



**St George's, University of London
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS**

1. Purpose

The purpose of the provisions for time off for dependants is to enable employees to take a short amount of time off to make arrangements to deal with specific circumstances involving a dependant. Time off for dependants is to be taken in cases of genuine emergency.

The age profile of St George's staff complement includes many people of child-rearing age. Parents are legally entitled to share time off work during their baby's first year and may return to work after this.

In addition, as the number of elderly people grows, more employees have responsibility for some degree of care of elderly relatives. Employers are increasingly recognising that many people, both men and women, are faced with combining work with some kind of domestic or caring responsibilities. These provisions, together with the arrangements for Maternity Leave, Partner's Leave Related to Maternity, Adoption Leave and Parental Leave, have been introduced to recognise the impact of these responsibilities.

The Time off for Dependants provisions supersede any existing arrangements (formal or informal) for Compassionate Leave.

2. Definition of a Dependant

A dependant is defined as the employee's husband, wife, civil partner, partner - whether opposite or same sex spouse or partner, co- parent, child or parent, or a person living with the employee in the same household (but not as an employee, tenant, lodger or boarder).

In some circumstances, a dependant could be someone who relies upon the employee for assistance. This could be an individual for whom the employee has primary caring responsibility, such as an elderly relative not living in the employee's household, or someone who is involved in a serious emergency where the employee is the only person who can help.

3. What types of Circumstances are Covered?

An employee will be entitled to time off to deal with the following situations:

- A dependant falls ill, is injured or assaulted or gives birth
- Childcare or other care arrangements break down, e.g. if the childminder or nurse does not turn up
- The consequences of the death of a dependant, e.g. to deal with funeral arrangements and to attend a funeral
- A child is involved in a serious incident at school or during school hours, e.g. if the child has been involved in a fight or is distressed.

The above list is not exhaustive. There may be other circumstances which are equally acute or which can be defined as a domestic emergency.

4. Notice Provisions

By definition, in most circumstances it will not be possible for the employee to give notice of his/her need for time off. However, as soon as is reasonably practicable, the employee should notify his/her Head of Division of the reason for the absence and, unless he/she has already returned to work, its likely duration.

5. How Much Time Off Should be Given?

The amount of time off will be determined by the Foundation Institute Director or a nominated representative. It should be reasonable in the particular circumstances of the case and should be sufficient to deal with the immediate problem and to arrange alternative longer-term care, if necessary.

There is no set amount of time which employees can take off, but in most cases, one or two days will be adequate.

Time off to care for dependants will normally be paid. However, there will be occasions when it will be combined with the employee's annual leave entitlement or, where this is exhausted, with a period of unpaid leave or parental leave (if applicable).

6. Records of Time Off for Dependants

Foundation Institute Directors should nominate a designated person to maintain records of parental leave taken by individual members of staff. This person will normally also maintain the departmental records for annual leave and sickness absence.

7. Application of the Policy

Any concerns regarding the application of this Policy should be raised with the employee's Foundation Institute Director and with the HR Department in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the employee may raise the issue through the Grievance Procedure.

HR Department 20 December 1999

(Amended December 2007 to reflect change from Personnel Office to Human Resources Department)

(Amended August 2012 to meet Stonewall's WEI criteria)

(Amended July 2014 to take account of the new law introducing same sex marriage).