

## Diocese of Elphin – HR Policy Handbook

**Document Name:** Parental Leave Policy  
**Document No:** 6.1.10 (original)  
**Effective Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019  
**Written By:** Frank Mitchell, HR Advisor  
**Approved By:** +Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin



*Operating under the patronage of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, the Diocese of Elphin aims to provide staff members with a safe, caring and supportive Christian environment in which to carry out their work. Work objectives are to be advanced with due regard to the needs and dignity of each staff member and with due regard for the individuals and communities the diocese serves.*

*This document outlines the Diocesan policy on Parental Leave. It is applicable to parishes, offices, agencies and any entity operating under the governance of the Diocese of Elphin (hereafter referred to as "the employer"). Line Managers (Bishop, Priests, Deacons, Religious, Lay Personnel who supervise staff members) are responsible for communicating this policy and having it signed off by their staff member(s).*

### Introduction

This policy informs all staff members covered by the Parental Leave Acts 1998 to 2006 of their rights and entitlements while in this employment.

This policy covers all part-time and full-time staff members, provided that they meet the conditions outlined below. This policy provides parents with a temporary unpaid break from work to take care of young children.

### Entitlements

Under our parental leave policy you have the following entitlements.

- You are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave to enable you to take care of the child concerned;
- The leave must be taken before the child reaches eight years of age. In the case of a child with a disability the leave must be taken before the child reaches 16 years of age;
- In the case of an adopted child, who is under six years at the time of adoption, the leave must be taken before the child reaches eight years of age. If the child is aged between six and eight years, at the time of adoption, the leave must be taken within two years of the adoption order;
- Each parent has a separate entitlement to parental leave from his or her job, 14 of their 18 weeks of parental leave may be transferred between parents working in the organisation with the agreement of the employer;
- Where a parent has more than one child, no more than 18 weeks' parental leave may be taken in any 12-month period, except in the case of multiple births;
- You must have one year's continuous service with "the employer" before you are entitled to take parental leave. However, if you have more than three months service, and where your child is approaching the age threshold, you will be entitled to one week's parental leave for every month of continuous employment completed with "the employer";
- Any period of probation, training or apprenticeship will be suspended while you are on parental leave, and will be completed on your return;
- Full-time and part-time staff (pro rata) can avail of the entitlement once they fulfil the above criteria;
- Right to request a change to working hours or working patterns on return from parental leave.

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### Applying for parental leave

You must fill out and submit a notification document not later than six weeks before the commencement of the leave. The request must specify the commencement date, duration, and mechanism for taking parental leave. (See Appendix 1)

If you wish to revoke your notice of intention to take parental leave, you must do so in writing to "the employer" at least four weeks before the leave is due to commence. You can only revoke your notice to parental leave prior to signing the confirmation document. After both parties have signed the confirmation document, alterations to the document can only be made by agreement between both parties. (See Appendices 2 & 3)

### Taking of parental leave

Parental leave may be taken as a continuous block of 18 weeks, or two blocks of six or more weeks with a minimum of 10 weeks between each block. By agreement with "the employer", parental leave may be broken up over a period of time into individual weeks, days or hours. If parental leave is curtailed, it may be taken at another time, by agreement.

### Postponement of parental leave

Parental leave may be postponed by "the employer" for no more than 6 months. Notice will be given to the staff member in writing, not less than four weeks following consultation with the staff member, where the taking of parental leave would have substantial adverse effect on the business profession or occupation by reason of:

- Seasonal variations in the volume of the work concerned;
- The unavailability of a person to carry out the duties of the staff member
- The nature of those duties;
- The number of staff members in employment;
- The number of staff members in the employment whose periods, or part of whose periods of parental leave will fall within the period specified by that staff member in their notice; or
- Any other relevant matters.

Parental leave will not be postponed more than once.

Where a child is older than the eligibility age solely by reason of the postponement, the child will be deemed to be below that age for the purposes of parental leave.

### Sickness while on parental leave

In the event that you become ill while on parental leave, and are unable to take care of the child, you are required to inform your manager. The period of parental leave will be suspended and the sick leave procedure will be applied, which will require you to submit medical certificates. On completion of the certified leave, you may resume your parental leave. A "fitness for work" certificate may be required.

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### **Request to a change in working hours or patterns**

A staff member may request a change to the working hours or pattern of work for a set period following his or her return to work from parental leave. A staff member must, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but not later than 6 weeks before the proposed commencement of the set period, give his or her employer a request in writing signed by the staff member to specify the nature of the changes requested and the duration of the set period. Your manager will not later than four weeks from receipt of request inform you if your request has been granted or refused.

### **Employment rights protection**

A staff member who is absent on parental leave will be treated as if he/she had not been absent, retaining all employment rights, except the right to remuneration. A staff member retains an entitlement to public holidays which fall during a period of parental leave. These will be added on to the end of the period of leave. Annual leave continues to be accrued during an absence on parental leave. A staff member is entitled to return to the same job, or an equivalent job, on his/her return, under terms and conditions no less favourable than those of the staff member's present contract of employment.

### **Abuse of leave**

Parental leave is granted solely for the purpose of taking care of the child concerned. This leave may be terminated if it not used for this purpose, and you may be subject to serious disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

*For further information please contact:*

HR Advisor  
Elphin Diocesan Office  
St. Mary's  
Temple Street  
Sligo F91 KTX2  
Email: [hr@elphindiocese.ie](mailto:hr@elphindiocese.ie)  
Mobile: 087 240 4882

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### Appendix 6.1.10(a) Notice to employer of intention to take parental leave

This form must be completed by the staff member concerned not later than six weeks before the commencement of the leave. The employer may request evidence in relation to the child's date of birth, parentage, or an adoption order.

<b>Name of Staff member</b>			
<b>Address of Staff member</b>			
<b>Commencement date of employment</b>			
<b>Department</b>			
<b>Staff Id (if applicable)</b>			
<b>PPS Number</b>			
<b>Proposed commencement date of parental leave</b>			
<b>Proposed duration of parental leave</b>	<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Month</b>
<b>Manner in which to be taken (Please provide a brief description)</b>			
<b>Proposed date of return to work</b>			
<b>Name of Child</b>			
<b>Child's date of birth</b>			

Please attach a copy of the birth certificate/adoption order. A staff member is entitled to a maximum of 18 weeks unpaid parental leave in any one year\*. Parental leave is granted solely for the purpose of taking care of the above-named child. This leave may be terminated if it is not used for this purpose. Any staff member abusing this leave may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

I declare that the information given above is accurate and complete.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Staff member )

\*Where a parent has more than one child, no more than 18 weeks' parental leave may be taken in any 12-month period, except in the case of multiple births or as agreed with employer.

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### Appendix 6.1.10(b)

#### Confirmation of parental leave

To be completed by the employer not later than four weeks before the commencement of the parental leave.

<b>Name of Staff member</b>			
<b>Address of Staff member</b>			
<b>PPS Number</b>			
<b>Name and Date of birth of child</b>			
<b>Approved commencement date of parental leave</b>			
<b>Duration of parental leave</b>	<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Month</b>
<b>Manner in which to be taken (Please provide a brief description)</b>			

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Employer/manager)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Staff member)

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### Appendix 6.1.10(c) Postponement of parental leave

To be completed by the employer not later than four weeks before the commencement of the parental leave. The postponement may be for a period not exceeding six months, to a date agreed by "the employer" and the staff member .

<b>Name of Staff member</b>			
<b>Address of Staff member</b>			
<b>PPS Number</b>			
<b>Name of Child</b>			
<b>Child's date of birth</b>			
<b>Grounds for postponement</b>			
<b>Proposed alternative date</b>			
<b>Manner in which to be taken (Please provide a brief description)</b>			
<b>Proposed duration of parental leave</b>	<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Month</b>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Manager)