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# Maternity Policy

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## 1. Introduction

GRAHAM Facilities Management supports the right of its employees to take maternity leave and return to work and to take time off to attend antenatal care appointments/classes. It therefore aims to provide flexibility in its employment practices in order to retain as many of its workforce as possible after leave periods of this nature.

The policy follows the prevailing statutory provisions (with the exception of pay) and will, therefore, vary in line with any future amendments. It may also be reviewed according to changing business needs and in light of other changes in employment law.

In the event of an employee becoming pregnant we would encourage you to inform your line manager at the earliest possible stage in order that the full procedure can be outlined to you and your entitlements explained.

## 2. Eligibility

All employees, irrespective of service or working hours are covered by this policy.

## 3. Notification of Pregnancy

We encourage you to notify us as soon as possible of your pregnancy and in any event no later than 4 weeks before the birth. We encourage employees to advise us as early as possible so that we can carry out a risk assessment and consider whether any adjustments to your job/working hours are necessary.

## 4. Meeting to discuss your maternity

An informal meeting will then be arranged with your line manager so that they ensure you are aware of your entitlements and the processes involved. The meeting will include discussion on the following points:

- the amount of leave you can take and the payment arrangements
- the information that we will need from you to process your maternity leave
- time off for ante natal care, post-natal care and ante-natal classes
- risk assessments to ensure your role does not pose a risk to your, or your baby's, health and safety
- your right to return after maternity leave to the same or a similar role.

## 5. Risk Assessment

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So that we may assess any potential risk that your role poses to your health and safety, and the health and safety of your baby, a risk assessment will be carried out to identify any risk to you during your pregnancy, where you have recently given birth, or where you are breastfeeding. We will, where possible, take steps to eliminate any risk that is identified.

Those steps may include temporarily making changes to your working conditions or to your hours of work. If there are no changes that can be identified that will reduce or remove any risk that may be identified for you or your baby, you will be offered suitable other work. If other work cannot be provided, you will be placed on health and safety leave.

You will be paid in full for the first 21 days of health and safety leave (which may not be consecutive). After this period, you may be entitled to a social welfare payment.

If you become aware that you are no longer vulnerable to the risk for which you have been granted health and safety leave, you are obliged to inform the Company in writing of the fact, as early as reasonably practicable. Likewise, if a risk no longer exists, or if we can offer suitable alternative work, the Company will notify you in writing and the health and safety leave will expire seven days after receiving the notification to return to work.

## **6. Time off for ante-natal and post-natal care**

You are entitled to request paid time off work to attend appointments for antenatal care prescribed by a doctor or midwife. You may be asked to provide evidence of appointments and/or that you are pregnant.

Wherever possible, you should arrange appointments outside of working hours. If this is not possible, they should be arranged for a time when disruption to the business is minimised, usually at the start or end of the working day. You should try to give us as much notice as possible of appointments.

The father of your expected child or your partner may be eligible to take time off to accompany you to antenatal appointments and should make separate enquiries in this respect.

You are also entitled to receive post-natal care for the first 14 weeks following the birth of your baby.

You will receive full pay for the time taken to attend these appointments.

## **7. Time off for ante-natal classes**

You are entitled to paid time off to attend antenatal classes, subject to the following:

- you are entitled to paid time off to attend **one set** of ante-natal classes, except for the last three classes in a set

- An expectant father is entitled to paid time off to attend the last two ante natal classes in a set of classes which the expectant mother is attending. This is a one off entitlement for fathers in relation to one birth only.

You may use annual leave or unpaid leave if you wish to attend more than the entitlements above provide.

You are required to give two weeks' notice in writing of the attendance at ante-natal classes, detailing the time and location of the classes in addition to an appointment card from the organisation who runs the class.

If you are unable to comply with the notification requirements above, you must provide evidence of attendance at the ante-natal class, and also provide an explanation as to you were not able to follow the notification procedure.

We reserve the right to refuse payment for time-off to where there is an abuse of this procedure, and any such abuses will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

## 8. Maternity Leave

You are entitled to 42 weeks' maternity leave in total, broken down as follows:

- 26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)
- Additional Maternity Leave that starts immediately after Ordinary Maternity Leave and continues for a further 16 weeks. If you wish to take Additional Maternity Leave (AML), you must inform us at least four weeks before your Ordinary Maternity leave is due to end.

At least **two weeks** must be taken before the expected date of birth, and at least **four weeks** after the birth. You must not start your leave earlier than **sixteen weeks** before the end of the week in which your baby is due.

## 9. Notice of your intention to take Maternity Leave

We require that you notify us in writing of your pregnancy, and the date you wish your maternity leave to start, no later than **four weeks before** the desired start date. This notification must be accompanied by a Doctor's Certificate setting out the expected date of birth.

## 10. Early Birth

In the event of a premature birth the 26 weeks leave will be extended by an additional period of leave. This period of leave will commence at the end of the 26 weeks. The additional period to be added will be the number of weeks from the baby's actual date of birth, up to two weeks before the expected date of confinement, which would have been the 37<sup>th</sup> week of the pregnancy

## **11. Ending additional maternity leave due to sickness**

If you fall ill during the period of additional maternity leave period, or if you have indicated that you wish to take additional maternity leave and then fall ill, your line manager may agree to early termination of additional maternity leave. In these circumstances, the period of time will be reallocated to sickness absence. The reallocation of the nature of this leave is entirely at the line manager's discretion. You will not be able to resume additional maternity leave once it is terminated early. Reallocated sickness absence will be treated in the same way as any other sickness absence under the Company's absence management practices.

## **12. Postponement if you child becomes ill**

If your child goes into hospital after you have already taken at least 14 weeks' maternity leave you may apply to your line manager to postpone the remainder of your leave for up to 6 months.

## **13. Stillbirth & Miscarriage**

If you suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy or your baby has a birth weight of at least 500g, you will still be entitled to 26 weeks' maternity leave.

## **14. Fathers Leave**

If you die during the first 40 weeks of your maternity leave, the baby's father may be entitled to a period of Fathers Leave. The amount of fathers leave available will be dependent on what stage of maternity Leave you have passed away. For more information on fathers leave, please contact HR.

## **15. Maternity Pay**

The Company operates an enhanced maternity pay scheme, Women with 12 Months Service continuous service at the date their leave is due to commence, will be eligible for GRAHAM enhanced maternity pay.

Enhanced Maternity Pay (EMP) For eligible employees the first 6 Months of EMP will be paid at full pay, followed 16 weeks unpaid.

If you are not eligible for Enhance Maternity Pay , you maybe be eligible for maternity pay through the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection for the Ordinary Maternity Leave period, depending on meeting certain PRSI eligibility criteria. Social Welfare benefits are not payable during the Additional Maternity Leave.

## **16. Keeping in touch during Maternity**

We may be in touch with you occasionally during your maternity leave, for example to update you on the situation at work or to discuss arrangements for your return. You should discuss with your line manager how you would prefer this contact to be made and the level of contact you would like.

## **17. Rights during Maternity Leave**

Your normal terms and conditions of employment will continue to during your ordinary maternity leave period and your additional maternity leave period, with the exception of pay.

## **18. Holidays During Maternity Leave**

You will retain your full entitlement to annual leave during your maternity leave however you are unable to take annual leave during this period. We will meet with you prior to you taking maternity leave to discuss and agree the arrangements for the taking of these holidays either before, or at the end of your maternity leave. Where there is a public holiday during your maternity leave, you are entitled to take this holiday at another time as agreed with your manager.

If the holiday year is due to finish during your maternity leave or shortly after it ends you should plan with us to use your holiday entitlement before starting your maternity leave. Alternatively, you might consider ending your maternity leave early and transferring onto paid holiday in order to use up your entitlement.

## **19. Return to work**

You must provide at least 4 week's notice of your intention to return to work from Maternity Leave. Upon return, you will be entitled to return to your normal role so far as it is reasonably practical. However, if this is not possible you will be offered suitable alternative work.

You may be invited to attend an informal meeting with your line manager in order to discuss any arrangements regarding your return to work. The following points will be discussed at this meeting]

- any developments that have taken place at work and
- any training which it may be appropriate to have in light of any developments.

If you decide that you do not wish to return to work after your maternity leave, you are required to give us notice of your resignation and this amount is set out in your contract of employment.

Employees must return to work for a minimum of 12 months following enhanced paid family leave. In the event of leaving within this minimum period, the employee must return the enhanced element above the statutory limits as follows:

- Within 6 months - 100% repayable of the enhanced family leave pay
- Between 6 months and up to 12 months - 50% repayable of the enhanced family leave pay

## **20. Breastfeeding**

If you are breastfeeding, you are entitled to take 1 hour (with pay) off work each day as a breastfeeding break for up to 26 weeks after birth provided you inform your manager of your intention to continue breastfeeding when you provide notice of your return to work. This time may be taken as;

- One 60 minute break
- Two 30 minute breaks
- Three 20 minute breaks

Part-time employees will be entitled to a pro rata benefit.

## **21. Status of this policy**

This policy does not give contractual rights to individual employees. The Company reserves the right to alter any of its terms at any time although we will notify you in writing of any changes.

Deliberate abuse of this policy and the Maternity Leave and pay entitlement will be treated as a disciplinary offence and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedure which may result in your dismissal.

## Notice to take Maternity Leave

When complete, please return this form to: *[Insert name and job title]*  
Please also keep a copy for your records.

### EMPLOYEE DETAILS

Name of employee: Department:

Home address:

Email address:

Home telephone number:

### MATERNITY LEAVE DETAILS

Expected week of childbirth:	
Intended start date of maternity leave:	
Intended end date of maternity leave	
Intended start date of additional maternity leave (to start immediately after the initial maternity leave period ends)	
Intended end date of additional maternity leave	
Intended total length of maternity leave:	
Intended return to work date:	

#### Declaration:

- I confirm that I am pregnant;
- I have attached a copy of the medical certificate confirming my pregnancy.

Employee signature:

Date:

To qualify for maternity leave you must complete and return this form to HR by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> week before your EWC.