



Dependant Leave Policy

People and Culture

In line with our commitment to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment, and in accordance with the Employment Rights Act (1996), we are committed to supporting staff who have caring responsibilities. This policy describes staff members' right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid leave to deal with **specific emergency circumstances involving a 'dependant'**.

What is a 'dependant'?

A 'dependant' is defined as a member of staff's parent, spouse/partner, child, or someone who lives as part of the family. For example, an elderly aunt or grandparent who lives in the household for whom the member of staff is the main carer. It does not include tenants or boarders living in the family home.

In cases of illness, injury or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the member of staff for assistance. This may be where the member of staff is the primary carer or is the only person who can help in an emergency.

Under what circumstances can a member of staff take time off?

A member of staff has a statutory right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to take necessary action to deal with certain situations affecting their dependants. This is called 'Time off for Dependants' or 'Emergency Family Leave' and is aimed at dealing with emergencies. The law allows you to take reasonable time off in five types of situations. These are when it is necessary:

- To provide assistance if your dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted,
- To make arrangements to provide care for a dependant who is ill or injured,
- As a result of the death of your dependant (for example, because you need to make funeral arrangements),
- To deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown in care of your dependant (for example, if your childminder fails to turn up),
- To deal with an unexpected incident which occurs with your child during school hours (for example, if your child is suspended from school).

How much time off is allowed?

Under the Employment Rights Act (1996) there is no set limit to the amount of time off which can be taken, but government guidance suggests that in most cases, the amount of leave will be one or two days, but this will depend on individual circumstances. For example, if a child falls ill, the leave should be enough to help the member of staff cope with the crisis and deal with the immediate care of the child, visiting the doctor and making any necessary longer term care arrangements.

Once the immediate emergency has been taken care of, if further time off is necessary, staff may request to take it as annual leave. In the event a further period of unpaid leave is required in order to care for a sick child, please refer to the [Parental Leave](#) scheme within our Family Friendly area of the intranet. Members of staff who are primary carers for a dependant with a long term care need may wish to refer to our [Supporting Carers at Work](#) policy.

Eligibility and notification required to access dependant leave

There is no qualifying period of employment for this entitlement. Staff are entitled to 'dependant' leave immediately but must notify the University as soon as possible about their absence, the reason for it and how long they expect to be away from work. The member of staff should inform their manager via a phone call in the first instance. Any unpaid leave days agreed should then be formally recorded through the member of staff's Agresso Web Services account. Reasonable evidence of the incident may be requested separately e.g., proof that a dependant is ill.

Is 'dependant leave' paid?

The member of staff will remain employed while on dependant leave but will not be paid.

Other Leave types

Time off under this policy is intended to be for members of staff to deal with emergency situations involving dependants. Once the immediate emergency has been taken care of, if further time off is necessary, staff may request to take it as annual leave.

In the event a further period of unpaid leave is required in order to care for a sick child, please refer to the [Parental Leave](#) scheme.

Members of staff who are primary carers for a dependant with a long term care need may wish to refer to our [Supporting Carers at Work](#) policy, also found within our Family Friendly area of the intranet.

In cases of bereavement or severe illness in the immediate family (i.e., parent, spouse/partner, child, or sibling) and exceptionally, in other circumstances, paid **Compassionate Leave** will be considered. Such leave is normally considered by the DVC Faculty or nominee/PVC/PSU Director and granted based on the circumstances of each individual case. All applications for compassionate leave must be discussed with and submitted for approval to a Senior Business Partner – People and Culture. Please refer to the [Leave in Special Circumstances](#) policy for further details.

We recognise that, while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that a member of staff can ever face. Please contact your Business Partner – People and Culture team for support and advice regarding our [Parental Bereavement Leave policy](#).

Internal sources of support and advice

- [Employee Assistance Programme](#). The scheme is designed to offer confidential support, information and advice, either online or by telephone, for individuals in dealing with life's challenges. The service is fully funded by the University and there is no charge to staff or their families for using it.
- [Cranfield's Mental Health First Aiders](#)
- [Cranfield Parents and Carers' Network](#)

All information received in relation to this policy will be stored and processed in line with applicable data protection legislation. To learn more about how we handle your data please review our [Privacy Notice](#).

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