



## Maternity Policy

### 1. About this policy

This policy outlines the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who are pregnant or have recently given birth, and sets out the arrangements for ante-natal care, pregnancy-related sickness, health and safety, and maternity leave.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

### 2. Time off for ante-natal care

If you are pregnant you may take paid time off during working hours for ante-natal care. You should try to give us as much notice as possible of the appointment. Unless it is your first appointment, we may ask to see a certificate confirming your pregnancy and an appointment card.

### 3. Entitlement to maternity leave

All employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks' maternity leave, consisting of 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave (**OML**) and 26 weeks' additional maternity leave (**AML**).

### 4. Notification

Please inform us as soon as possible that you are pregnant. This is important as there may be health and safety considerations.

Before the end of the fifteenth week before the week that you expect to give birth (**Qualifying Week**), or soon as reasonably practical afterwards, you must tell us:

- the week in which your doctor or midwife expects you to give birth (**Expected Week of Childbirth**) and
- the date on which you would like to start your maternity leave (**Intended Start Date**).

We will write to you within 28 days to tell you the date we will expect you to return to work if you take your full maternity leave entitlement (**Expected Return Date**).

Once you receive a certificate from a doctor or midwife confirming your Expected Week of Childbirth (MATB1), you must provide us with a copy.

### 5. Starting maternity leave

The earliest you can start maternity leave is 11 weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth (unless your child is born prematurely before that date).

If you want to change your Intended Start Date please tell us in writing. You should give us as much notice as you can, but wherever possible you must tell us at least 28 days before the original Intended Start Date (or the new start date if you are bringing the date forward). We will then write to you within 28 days to tell you your new expected return date.

Your maternity leave should normally start on the Intended Start Date. However, it may start earlier if you give birth before your Intended Start Date, or if you are absent for a pregnancy-related reason in the last four weeks before your Expected Week of Childbirth. In either of those cases, maternity leave will start on the following day.

Shortly before your maternity leave is due to start we will discuss with you the arrangements for covering your work and the opportunities for you to remain in contact, should you wish to do so, during your leave. Unless you request otherwise, you will remain on circulation lists for internal news, job vacancies, training and work-related social events.

The law says that we cannot allow you to work during the two weeks following childbirth.

## **6. Maternity pay**

Statutory maternity pay (**SMP**) is payable for up to 39 weeks provided you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the Qualifying Week and your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year. The first six weeks SMP are paid at 90% of your average earnings and the remaining 33 weeks are at a rate set by the government each year.

## **7. During maternity leave**

With the exception of terms relating to pay, your terms and conditions of employment remain in force during OML and AML.

Annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue at the rate provided under your contract. If your maternity leave will continue into the next holiday year, any holiday entitlement that cannot reasonably be taken before starting your maternity leave can be carried over and must be taken immediately before returning to work unless the Principal agrees otherwise. You should try to limit carry over to one week's holiday or less. Carryover of more than one week is at the Principal's discretion. Please discuss your holiday plans with the Principal in good time before starting your maternity leave. All holiday dates are subject to approval by the Principal.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, we shall make employer pension contributions during OML and any period of paid AML, based on your normal salary, in accordance with the pension scheme rules. Any employee contributions you make will be based on the amount of any maternity pay you are receiving, unless you inform us that you wish to make up any shortfall.

## **8. Keeping in touch**

We may make reasonable contact with you from time to time during your maternity leave although we will keep this to a minimum. This may include contacting you to discuss arrangements for your return to work.

You may work (including attending training) on up to ten "keeping-in-touch" days during your maternity leave. This is not compulsory and must be discussed and agreed with the Principal.

You will be paid at your normal basic rate of pay for time spent working on a keeping-in-touch day and this will be inclusive of any maternity pay entitlement.

## **9. Returning to work**

You must return to work on the Expected Return Date unless you tell us otherwise. If you wish to return to work earlier than the Expected Return Date, you must give us eight weeks' prior notice of the date. It is helpful if you give this notice in writing. You may be able to return later than the Expected Return Date if you request annual leave or parental leave, which will be at our discretion.

You are normally entitled to return to work in the position you held before starting maternity leave, and on the same terms of employment. However, if you have taken AML and it is not reasonably practicable for us to allow you to return into the same position, we may give you another suitable and appropriate job on terms and conditions that are not less favourable.

If you decide you do not want to return to work you should give notice of resignation in accordance with your contract.