



Shared Parental Leave (Adoption) Policy

Signed: Headteacher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Kemp".

Print Name: Jonathan Kemp

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1. Introduction to shared parental leave

This policy sets out your rights to shared parental leave and pay when adopting a child. Shared parental leave enables adopters to commit to ending their adoption leave and pay at a future date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as shared parental leave and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from adoption leave and opt in to shared parental leave and pay at a later date. The school has a separate policy on shared parental leave for parents in a birth situation.

Shared parental leave should not be confused with unpaid parental leave, which is unaffected by shared parental leave.

The school recognises that, from time to time, employees may have questions or concerns relating to their shared parental leave rights. It is the school's policy to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. As the shared parental leave provisions are complex, if you wish to take shared parental leave you discuss this with your Headteacher at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the processes are followed correctly.

2. Definitions under this shared parental leave policy

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Adopter" means the person with whom the child is, or is expected to be, placed for adoption, or, in a case where two people have been matched jointly, whoever has elected to be the child's adopter for the purposes of adoption leave.

"Partner" means the person who is married to, or the civil partner or the partner of, the adopter at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain). This includes someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the adopter and the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the adopter's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

"Matched for adoption" means an adoption agency deciding that a person would be a suitable adoptive parent for a child either individually or jointly with another person. A person is notified of having been "matched for adoption" with a child on the date on which the person receives notification of the adoption agency's decision.

"Placed for adoption" means placed for adoption under UK adoption laws, including placement with a local authority foster parent who is also a prospective adopter ("foster to adopt").

"Official notification" means written notification, issued by or on behalf of the relevant central authority, that it is prepared to issue a certificate to the overseas authority concerned with the adoption of a child from overseas, or that it has issued a certificate and sent it to that authority, confirming, in either case, that the adopter is eligible to adopt, and has been assessed and approved as being a suitable adoptive parent.

3. Scope of this shared parental leave policy

This policy applies in relation to employees of the school, whether they are the adopter or the partner. If you are the adopter and are employed by the school, your partner must (where relevant) submit any notifications to take shared parental leave to their own employer, which may have its own shared parental leave policy in place, if they want to take a period of shared parental leave.

Similarly, if you are the partner and are employed by the school, the adopter must (where relevant) submit any notifications to their own employer.

The adopter and the partner should ensure that they are each liaising with their own employer to ensure that requests for shared parental leave are handled as smoothly as possible.

4. Amount of shared parental leave available

The amount of shared parental leave to which an individual is entitled will depend on when the adopter brings their leave period to an end and the amount of leave that the other adoptive parent takes in respect of the child. Shared parental leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week. You can request to take shared parental leave in one continuous block (in which case the school is required to accept the request as long as you meet the eligibility and notice requirements), or as a number of discontinuous blocks of leave of at least a week each in length (in which case you need the school's agreement). A maximum of three requests for leave per adoption placement (regardless of the number of children who are placed as part of that placement) can normally be made by each adoptive parent.

You can begin a period of shared parental leave at any time from the date on which the child is placed for adoption (for adoptions from overseas, at any time from the date on which the child enters Great Britain) or, where more than one child is placed for adoption through a single placement, the date of placement of the first child (for adoptions from overseas, at any time from the date on which the first child enters Great Britain). However, you should bear in mind that the adopter's partner will lose their entitlement to take up to two weeks' paternity leave following the adoption of their child if shared parental leave is taken first. You must take any shared parental leave within 52 weeks of the date on which the child is placed for adoption (for adoptions from overseas, within 52 weeks of the date on which the child enters Great Britain).

5. Eligibility for shared parental leave

To be eligible to take shared parental leave, both adoptive parents must meet certain eligibility requirements.

5.1. Adopter's eligibility for shared parental leave

The adopter is eligible for shared parental leave if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the end of the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) and remain in continuous employment with the Local Authority until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- are entitled to statutory adoption leave in respect of the child; and
- comply with the relevant adoption leave curtailment requirements (or have returned to work before the end of statutory adoption leave), and shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements.

In addition, for the adopter to be eligible for shared parental leave, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner in at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or the week in which the child enters Great Britain in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks; and
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the adopter, for the care of the child.

5.2. Partner's eligibility for shared parental leave

The partner is eligible for shared parental leave if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the end of the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) and remain in continuous employment with the Local Authority until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;
- has, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the adopter, for the care of the child; and
- complies with the relevant shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements.

In addition, for the partner to be eligible for shared parental leave, the adopter must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or the week in which the child enters Great Britain in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- be entitled to statutory adoption leave or statutory adoption pay in respect of the child; and
- comply with the relevant adoption leave or pay curtailment requirements, or have returned to work before the end of statutory adoption leave.

6. Notice requirements for shared parental leave

The notices that you must give to the school to be able to take shared parental leave are made up of three elements. They are:

- If you are the adopter an "adoption leave curtailment notice" setting out when you propose to end your adoption leave (unless you have already returned to work from adoption leave);
- a "notice of entitlement and intention" giving an initial, non-binding indication of each period of shared parental leave being requested; and
- a "period of leave notice" setting out the start and end dates of each period of shared parental leave being requested.

The notice periods set out below are the minimum required by law. However, the earlier you inform the school of your intentions, the more likely it is that the school will be able to accommodate your wishes, particularly if you want to take periods of discontinuous leave.

If you have already decided the pattern of shared parental leave that you would like to take, you can provide more than one type of notice at the same time. For example, the adopter could provide an adoption leave curtailment notice, notice of entitlement and intention and period of leave notice at the same time. Similarly, the partner could provide their notice of entitlement and intention and period of leave notice at the same time.

6.1. Adopter's notice curtailing adoption leave

Before the adopter or partner can take shared parental leave, the adopter must either return to work before the end of their adoption leave (by giving the required eight weeks' notice of their planned return) or provide their employer with an adoption leave curtailment notice. The adoption leave curtailment notice must be in writing and state the date on which adoption leave is to end. That date must be at least:

- two weeks after the first day of the adopter's ordinary adoption leave period;
- eight weeks after the date on which the adopter gave the adoption leave curtailment notice to their employer; and
- one week before what would be the end of the additional adoption leave period.

The adopter must provide their adoption leave curtailment notice at the same time they provide either

- their notice of entitlement and intention or
- a declaration of consent and entitlement confirming that their partner has given their employer a notice of entitlement and intention.

6.2. Revocation of adoption leave curtailment notice

The adopter can withdraw their notice curtailing their adoption leave in limited circumstances. The withdrawal of an adoption leave curtailment notice must be in writing and can be given only if the adopter has not returned to work. The adopter can withdraw their adoption leave curtailment notice if:

- it is discovered that neither the adopter nor the partner are entitled to shared parental leave or statutory shared parental pay and the adopter withdraws their adoption leave curtailment notice within eight weeks of the date on which the notice was given; or
- the partner has died.

6.3. Your notice of entitlement and intention

You must provide the school with a non-binding notice of entitlement and intention. Your notice of entitlement and intention, must be in writing and provided at least eight weeks before the start date of the first period of shared parental leave to be taken. You must complete the relevant form associated with this policy which sets out the information you are required to give.

Within 14 days of receiving a notice of entitlement and intention from you, whether the adopter or partner, the school can request from you:

- (in relation to adoptions within the UK), documentary evidence from the adoption agency of:
 - the name and address of the adoption agency;
 - the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child; and
 - the date on which the adoption agency expects the child to be placed for adoption with the adopter; and
- (in relation to adoptions from overseas), a copy of the official notification; and
- whether a UK or overseas adoption, the name and address of the other adoptive parent's employer (or a declaration that the other adoptive parent has no employer).

You have 14 days from the date of the request to send the school the required information.

6.4. Variation or cancellation of notice of entitlement and intention

You can vary or cancel your proposed shared parental leave dates following the submission of a notice of entitlement and intention, provided that you provide the school with a written notice. The written notice must contain:

- an indication as to when you intend to take shared parental leave (including the start and end dates for each period of leave);
- details of any periods of shared parental leave that have been notified through a period of leave notice;
- details of any periods of statutory shared parental pay that have been notified in relation to periods where shared parental leave was not to be taken; and
- a declaration signed by the adopter and the partner that they agree the variation.

Any indication of leave intended to be taken that you provide in a variation of notice of entitlement and intention is non-binding until you provide a period of leave notice in relation to that period of leave. There is no limit on the number of variations of notice of entitlement and intention that the employee can make.

6.5. Your period of leave notice

To take a period of shared parental leave, the employee must provide the school with a written notice setting out the start and end dates of each period of shared parental leave requested in that notice.

A period of leave notice must be given not less than eight weeks before the start date of the first period of shared parental leave requested in the notice. The notice may be given at the same time as a notice of entitlement and intention and can be a request for a continuous period of leave or discontinuous periods of leave.

6.6. Variation or cancellation of period of leave notice

You can vary or cancel their proposed shared parental leave dates following the submission of a period of leave notice, provided that you provide the school with a written notice not less than eight weeks before any period of leave varied by the notice is due to commence. The written notice can:

- vary the start date or the end date of any period of shared parental leave or cancel a request for leave;
- request that a continuous period of leave become discontinuous periods of leave; or

- request that discontinuous periods of leave become a continuous period of leave.

6.7. Limit on number of requests for leave

You can provide a combined total of up to three period of leave notices or variations of period of leave notices per adoption, although the school may waive this limit in some circumstances.

7. Continuous period of shared parental leave

If you submit a period of leave notice requesting one continuous period of leave, they will be entitled to take that period of leave subject to you meeting the eligibility criteria as defined above.

8. Discontinuous periods of shared parental leave

You may submit a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave. For example, the adopter and partner could request a pattern of leave from their respective employers that allows them to alternate childcare responsibilities.

If you submit a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave, the school, in the two weeks beginning with the date the period of leave notice was given, can:

- consent to the pattern of leave requested;
- propose an alternative pattern of leave; or
- refuse the pattern of leave requested.

If agreement is reached within those two weeks, the employee is entitled to take the leave on the dates agreed.

If no agreement has been reached within that two-week discussion period, you are entitled to take the leave as one continuous period of leave. In that event, you must choose a start date for the leave that is at least eight weeks from the date on which the period of leave notice was originally given. You must notify the school of that date within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period. If you do not choose a start date within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period, the period of continuous leave will start on the date of the first period of leave requested in the period of leave notice.

Alternatively, if the school has refused the request or no agreement has been reached during the two-week discussion period, you may withdraw a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave. You can withdraw a period of leave notice at any time on or before the 15th day after the period of leave notice was given. A notice for discontinuous leave that has been withdrawn before it is agreed does not count towards the total number of requests for leave that you can make.

9. Amount of shared parental pay available

Statutory shared parental pay is available for eligible adoptive parents to share between them while on shared parental leave. The number of weeks' statutory shared parental pay available to the adoptive parents will depend on how much statutory adoption pay the adopter has been paid when their adoption pay period ends. A total of 39 weeks' statutory adoption pay is available to the adopter. As adoption leave cannot be curtailed for the first two weeks of leave, an adopter can share up to 37 weeks' statutory shared parental pay with their partner.

Any statutory shared parental pay due during shared parental leave will be paid at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate.

It is up to the adoptive parents as to who is paid any statutory shared parental pay and how it is apportioned between them.

10. Eligibility for statutory shared parental pay

For employees to be eligible for statutory shared parental pay, both adoptive parents must meet certain eligibility requirements.

10.1. Adopter's eligibility for statutory shared parental pay

The adopter is eligible for statutory shared parental pay if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the end of the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) and remain in continuous employment with the Local Authority until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;
- have normal weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- are absent from work and intend to care for the child during each week in which they receive statutory shared parental pay; and
- are entitled to statutory adoption pay in respect of the child, but the adoption pay period has been reduced.

In addition, for the adopter to be eligible for statutory shared parental pay, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks; and
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the adopter, for the care of the child.

10.2. Partner's eligibility for statutory shared parental pay

The partner is eligible for statutory shared parental pay if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the end of the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) and remain in continuous employment with the Local Authority until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;

- have normal weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the adopter, for the care of the child; and
- are absent from work and intends to care for the child during each week in which they receive statutory shared parental pay.

In addition, for the partner to be eligible, the adopter must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child; and
- be entitled to statutory adoption pay in respect of the child, but the adoption pay period has been reduced.

11. Rights during shared parental leave

During shared parental leave, all terms and conditions of the employee's contract except normal pay will continue. Salary will be replaced by statutory shared parental pay if the employee is eligible for it.

This means that, while sums payable by way of salary will cease, all other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement will continue to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid during periods of paid shared parental leave.

12. Contact during shared parental leave

The school reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during shared parental leave. This may be to discuss your plans for your return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work or to update them on developments at work during their absence.

An employee can agree to work for the organisation (or to attend training) for up to 20 days during shared parental leave without that work bringing the period of their shared parental leave and pay to an end. These are known as "shared-parental-leave-in-touch" (SPLIT) days.

The school has no right to require you to carry out any work and you have no right to undertake any work during your shared parental leave. If you do any work you will be paid your normal rate of pay inclusive of any statutory ShPP entitlement.

13. Returning to work following shared parental leave

You have the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from shared parental leave if the period of leave, when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory adoption leave or statutory paternity leave taken by the employee in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.

If you are returning to work from shared parental leave and the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks*, you have the right to return to the same job unless this is not reasonably practicable. If it is not reasonably practicable for the school to permit a return to the same job, you have the right to return to another job that is suitable and appropriate for you.

(the period of leave is calculated by adding and period of shared parental leave, statutory adoption or paternity leave taken in relation to the same child, or was the last of two or more consecutive periods of statutory leave that included a period of ordinary parental leave of more than four weeks, or a period of additional adoption leave or additional maternity leave)*

Appendix 1: Notification of intention to take Adoption Leave

On completion please hand this form to your Headteacher.

Personal Details

Name.....

Home Address.....

.....Post Code

Home Telephone Number.....

School.....School Ref. No.....

Post Held

Leave

The child's placement is due to take place on

A matching certificate issued by an adoption agency confirming that I have been matched for adoption is enclosed with this form

I would like to start my adoption leave on

Pay

If eligible, the Occupational Adoption Pay equivalent to 12 weeks half pay for non-teaching staff and 7 weeks for teaching staff is conditional upon returning to work for 3 months following maternity leave to Hertfordshire County Council, another local government or associated employer or a new employer following a TUPE in the same post (but excluding new employment with an Academy or Free School).

If you want to return early from your Adoption Leave you must give your Headteacher at least 21 days' notice.

I confirm that the child whom I am adopting has been newly matched by an approved adoption agency and I am the only individual taking adoption leave in respect of the adoption of this child

Signed Date

Appendix 2: Notification of intention to take Paternity Leave (Adoption)

On completion please hand this form to your Headteacher no later than 15 weeks before the EDC, unless this is not practicable.

Part 1
Personal details
Preferred title.....
Full name.....
Home Address.....
.....Post Code
Home Telephone Number.....
National Insurance Number.....
Personnel Number.....
School..... School Ref. No.....
Post Held.....
Your dates for pay and leave
The adoption placement is due to commence on
Date you would like adoption pay and leave to commence
I'd like to be away from work for <input type="checkbox"/> one week <input type="checkbox"/> two weeks
I would like to take Additional Paternity Leave commencing on..... and will be returning on.....
<i>You must be able to tick all boxes to get adoption leave and pay.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> I have responsibility for the child's upbringing
<input type="checkbox"/> I will take off work to support the mother or care for the child
<input type="checkbox"/> The information provided in this application is true and accurate <u>and</u> I enclose herewith a copy of the matching certificate issued by an adoption agency confirming that I have been matched for adoption.

Teachers only

I have been continuously employed with Hertfordshire County Council for 26 weeks or more.

Signed Date

Signed Date

Headteacher

For HCC use only

Option payable (Delete as applicable)	
<input type="checkbox"/> One/two week(s) without pay	<input type="checkbox"/> One/two week(s) with SPP only
<input type="checkbox"/> One/two week(s) with full pay	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional paternity pay (____weeks)

PART 2

Adopter's Declaration

To be completed by the mother of the child or the person who took Adoption Leave/Pay:

Your first name	Your surname	National Insurance Number									

Your address

My adoption leave started on:	I have given notice to my employer that I will return to work on:	
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--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

During my period of maternity/adoption leave I was entitled to Statutory adoption pay (please tick to confirm)

(please tick all boxes)

I confirm that the person named in Part 1:

Is the biological father of the child or my spouse, civil partner or partner

Has, or expects to have, the main responsibility (apart from my responsibility) for the upbringing of the child		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Is, to my knowledge, the only person exercising the entitlement to additional paternity leave, and is the sole applicant for additional statutory paternity pay (if applicable), in respect of my child		<input type="checkbox"/>					
I consent to Hertfordshire County Council processing such of my information as is contained in this form.							
Signature		Date					