilities

It must not be used for emergencies (covered under the Time Off for Dependents Policy).

Notice Requirements

Employees must provide:

- At least 21 days' written notice before the intended start date, confirming:
 - the dates the leave is to be taken
 - the amount of leave requested
 - confirmation that the leave is for the purpose of caring for the child

Requests should be made to your Line Manager.

We may request reasonable evidence of parental responsibility or the child's date of birth.

Postponement of Leave by the Nursery

Parental Leave can be postponed only where business needs require it, for example:

- operational staffing ratios
- continuity of care concerns
- unavoidable impacts on nursery operations

Postponement is not permitted where:

- the leave request relates to a child's birth
- the leave request relates to a child's adoption placement

If leave is postponed:

- it must be taken within 6 months of the original start date
- a written explanation and new dates will be provided within 7 days of the request

We will always aim to accommodate leave requests wherever possible.

Protection from Detriment

Employees will not be treated unfairly, denied opportunities, or subjected to detriment for requesting or taking Parental Leave.

Any concerns about treatment linked to Parental Leave should be raised under the Grievance Procedure.

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During Parental Leave

- Employees remain employed and retain all contractual benefits except pay
- Annual leave continues to accrue
- Pension contributions may pause during unpaid leave unless the employee opts to top up contributions

Employees should discuss any queries with your Line Manager.

Returning to Work

After Parental Leave of up to 4 weeks, employees have the right to return to the same job.

After longer periods or combined leave types, employees may return to the same job or a suitable alternative role on no less favourable terms, in line with statutory requirements.

Employees who wish to request changes to their working patterns on return (e.g., reduced hours or flexible working) should refer to the Flexible Working Policy.

Interaction with Other Leave Types

Parental Leave is separate from:

- Paternity Leave
- Time Off for Dependants (for emergency situations)
- Shared Parental Leave
- Maternity and Adoption Leave
- Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

Employees may use these leave types at different times if eligible.

Record Keeping

All Parental Leave records will be maintained securely in the HR system in accordance with Data Protection requirements.

Employees must ensure leave dates and documentation are uploaded to the HR platform where required.

Further Guidance

ACAS – Parental Leave Guidance:
www.acas.org.uk