

Emergency Time off for Dependants & Carers Leave Policy / Procedure

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| Policy Owner | Director of HR | Policy Author | HR Manager |
| Approved By | The Executive | Date Approved | April 2024 |
| Status | Approved | Impact Assessment | Yes |
| Version | 2 | Date of Next Review | April 2027 |

| Version Number | Purpose/Change | Date |
|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Creation of Policy | September 2018 |
| 1.1 | Converted policy into new standard template, policy owner updated from Director of HR to HR Manager and minor grammatical corrections made. | August 2022 |
| 1.2 | Reviewed terminology and updated links | August 2023 |
| 2 | Updated statutory legislation for carers leave | March 2024 |

DEPENDANTS AND CARERS LEAVE

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The University aims to support all employees in achieving a healthy work/life balance, recognising that many employees will have family and caring responsibilities that will impact on their working lives and require them to be absent from work from time to time, planned or unplanned. As such the University has built on its statutory obligations and developed a numbers of flexible family friendly policies which are available to all staff irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation. Employees can access these policies [here](#).
- 1.2 For further advice and information on this policy or any of the University's other family friendly policies, please contact your HR representative.

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This policy sets out the rights of employees to take either unpaid emergency dependants leave in the event of unforeseen or emergency situation or unpaid carers leave. It outlines the process employees and managers should follow. This policy ensures a consistent and fair approach in line with legislative requirements and commitment to best practice.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 All employees have a statutory entitlement from the first day of employment to request :
 - 3.1.1 Emergency dependants leave to allow the employee to make arrangements to deal with specific circumstances involving a dependant.
 - 3.1.2 Carers leave up to one week (within a rolling twelve month period), to undertake caring responsibilities.

- 3.2 Carers are employees with caring and support responsibilities of others who are unable to care for themselves. This could be an employee's spouse or civil partner/partner, child, parent, grandchild or anyone unable to care for themselves who depend on the employee for care.
- 3.3 In cases of illness, injury or where care arrangements break down, a dependent may also be someone who reasonably relies on an employee for assistance, including where an employee is the primary carer or is the only person who can help in an emergency.

4. Entitlement

- 4.1 There is no set limit on the amount of time employees can take off for emergency care of dependants. In most cases, the time taken should be enough for the employee to deal with/manage/respond to the caring need and make longer term arrangements if necessary.
- 4.2 Employees are entitled to up to one week unpaid carer leave within a twelve month rolling period.
- 4.3 As a guide, time off for Emergency Dependants Leave could be to deal with the following (this is not an exhaustive list):
 - 4.3.1 To assist with the sudden illness of a dependent where they need to attend their GP or hospital, or to provide immediate care for the dependent before longer term arrangements are put in place.
 - 4.3.2 To make alternative arrangements when normal childcare arrangements have unexpectedly broken down or to deal with an incident that involves a dependent/child of the employee which occurs unexpectedly during school time.
- 4.4 The provision for time off under Emergency Dependants Leave is not intended to be a long-term arrangement. For example, if a child is taken ill, time off will be granted to deal with the

immediate situation but would not be entitled to time off for the duration of the child's illness. This would be an example of carers leave.

- 4.5 Where further time off is required, dependants leave may be supplemented by carers leave or annual leave. Managers should contact their HR representative if they are unsure as to whether leave should be granted in specific circumstances not listed above.

5. Notification

- 5.1 There are no formal requirements for requesting the time off however, employees should notify their line manager as soon as possible that time off is required, confirming the reason(s) why the time off is needed, and the leave is approved must be taken within one month of the original request.
- 5.2 On their return to work, employees should ensure the [Dependants/Care Leave Request Form](#) is completed and signed by their manager for each period taken. On approval, the manager will send the completed form to the HR Department and the Payroll Department for their records.

6. Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required.

APPENDIX 1: TIME OFF FOR DEPENDENTS/CARERS LEAVE

FAQ's

1. How does this affect my contract of employment?

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

The period of leave counts towards the period of continuous service for the purposes of entitlement to statutory employment rights.

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.

2. What happens to my annual leave?

Annual leave will continue to be accrued at your normal contractual rate.

3. How will leave / pay affect my pension?

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

During any period of unpaid leave, your membership will cease to continue for that period unless the employee has the right to return to work, in which case an employee can choose to make up pension contributions to cover the unpaid period. An employee can discuss this directly with an LGPS Advisor at 01224 264264 or e-mail at pensions@nespf.org.uk.

Scottish Teachers superannuation Scheme (STSS)

During any period of unpaid Leave, an employee's membership will cease to continue for that

period. Under the current rules of the scheme members are not able to buy back the lost pension during any period of unpaid leave.

4. What other support does the University offer?

The University is committed to helping working parents and carers and offers a variety of family friendly benefits and flexible arrangements. Policies and procedures within the suite of [family friendly](#) include: maternity leave, paternity/supporting partner leave, adoption/surrogacy leave, shared parental leave, parental leave, fertility treatment leave and foster care leave. In addition, the University offers:

Childcare facilities

The Treehouse Early Care Centre is a purpose build facility based on the University Campus. It provides high quality care and education for children aged 3 months to 5 years during Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 6pm. Further information and contact details can be found at [Supporting Working Parents](#). Employees may be eligible to salary sacrifice part of their salary for the full cost of their childcare place, saving between 30% and 42% depending on the tax rate.

Employees are advised to submit applications to their preferred nursery provider(s) as early as possible as places are normally reserved very quickly.

King's Camps

King's Camps is a holiday childcare provider (OFSTED-registered) which operate from RGU: SPORT on the University campus during the Easter, Summer and October holidays. University Employees can book in advance to spread the cost and currently receive a discount. Employees will also find information here on childcare support including the [Government's Tax-Free Childcare scheme](#).

Flexible Working

The University's flexible working scheme can help achieve a better work-life balance and enable employees to develop a work pattern that suits their family commitments. For more information, please refer to the University's [Flexible Working Scheme](#).

University Support Helpline

The University recognises that employees may need confidential independent help, information, and guidance. For that reason a 24 hour confidential support [employee helpline](#) is available to employees and their family members to access. Professionals are available to answer queries on a wide range of practical and more sensitive issues and the service offers: life support, legal information, bereavement assistance, medical information, a wellbeing portal, and online CBT.