

Policy Info Pages

Time off for Dependants

The organisation operates the following policy in relation to emergency situations involving dependants. It explains the right to take time off to manage unexpected or sudden problems relating to a dependant and make any necessary longer-term arrangements.

Circumstances in which right to time off for dependants applies

All employees (irrespective of length of service, and whether they are part time or full time) are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to take necessary action:

- to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted;
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for an ill or injured dependant;
- in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant;
- to deal with an incident that involves their child and occurs unexpectedly while the child is at school/other educational establishment.

A dependant is:

- a spouse;
- a civil partner;
- a child;
- a parent;
- a person who lives with the employee other than as his/her employee, tenant, lodger or boarder;
- any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance if he/she fell ill or was injured or assaulted, or who would rely on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury; or
- in relation to the disruption or termination of care for a dependant, any other person who reasonably relies on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care.

Procedure

An employee who needs to take time off for dependants should speak to his/her line manager at the earliest opportunity. If the employee becomes aware of an emergency situation while at work, he/she should immediately speak to his/her line manager about leaving work early. The employee should explain:

- the reason for the absence; and
- how long he/she expects to be absent from work.

If the employee's line manager is unavailable, he/she must speak to an equivalent or more senior manager.

The employee must inform the line manager as soon as possible of any change in the anticipated date of his/her return to work.

Pay

There is no statutory entitlement to receive pay while taking time off for dependants. Therefore, the organisation does not pay employees for any time off for dependants.

How much time off can be taken?

The right to time off for dependants will, in most cases, be one or two days. The employee must actively seek alternative longer-term arrangements for the care of a dependant as soon as possible after the emergency occurs.

If the employee is unable to make alternative arrangements, he/she must contact the line manager and explain why further absence is required. If further time off no longer qualifies as time off for dependants, it is at the absolute discretion of the organisation whether or not to grant annual leave/discretionary unpaid leave at short notice.

Failure to return from a period of time off for dependants may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Providing false information

If an employee knowingly provides false information in relation to taking time off for dependants, this may be treated as a disciplinary matter, which could potentially amount to gross misconduct, rendering the employee liable to summary dismissal.