

## **SPECIAL LEAVE FOR UNPLANNED & URGENT DOMESTIC, PERSONAL & FAMILY REASONS**

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to help employees balance the demands of domestic and work responsibilities at times of UNPLANNED and URGENT need. It enables staff to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem and make any appropriate arrangements.

### **2. Circumstances where Special Leave can be granted:**

- if a dependant (see 2.1) falls ill, gives birth or has been involved in an accident or assaulted, including where the victim is hurt or distressed rather than injured physically;
- to make appropriate care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- to deal with the death of a dependant, for example, to make funeral arrangements or to attend a funeral;
- to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements for a dependant; for example, when the childminder or nurse fails to turn up, or when a school or nursery (attended by the children of staff) is unexpectedly closed;
- to deal with an incident involving the employee's child during school hours: for example, if the child has been involved in an accident or is being suspended from school.

#### **2.1 Who is a dependant**

A dependant can be the employee's spouse or civil partner, child or parent, or someone who lives in the same household but who is not his/her employee, lodger or boarder. A dependant may also be any person who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance on an occasion when the person falls ill or is injured or assaulted, or to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury, or where care arrangements are unexpectedly disrupted or terminated.

### **3. Benefits**

#### **3.1 For all employees**

An employee who works for the University full time or part time, regardless of length of service or type of contract, will be entitled to apply to take a reasonable period of unpaid time off for the reasons detailed above.

#### **3.2 For employees with a contract of employment with terms and conditions in excess of statutory**

In addition to the benefits to all employees those with a contract of employment with terms and conditions in excess of the statutory will be entitled up to the first five days paid (pro rata for part time staff) in a 12-month period. Heads of Schools/Departments (or designated person) may grant leave with pay (taken from the five day entitlement stated above) for urgent domestic business needs e.g. burglary of home to allow arrangements to be made.

### **4. Personal Health and Welfare appointments**

Individuals should make every effort to arrange appointments to a doctor, dentist, optician or other medical provider outside of working hours, irrespective of their working pattern. However, if this is not possible it is the normal expectation for the amount of time taken out of the working day to be made up.

Hospital appointments should also be made outside of working hours if at all possible. However the University recognises the scheduling of hospital appointments is sometimes outside the control of the individual employee. If this is the case paid time off, for those staff covered in Para 3.2, should be given for hospital appointments (Ante-natal care is the exception where time is paid irrespective of when the appointment is arranged). The supervisor/manager may ask to see confirmation of the appointment e.g. appointment card or letter. The supervisor/manager should ensure that any personal information, such as the nature of the illness, must remain confidential in all cases.

## **5. Additional information**

Where a member of staff needs to use the University telephone system, for example to make an appointment to a doctor which due to opening hours cannot be arranged outside of work, the supervisor/manager should be consulted.

## **6. Application Process**

Staff requesting Special Leave for unplanned or urgent domestic, personal and family reason should apply through their Head of School/ Department or designated nominee as soon as is reasonably possible. The staff member must state the reason for the absence and how long they are expected to be away from work.

It is **unlikely** that staff would need to take the full entitlement in a given period as they will be required to make speedy arrangements so that they can resume work as soon as possible. However, each situation should be dealt with individually. Should the employee know that the school or nursery (attended by the children of staff) would be closed for a second consecutive day, they should request to take annual leave or unpaid leave as normal.

Contact between the employee and Head of School/Department or designated nominee during the period should be agreed at the first point of contact. In most cases the contact will be on a daily basis.

Special leave should only be granted at the start of the employee's working day, or as soon as is reasonably practicable, and should not normally be granted retrospectively. Any local arrangements for taking this leave should be followed.

Staff requesting time off to attend a personal health and welfare appointment should do so via their supervisor/manager as soon as the appointment date is known.

The Head of School/Department or designated nominee should notify any unpaid special leave to the Payroll and Pensions Section.

For further information

Please contact the HR [Employment Support Services team](#).