

Time off for Dependants Policy	
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Compliance lead	Director of People, Employee Engagement and PSTE
Agreed Policy file name	Time off for Dependants Policy
Agreed policy location:	RMT Information area\Policies and Procedures RMT website

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Employees have a statutory right to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with emergencies involving their dependants. This policy sets out the Trust's stance on permitting employees to take time off for this purpose whilst ensuring the Trust's operations are not unduly affected. The term 'dependant' is prescribed in law and replicated in this policy. The policy also sets out areas of flexibility that the Trust may adopt in order to support employees. Employees will not be subject to detriment for taking time off for dependants.
- 1.2 Employees who use time off for dependants for reasons other than that for which the statutory right is intended may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under the Trust's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.
- 1.3 This Time off for Dependants Policy may be reviewed at the discretion of the Trust. While it does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and is entirely non-contractual, all employees are required to adhere to the policy and any failure to comply with any aspect of the policy may be treated as a disciplinary matter. The Trust may vary the procedure set out in this policy and procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

2. Entitlement

- 2.1 You are entitled to take a reasonable (see below) amount of time off to take action in relation to unforeseen events involving a dependant irrespective of your length of service, defined as follows:
 - spouse/civil partner
 - child
 - parent

- person who lives in the same household but is not a tenant, lodger, boarder or employee
- those who reasonably rely on you for the provision of care or for assistance if they fall ill. This could be, for example, an elderly neighbour.

2.2 It is not possible to define what a reasonable amount of time is because this will depend on the specific circumstances in question. The same event may require varying amounts of time off for different people, or even the same person if it happens more than once on different occasions.

2.3 The right to time off extends only to that needed to make arrangements in the event of an emergency. Therefore, it is anticipated that no more than one or up to three days will be appropriate on each occasion. Arrangements to cover any time off needed in excess of this as a result of an emergency will need to be discussed with your line manager.

2.4 The Trust recognises that people other than those listed above in relation to whom the statutory right applies may depend on you for assistance. Requests for time off in relation to these people should be made to your line manager.

3. Events covered by this policy

3.1 An unforeseen emergency, for the purposes of this policy, can cover various events in an employee's life, for example:

- to help when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted (including mental illness or injury)
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured
- to cope with the unexpected breakdown of arrangements for caring for a dependant and
- to deal with an incident involving a child of the employee which occurs unexpectedly during school hours or in circumstances where the school has responsibility for the child.

3.2 Time off for emergencies not involving a dependant e.g. a flood at home, is not covered by this policy, however, if this emergency is related to a domestic emergency then this request may need to be dealt with under another policy, for instance domestic incident leave or the when a dependant dies under the compassionate leave policy.

4. Pay for time off

4.1 There is no legal obligation on the Trust to pay employees for time off for dependants, however, a maximum of up to three days in a rolling 12 month period will be paid at full pay. Part days taken will be counted as a full day.

5. Requests for extended periods of time off for dependants

- 5.1 After the approval of a request for a short period of time off work to deal with a dependant, the situation may develop into a requirement for an extended period of time off work. Ordinarily, a request for extended time off from work (more than one day) would not be approved unless a short term request has been made first. This is at the discretion of the line manager, based on the circumstances of the request.
- 5.2 The employee should immediately discuss the ongoing situation with their line manager and they may make a request for an extended period of time off from work.
- 5.3 Extended periods of time off are granted at the Trust's discretion. The extended time off permitted under this policy may be taken from the employee's holiday entitlement (where authorised by the line manager dispensing with the usual notice periods) or be covered off by time off in lieu or be granted as unpaid time off. If unpaid, the Line Manager may agree for the employee to make up the time as appropriate.

6. Notification

- 6.1 As soon as is reasonably practicable, you must contact your line manager to inform him/her of your need to take time off for dependants. If you are in work at the time the need arises, you must make reasonable efforts to inform your line manager in person of the need to leave work. If your line manager cannot be located, you should contact their line manager or a member of the Department of Human Resources. If you are out of work when the need to take time off arises, you should notify your line manager by telephone or, in exceptional circumstances where a telephone call is not appropriate, by email.
- 6.2 The reason for your absence/the need to leave and the expected duration must be provided. Failure to do this may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. Your line manager may ask you for evidence of the need to take time off.