**Scope**

This policy applies to all operational employees of COMPANY

**Purpose & Aims**

The Parental Leave act 1998 (Amended 2019) entitles an employee to unpaid leave in respect of any child up to the age of 12 years old. If the child was adopted between the age of ten and twelve, leave in respect of this child can be taken for up to two years from the date of the adoption order. In the case of a child with a disability or long-term illness, leave may be taken up to 16 years of age. A person acting in loco parentis with respect to an eligible child is also covered under this leave.

On 1st September 2019 the amount of parental leave available to each parent per child increased to 22 weeks and extended the age limit for all children to 12 years.

Where the full leave entitlement has been utilised under the previous legislation Parents may claim the balance of weeks for children between the ages of 8 to 12 years old, or 16 years old in the event of a child with a disability or long-term illness.

An employee must have a minimum of one year’s continuous service to avail of the full entitlement. You must give a minimum of six weeks’ notice in writing of your intention to take parental leave. This notification should be sent to the RELEVANT PERSON.

The purpose of this policy is to provide unpaid parental leave to all employees who are natural, adoptive or relevant parents or in a position of loco parentis to take care of their child less than 12 years of age or 16 years of age in the case of a child with a disability or long-term illness.

**Entitlement for Leave**

Any full-time employee who is a natural, adoptive or relevant parent or in a position of loco parentis is entitled to 22 weeks-unpaid leave to enable him/her to take care of their child.

Employees who have less than 1 years’ service may be entitled to a pro-rata parental leave entitlement where there is more than 3 months service but less than 1 years, if the child is about to go beyond the specific age limit. The parental leave entitlement is one weeks-unpaid leave for each month of continuous employment.

Pro-rata entitlements apply for employees who work part time.

**Protection of Employment Rights**

* All employees’ rights are protected while on parental leave.
* Though the employee will not be working, public holidays and annual leave will continue to accumulate.
* Force majeure or maternity leave is not considered to be part of parental leave.
* Parental leave is regarded as reckonable service.

**Applying for Parental Leave**

* Requests for parental leave must be submitted to the RELEVANT PERSON 6 weeks prior to the proposed date of commencement.
* A birth certificate for the child must be attached.
* In cases where the leave could have an adverse effect on the business, the company reserves the right to postpone its commencement for up to 6 moths

**Way Leave Can Be Taken**

The leave may be taken as a continuous block of 22 weeks or two separate periods of a minimum of six weeks each.

If the leave is taken in two blocks there must be at least ten weeks between each separate period. Leave may also be broken up over a longer period following discussion and consent from the RELEVANT PERSON however this is on a case by case basis and will only be applied in consideration of the needs of the business.

An employee is not entitled to any more than 22 weeks per child. Where an employee qualifies for parental leave in respect of more than one child, the employee may not take more than 22 weeks’ Parental Leave in any 12-month period unless in the case of twins or triplets.

**‘New Parent’ Leave**

As of 1st November 2019, parents are entitled to two weeks additional leave in the 52 weeks following the birth / adoption of a new child. Payment is issued by the Department of Social Protection

(Company) does / not provide pay during the two week Parental Leave period.

A**buse of this Policy**

Employees found abusing their entitlement to parental leave will immediately have their parental leave entitlement terminated and will be dealt with in accordance with the Company’s Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal if proven to have occurred.

**Related Policies, Procedures & Processes**

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

* Grievance Policy
* Disciplinary Policy