



Parental Leave Policy

Version 3

Purpose:	The purpose of Parental Leave is to entitle a working parent to unpaid leave from work to enable them to take care of their child in accordance with Parental Leave Act.
Circulation:	This document is available for all to review and will be published on the Institute's website.
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Approval Date:	4 September 2024
Date to Review:	In accordance with legislation

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1. Introduction

All employees who qualify under the terms of the Parental Leave Act, 1998 are entitled to take 26 weeks unpaid leave from work for each eligible child before their 16th birthday.

2. Eligibility

All staff employed by Dundalk Institute of Technology (“the Institute” / “DkIT”) with continuous service of one year who is a natural or adoptive parent are entitled to parental leave. The maximum age of the child in respect of whom staff may take parental leave is 16 years in all cases, including for parents with children with a disability or long-term illness and in the case of adoption.

Employees who have less than one year’s service are entitled to a pro-rata parental leave entitlement after three month’s service in Dundalk Institute of Technology, if the child is approaching the age threshold.

Part-time employees of Dundalk Institute of Technology are entitled to unpaid parental leave on a pro-rata basis.

3. Application Procedure

Information and application forms for parental leave are available from the Institute website. Applications must be made on the approved form only and must be approved by the appropriate Head of School/ Department/ Function/ Unit before submission to Human Resources.

Forms must be submitted a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the proposed date of commencement. Applications must specify the start date, duration and mechanism for taking the parental leave and should be accompanied by a copy of the child’s birth certificate.

All applications for parental leave are subject to the approval of the Institute. Staff members must discuss and agree proposed dates and the pattern of leave with their Head of School/ Department/Function prior to formal application as Human resources will contact them confirm suitability of the proposal in line with operational requirements.

You must then apply for Parental Leave on ESS CORE through the Employee Request tab.

Once approval has been secured for the application, Human Resources will inform the staff member in writing of the date of commencement, agreed dates and pay multiplier for the period concerned. Employees must inform their Head of School/Department/Function and Human Resources in writing at least 4 weeks before the date on which you intend to return to work after parental leave.

4. Leave Entitlements

4.1 Unpaid Leave

All staff employed by the Institute with continuous service of one year who is a natural or adoptive parent are entitled to up to 26 working weeks unpaid leave. Employees who have less than one year’s service are entitled to a pro-rata parental leave entitlement after three month’s service in the Institute.

Part-time employees are entitled to unpaid parental leave on a pro-rata basis. This is calculated on the average number of hours worked per week in the 18-week period prior to the commencement of the parental leave. In the case of multiple birth e.g. twins; the entitlement is up to 26 weeks for each child.

The leave is non-transferable i.e. one parent cannot take the other parents leave and vice versa. However, in a case where both parents are employed by the Institute subject to the Institute's agreement, parental leave can then be transferred from one parent to the other.

If a parent falls ill while on parental leave and as a result is unable to care for the child, they may suspend the parental leave for the duration of the illness following which period the parental leave recommences.

4.2 Pattern of Parental Leave

It is normal that the 26 working weeks be taken as one block of continuous leave, however in exceptional cases and with prior approval of the Head of School/Department/Function and Human Resources it may be broken down into pre-planned time off. 26 weeks unpaid parental leave is available per eligible child, and the maximum time off in any one year is 26 weeks without the specific consent of the Institute except in the case of multiple births.

The proposed period of leave must be agreed with your Head of School/Department/Function School/Unit and approved by the Human Resources Manager. All public holidays during the period of parental leave will be added to the end of the period of parental leave. At least 6 weeks advance notice of an intention to take parental leave is required from the member of staff so that alternative arrangements for the carrying out of their duties can be made.

The following patterns of Parental Leave may be granted:

- Administrative/Technician/Maintenance: Minimum ½ day per week
- Academic: ½ day per week minimum. Any academic staff member applying for Parental Leave must do so for the complete semester and not during the period of classes only.
- Hourly paid leave will **not** be considered.

4.3 Alterations and Postponement of Parental Leave

The Institute has the right to postpone or alter the manner of parental leave where the leave could have significant adverse consequences on the Institute. This will be discussed with the employee in full prior to any formal written notice. Notice of an alteration or postponement will be given to the employee not later than 4 weeks before the proposed commencement date. Parental leave can be postponed for up to 6 months if the Institute is satisfied that granting the leave would have a significant adverse effect on the Institute, if there are difficulties in finding a replacement or if a number of employees are already on parental leave.

5. Returning to Work

Section 14, 15 and 16 of the Parental Leave Acts, refer to:

- Protection of Employment Rights whilst taking leave under the Act;
- Right to return to the position held prior to taking leave under the Act and on the same Terms and Conditions; and

- Where it is not reasonably practicable for the employee to return to the position previously held, the Institute must find an alternative suitable position on the Terms and Conditions not substantially less favourable than those which applied prior to taking leave under the Act.

With reference to the above, on return from a period of parental leave the staff member will return to their normal post, in so far as this is practicable or to an alternative position under terms and conditions of employment that are no less favourable than the contract.

If an employee is found to be abusing their entitlement to parental leave they will immediately have their parental leave entitlement terminated and may be subject to the disciplinary process.

6. Protection of Employment Rights

Employment rights, except the right to remuneration and superannuation benefits, are unaffected during a period of parental leave. To ensure preservation of social insurance records, employees should contact the local Department of Social & Family Affairs office to ensure that appropriate credits are made.

Absence from employment while on parental leave shall not be treated as part of any other leave from employment to which the employee concerned is entitled.

The Institute reserves the right to extend periods of probation to take account of absence due to parental leave.