

## **PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

An employee is entitled to up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave per child if he/she is the birth or adoptive parent of a child who is under 18 years of age. To qualify for ordinary parental leave, employees must have completed at least one year's continuous service with the Church.

"Ordinary parental leave" should not be confused with shared parental leave. Shared parental leave enables mothers to commit to ending their maternity or adoption leave and pay at a future date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as shared parental leave and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from maternity leave and opt in to shared parental leave and pay at a later date. There is a separate policy on shared parental leave.

### **2. Rights during 'ordinary' leave**

Qualifying employees will be entitled to a maximum of 18 weeks' ordinary parental leave to be taken up until the child's 18th birthday. During ordinary parental leave, the employee will remain employed, although pay and most contractual benefits will be suspended. The right to accrue statutory holiday entitlement will, however, remain in place. Certain other terms of employment will remain in force. During parental leave employees will be entitled to the implied obligation of trust and confidence, and any terms and conditions of employment relating to:

- notice of termination;
- redundancy compensation; and
- disciplinary or grievance procedures.

Employees taking ordinary parental leave will be bound by the implied obligation of good faith, and any terms and conditions of employment relating to:

- notice of termination;
- disclosure of confidential information;
- the acceptance of gifts or other benefits; and
- participation in any other business.

### **3. Conditions of 'ordinary' parental leave**

The following conditions apply.

An employee may not exercise any entitlement to ordinary parental leave unless he/she has complied with any request made by the Church to produce

evidence of parenthood or parental responsibility. This could be in the form of a birth certificate or adoption papers.

The employee must give proper notice of the period of leave that he/she proposes to take. This notice must be given to the Church at least 21 days before the date on which leave is to start and must specify the dates on which the period of leave is to begin and end.

Where the employee is the father of the child in respect of whom the leave is to be taken and he requests ordinary parental leave to begin when his child is born, his notice must specify the expected week of childbirth and the duration of the period of leave. The employee must give this notice at least 21 days before the expected week of childbirth.

Where the ordinary parental leave is in respect of an adopted child and is to begin on the date of the placement, the employee's notice must be given to the Church at least 21 days before the beginning of the week in which the child is to be placed for adoption, or as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter. It must specify the week in which the placement is expected to occur and the duration of the period of ordinary parental leave requested.

The Church may postpone a period of ordinary parental leave (other than where parental leave has been requested immediately after childbirth or immediately after placement for adoption) where the Church considers that its business would be unduly disrupted if the employee were to take leave during the period requested. In such a case, the Church will allow the employee to take an equivalent period of ordinary parental leave beginning no later than six months after the commencement of the period originally requested. The Church will give notice in writing of the postponement stating the reason for it and specifying suggested dates for the employee to take parental leave. Such notice will be given no more than seven days after the employee's notice was given to the Church.

Employees may not take ordinary parental leave in blocks of less than one week (except in relation to a child who is disabled).

Employees may not take more than four weeks' leave in respect of any individual child in any year. For these purposes a year is the period of 12 months beginning when the employee first becomes entitled to ordinary parental leave in respect of the child in question, and each successive period of 12 months beginning on the anniversary of that date.

#### **4. Return from 'ordinary' parental leave**

An employee who returns to work after a period of ordinary parental leave is entitled to return to the job in which he/she was employed prior to the absence if it was an isolated period of leave lasting four weeks or less. If the period of parental leave followed on immediately from another period of statutory leave, the employee's right to return depends on the length of leave taken.

The employee has the right to return to the same job if the ordinary parental leave was the last of two or more consecutive periods of leave that did not include:

- a period of ordinary parental leave lasting more than four weeks; or
- any period of statutory leave that, when added to any other period of statutory leave (excluding ordinary parental leave) taken in relation to the same child, means that the total amount of statutory leave taken in relation to that child totals more than 26 weeks.

An employee who returns to work after a period of ordinary parental leave that does not fall into the above description, for example because it follows ordinary and additional maternity leave lasting more than 26 weeks, is entitled to return to the job in which he/she was employed prior to the absence, or, if that is not reasonably practicable, to another job that is both suitable and appropriate