

University of Sussex

Arrangements for time off for dependants

1. The University recognises that many of its staff will have responsibility for dependants (for example older, sick or disabled relatives or school age children), and that from time to time staff may need to take unpaid time off to attend to unexpected problems or emergencies which may have arisen concerning a dependant. In its arrangements for granting time off for this purpose, the University seeks to accommodate such needs while ensuring that it continues to operate effectively.

2. A member of staff may therefore seek permission to have unpaid time off to take action which is necessary in the following circumstances.

(a) to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth¹, is injured or assaulted;

(b) to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;

(c) upon the death of a dependant;

(d) due to the unexpected disruption or termination of the arrangements for the care of a dependant; or

(e) to deal with an incident involving a child during the time when an educational establishment has the care of that child.

3. The definition of a dependant is a spouse/partner, a child or parent (whether they live with the member of staff or not), or someone living in the same household as the member of staff, who is not their employee, tenant, lodger, or boarder. In the case of (a) or (d) above, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the member of staff for assistance. These arrangements in relation to spouses or partners applies equally to all staff regardless of their gender and to same sex couples.

4. Requests for time off in these circumstances should be made to the person normally responsible for authorising requests for leave in the Unit in which the member of staff works. The member of staff must tell the authoriser of the reason for the absence as soon as reasonably practicable and for how long the absence is likely to last. Providing false information about the reason for the need to take time off may be grounds for disciplinary action. Heads of Units intending to refuse a request for time off should consult the Staffing Services Division before doing so.

5. The amount of time off granted will be that which is reasonable in the circumstances and should be sufficient to deal with the immediate problem and to arrange longer term care if necessary². These arrangements are intended specifically to deal with unforeseen and urgent circumstances. If a member of staff knows in advance that time off is likely to be necessary, or the emergency gives rise

¹ The University has separate parental leave arrangements which, for most staff, are likely to be a more appropriate scheme under which to seek time off for the birth of a child.

² For example, if a child falls ill, the leave should be enough to help the member of staff cope with the crisis - to deal with the immediate care of the child, visiting the doctor, and to make longer term care arrangements; it does not mean that the member of staff may then take, say, two weeks leave to look after the child.

to a need for a longer period of time off, it may be more appropriate to seek annual leave or to apply for parental leave under the arrangements set out elsewhere.

6. The Head of Unit will be responsible for notifying the Payroll Office of the amount of time off taken, (using the appropriate form), to enable payroll deductions to be made. No letter will be issued by the Staffing Services Division. It will be the Unit's responsibility to maintain records of the amount of time off for dependants granted to an individual. This record will be available to the member of staff on request.

7. Sickness during time off for dependants will not attract sick pay.

8. The University permits section heads to grant compassionate leave with or without pay in circumstances which are appropriate. The fact that these arrangements for time off for dependants expressly provide for unpaid time off does not preclude a section head from deciding to grant some or all of that time off with pay if the section head deems it to be appropriate.

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