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Family Policies

This policy is here to help you and us plan ahead when you're starting and looking after your family. There is a lot of information in here and there are some key timings associated with all types of family leave. We want to make sure everything is as clear as possible for you, so you can plan your finances, time off and any support you may need. Please take a read and if you've got questions after that please get in touch via HRAdvisors@teachfirst.org.uk.

This policy contains the following material:

Part A: Starting a family

- Section 1: Maternity Leave and Pay
- Section 2: Adoption Leave and Pay
- Section 3: Paternity Leave and Pay
- Section 4: Shared Parental Leave and Shared Parental Pay
- Section 5: IVF and fertility treatments

Part B: Looking after your family

- Section 6: Parental Leave and Pay
- Section 7: Emergency Time off for Dependents

Each section contains relevant guidance on antenatal appointments, sickness absence, benefits and return to work.

Part A: Starting a family

1) MATERNITY LEAVE & PAYMENTS

Entitlement to maternity leave

- a) If you are expecting a baby, you are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave regardless of how long they have worked at Teach First. You can start your maternity leave any time from 11 weeks before the expected week of your child's birth. You are required by law to take at least two weeks leave after the birth of your baby. It is also possible to end your maternity leave early and take Shared Parental Leave (SPL) instead. Please see section three for full details on SPL.

Process for claiming maternity leave

- b) It is best to tell your manager and HR Advisor about your pregnancy as soon as possible but no later than the end of the 15th week before your baby is due.

- c) You will then need to agree with your manager when your maternity leave is going to begin. Please take into account any annual leave that you will need to take before you go off and build this into the start of your leave. You will need to enter your annual leave into People Platform in the usual way. You should let the [HR Advisors](#) know your intentions for maternity leave so that we can arrange the correct payroll processes.
- d) Once everything is agreed, HR will write to you to confirm when your maternity leave will start and finish.

Maternity Packages

- e) The amount of pay you receive during your maternity leave will depend on your salary and length of service.
- f) If your baby arrives before you have started your maternity leave (including if you are on annual leave) then your maternity leave and pay will begin the next day. Any time which you had booked to take as annual leave after that time will be removed from People Platform and added back to your accrued but unused annual leave. If you are off sick due to your pregnancy in the four weeks before your baby is due, then your maternity leave may begin early.

Less than 26 weeks' service

- g) If you have less than 26 weeks continuous service at 15 weeks before your baby is due then you will not be eligible for maternity pay (statutory or enhanced) paid by Teach First, however you may be able to claim:
 - i) maternity allowance (full details available on www.gov.uk ; or
 - ii) Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), payable by your previous employer (provided that you were employed by another employer during the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth).
- h) Even if you are not eligible for maternity pay you must let us know about your leave in line with the process above.

Basic Package

- i) If you have 26 weeks or more but less than two years' continuous service at 15 weeks before your baby is due, then you will be eligible for SMP with a slight enhancement in your first six weeks.

Weeks	How much?
1 - 6	100% of your normal basic salary within the qualifying period For the avoidance of doubt, this is inclusive of your SMP entitlement which is 90% of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first six weeks

7 - 38	Statutory Maternity pay (see gov.uk for this year's weekly amount)
39- 52	Unpaid

Enhanced Package

- j) If you have two years' or more continuous service at on the date that you start your maternity leave then you will be entitled to our enhanced maternity pay which is as follows:

Weeks	How much?
1 - 6	100% of your normal basic salary within the qualifying period For the avoidance of doubt, this is inclusive of your SMP entitlement which is 90% of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first six weeks
7 - 38	50% of your average weekly earnings within the qualifying period or SMP; whichever is greater.
39 - 52	Unpaid

Subsequent pregnancies

- k) If you go on to have a subsequent pregnancy whilst employed by Teach First, your entitlements to leave and pay will be as follows:
- a. Maternity Leave: this is a day one right for all employees
 - b. Statutory Maternity Pay: Your entitlement to SMP will depend on your length of service, and the amount you were being paid during the "qualifying period", which is the eight weeks immediately prior to the 15th week before the week containing your expected due date. If you were on any form of unpaid leave, including the unpaid period of maternity leave, during the qualifying period it is possible that you will not qualify for SMP on a subsequent pregnancy.
 - c. Enhanced Maternity Pay: You will qualify for enhanced maternity pay if you have two or more years' service at the date on which you start your maternity leave, regardless of whether you have recently been on maternity leave or had any other form of extended leave during your employment.
- l) If you have any further questions relating to your entitlement on subsequent pregnancies, please contact the [HR Advisors](#) who will be able to advise on your situation.

Leaving Teach First during your pregnancy

- m) If, due to your resignation or the expiry of a fixed-term contract of employment, you leave Teach First during your pregnancy, you will still be able to claim SMP through Teach First, providing that you were employed by Teach First during the “qualifying week” (15 weeks before your expected week of childbirth). This will be paid to you in a lump sum. Please speak to your HR Advisor if you believe that this will be the case.

Annual leave

- n) Your annual leave will continue to accrue while you are on maternity leave and you will also accrue days in lieu of any bank holidays which fall during your leave, these will be pro-rated for part time employees. Unused annual leave will not be paid out in advance of your maternity leave or upon your return. On your return to work following maternity leave, you will be permitted to carry over all unused annual leave into the holiday year after your return.

Keeping In Touch days

- o) We encourage you to stay in touch with your line manager and colleagues during your maternity leave and we will keep you informed of any important changes or other things that you need to be aware of whilst you are off. You will need to discuss with your line manager how you would like to be contacted using the Parental Contact Form provided by HR. Any variation to this should be emailed to your HR Advisor.
- p) You can take up to 10 “Keeping In Touch” (KIT) days during your maternity leave, these days let you work without losing your entitlement to maternity pay. KIT days need to be agreed with your manager first, and can be used for anything that would normally be part of your job including training course, announcements, meetings or training etc. You can take them at any point during your maternity leave except from the first two weeks after your baby is born. There is no requirement to use your KIT days.
- q) When you work a KIT day you will receive your normal basic pay for the hours that you work in blocks of a half or full day. These will be paid in the next available pay run after they have been recorded by your line manager in People Platform.

Risk Assessments and wellbeing during your pregnancy

- r) Once you have let us know that you are pregnant, we will contact you to arrange a risk assessment to ensure that you are set up appropriately in the office.
- s) Please do make use of our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) if you need any extra support. Further details can be found on the intranet.

Antenatal care

- t) We understand that you will have antenatal appointments to attend during your pregnancy and we ask you to use our agile working policies to accommodate these where you can. However, we know that this is not always possible and you are entitled to paid time off to attend these appointments, please ensure that your line manager is made aware of the appointments and that your Outlook Calendar is up to date.

Your benefits and pension

- u) Unless you opt out, you will remain a member of the pension scheme and your contributions will be based on the maternity pay that you receive during this period. Teach First's contributions will be based on your normal full pay. All contributions will cease during the unpaid part of your maternity leave.
- v) For benefits that you contribute to or our other opt-in flexible benefits please refer to the [allowance package benefits matrix](#), [basic package matrix](#), or [enhanced package matrix](#) information page on SharePoint or contact your HR Advisor for further information.
- w) All other contractual non-salary benefits such as private medical insurance and life assurance will continue throughout your leave.

Returning to work

- x) You do not need to take the full 52 weeks of maternity leave if you do not wish to. If you decide during your maternity leave that you wish to return earlier than your original agreed date of return, then you will need to agree this with your manager and give us at least eight weeks' written notice. If you do not give us eight weeks' written notice of your early return from maternity leave, then we may need to delay your return for up to eight weeks, but this will not go past your original agreed return date.
- y) Before you return you should speak with your line manager and HR Advisor closer to the end of your maternity leave to discuss your return to work plan. You may wish to carry out a phased return and you can use any accrued but untaken holiday to facilitate this and approval of this will be at the discretion of your line manager.
- z) Unless there is an organisation or department restructure (in which case we will consult with you on the impact and implications for you and your role) you will return to your substantive post on the same terms and conditions as before you went off on leave.

Breastfeeding

- aa) If you are still breastfeeding when you return to work, then we will endeavour to find you a private space to express. In the London office this will be the Wellbeing Room (1.07). Breastfeeding women have priority over others for the use of this private space, although we expect all users to be respectful of each other's needs. If you are based in a regional office, please contact the [HR Advisors](#) if you require a space in which to express.

2) ADOPTION LEAVE & PAYMENTS

- a) To be eligible for Adoption leave the adoption must be taking place through a UK or overseas adoption agency; this policy will not apply to private adoptions and you cannot take Adoption leave if the child has not been newly matched to you, for example if you are adopting a stepchild.
- b) You can only take one period of Adoption leave for each adoption placement, even if more than one child is being placed with you.
- c) If you are adopting with a partner, only one of you (the main adopter) will get Adoption Leave and the other (co-adopter) may be able to take leave equivalent to paternity leave (see section three). However, you can end your Adoption leave early and take Shared Parental Leave instead (see section four).

- d) You can start your Adoption leave on any day of the week that the child is placed with you or up to fourteen days before the placement.
- e) You will need to let us know within seven days of being told by the Adoption agency that a child is going to be placed with you that you wish to take Adoption leave, in order to be eligible. Let your line manager know when you think the placement will start and when you would like to start your leave.
- f) The eligibility requirements for Adoption leave and pay are the same as maternity leave and maternity pay. Please refer to section one for full details.
- g) If your Adoption leave is disrupted (because the child is not placed with you or the placement ends) then you must let your line manager and HR Advisor know about this as soon as possible. You are entitled to continue your leave for up to eight weeks after the disruption has happened, although not if this is beyond your original end date.

Pre-adoption appointments

- h) We know that you will have adoption appointments to go to and you can take time off work to go to five adoption appointments regardless of your length of service and working pattern. Adoption appointments are those that have been made by an adoption agency or Local Authority relating to a child being placed for adoption, or for a Fostering for adoption placement.
- i) We appreciate that the five appointments might not directly match up to the different processes that adoption agencies use. Teach First are supportive of employees being able to decide how and when you wish to use these five days to suit you, and your adoption agency's processes best. If there are further appointments or review meetings you need to attend, after using up these five days, then you may need to use annual leave, and/or agile working to accommodate these.
- j) We ask you to use our agile working policies to accommodate these appointments where you can. If this is not possible, then you will get paid time off to attend. Please ensure that your line manager is made aware of the appointments and that your Outlook Calendar is up to date. We recognise that taking adoption leave can be a complex process, so please reach out to the [HR Advisors](#) if you need further guidance.

Adopting from overseas

- k) If you are adopting a child from overseas, the criteria for taking Adoption Leave and pay are the same for adoptions from within the UK. But there are differences in how you need to tell us that you're adopting and want to take leave:
 - I. Within 28 days of getting your Official Notification that the adoption has been approved by the relevant UK authority, you should tell your line manager the date of the Official Notification and when your child is expected to arrive in the UK.
 - II. Then, within 28 days of your child arriving in the UK, you'll need to let your manager know the actual date that they arrived.
 - III. You must give your manager at least 28 days' notice of when you want your Adoption Leave to start and how much leave you want to take. You can start your Adoption Leave when your child arrives in the UK, or up to 28 days after that date.

Fostering for adoption

- l) If you have been approved as a prospective adopter as part of a “Fostering to Adopt” or “concurrent planning” arrangement, you may be able to take to Adoption Leave. If you are fostering a child, but not under this arrangement, then you won’t be eligible.
- m) You will need to follow the same process as above and tell your manager that you want to take Adoption Leave. Once you receive your Matching Certificate, you’ll need to send this to your HR Advisor so that we can make sure that the details of your Adoption Leave and any pay you may be entitled to are correct.

Surrogacy arrangements

- n) If you are having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement and have a Parental Order, or are applying for one, you may be able to take Adoption Leave. Your partner may also get leave equivalent to Paternity Leave.
- o) You need to tell your manager that you’re having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement at least 15 weeks before the expected week of the birth. You can start your Adoption Leave from the date that your baby is born.
- p) If you are applying for a Parental Order and expect to be approved, you can take paid time off work to attend antenatal appointments which have been recommended or made on the advice of a GP, midwife, or nurse. As with all appointments we ask that you try to use agile working to cover them where possible.

Keeping In Touch (KIT) days, Pensions, annual leave, benefits & returning to work

- q) The arrangements for KIT days, pensions, annual leave, benefits and returning to work are the same as for maternity leave. Please refer to section one for more information.

3) PATERNITY LEAVE & PAYMENTS

Eligibility

- a) You are eligible for two weeks paid paternity leave if you have worked for Teach First for at least 26 weeks at the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and you are either the biological father of the child, the partner of the child’s mother or if you and your partner are adopting a child and you have 26 weeks’ service by the date that you’re told that a child is going to be placed with you, and your partner will be taking adoption leave.
- b) You can only take one period of Paternity Leave for each pregnancy or adoption placement, even if more than one child is born or placed with you for adoption.
- c) If you and your partner are eligible, you might want to take Shared Parental Leave, please see section four for more details.

Taking leave

- d) You can take Paternity Leave either as two separate blocks of one week each or as two consecutive weeks. You can start it on any day of the week after your child is born or placed with you. Your leave must finish within 56 days, or eight weeks, of your child's birth or placement with you.
- e) If you want to take Paternity Leave, talk to your line manager as soon as you can and no later than the end of the 15th week before your baby is due or seven days after being told that you've been matched with a child for adoption. Tell your manager and your HR Advisor when you want your Paternity Leave to start and whether you plan to take one or two weeks.

Paternity pay

- f) Providing that you meet the eligibility criteria above and you complete an [SC3](#) form, you will receive full pay for your two weeks paternity leave. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, then you may wish to take this unpaid or use your annual leave entitlement instead, subject to usual approval

Antenatal appointments

- g) We know that it's important for you to go to antenatal or pre-adoption appointments with your partner and you can take time off work to go to antenatal appointments if you are the father of the child, the partner of a pregnant woman or will become a parent through a surrogacy arrangement (and intend to apply for a Parental Order). We ask that you use our agile working policies to accommodate these where possible. It is expected that no more than half a day will be needed for an antenatal appointment, including travelling and waiting time. You will be paid up to half a day for up to two separate appointments, however longer absence for this reason may be taken from annual leave, or compassionate leave, where appropriate. Please ensure that your line manager is made aware of the appointments and that your Outlook Calendar is up to date.

Annual leave

- h) Your annual leave will continue to accrue while you are on Paternity Leave. If your bank holidays are not already included in your holiday entitlement, you will also get days in lieu of any bank holidays which fall during your Paternity Leave.

4) SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

- a) Shared Parental Leave (SPL) allows employed parents and adopters to share leave and Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) with their partner to care for children from birth until their first birthday. For example, a mother and her partner are both eligible for SPL and ShPP. The mother is entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave of which 39 weeks are paid. If the mother decides to curtail her maternity leave and associated pay after 12 weeks and begin SPL, the couple are entitled to 40 weeks of SPL and 27 weeks of ShPP.
- b) If you qualify and choose to take SPL, you or your partner will need to end Maternity or Adoption Leave and you cannot then decide to revert back to maternity leave. If your Maternity Leave has already started or a return date has already been agreed in writing, and you wish to end your Maternity Leave or Adoption Leave and begin SPL then you will need to let us know with at least eight weeks' notice.
- c) The mother or main adopter must take at least two weeks' Maternity Leave after your baby's birth or two weeks' Adoption Leave after placement, but then you can share the remaining 50 weeks' leave

and 37 weeks' pay between you. If you and your partner take time off simultaneously, the amounts you have taken will be added together – for example, both parents take 8 weeks' SPL after the mother's two weeks' compulsory Maternity Leave. The total that they have taken at this point is 18 weeks of their 52 week entitlement.

- d) You need to take all SPL by your child's first birthday or within 52 weeks of your child being placed for adoption.
- e) You can take SPL if you've already taken Paternity Leave, but once you've started taking SPL you won't then be able to take Paternity Leave.

Qualifying for Shared Parental Leave

- f) To qualify for SPL you must:
 - i. have worked for Teach First for 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before your baby is due, or the week you're told that you've been matched with a child for adoption, and;
 - ii. be employed by Teach First in the week before you take your SPL
- g) Also, your partner must:
 - i. have been employed for 26 weeks out of the 66 weeks (not necessarily continuously) before the week your baby is due to be born, or the week you're told that you've been matched with a child for adoption, and;
 - ii. have earned at least £30 a week on average during any 13 of those weeks (not necessarily continuously)

If your partner hasn't been working or is self-employed you can use the Government's [online calculator](#) to find out if you are entitled to Shared Parental Leave.

The processes for taking and amending Shared Parental Leave

- h) If you are the mother or main adopter then you must initially complete the [Shared Parental Leave Request Form](#) to evidence you and your partner's entitlement to SPL. This form will also outline how you wish to share parental leave. Once completed please send this to your Line Manager and HR Advisor, as soon as possible but at least eight weeks before you plan to take any SPL. You may then be invited to a meeting to discuss this further.
- i) If you wish to cancel or amend your SPL then you should complete the [Shared Parental Leave Variation Form](#) and send it to your manager and HR Advisor. You can submit up to three separate requests for blocks of SPL; after this you cannot make any further requests or amend your leave. Any requests that you have withdrawn before approval will not count towards your three requests.
- j) You can ask to take SPL as one single continuous block of leave. As long as you have given your manager eight weeks' notice, this will be approved.

- k) You can also ask to take SPL as more than one discontinuous block of leave – for example, take four weeks leave then return to work for four weeks and then take another four weeks leave. Your manager will need to think about how this might impact the organisation and if it would prove disruptive may not approve your request. If they can't approve it, you will have the option to make a new request.
- l) Once HR have received the final details, we will send you a letter confirming the details of your leave and pay.
- m) Once we have agreed your request for SPL, it becomes binding. You can only change your leave dates by making another request, which will count towards your three leave requests.

Shared Parental Pay

- n) If you are entitled to take SPL, your ShPP will be paid at the same rate as maternity pay. Please refer to section one for full details.

Keeping In Touch days

- o) You can take up to 20 'Shared Parental Leave in Touch' (SPLIT) days between yourself and your partner during your Shared Parental Leave, which lets you work without losing your entitlement to Shared Parental Leave pay. SPLIT days need to be agreed with your manager first and can be used for anything that would normally be part of your job, including training courses, announcements meetings and training etc. You can take them at any point during your Shared Parental Leave. There is no requirement to use your SPLIT days.
- p) When you work a SPLIT day, you will receive your normal basic pay for the hours that you work in blocks of a half or full day. These will be paid in the next available pay run after they have been recorded by your line manager in People Platform.
- q) SPLIT days are in addition to any KIT days you may have taken during Maternity or Adoption Leave.

Pensions, annual leave, benefits & returning to work

- r) The arrangements for pensions, annual leave, benefits and returning to work are the same as for maternity leave and so please refer to section one of this policy for more information.

5) IVF/FERTILITY TREATMENT

- a) We recognise that in order to start a family you may need time off to go for IVF/Fertility treatment and we will try and support you in the best way we can whilst balancing the needs of the organisation. As soon as you or your partner has their treatment confirmed let your manager or HR Advisor know and we will handle things in a sensitive and confidential way.
- b) If there is medical advice that adjustments are needed to your work duties or pattern while you're undergoing treatment, your manager will work with your HR Advisor to ensure these are met

- c) If you need go to appointments to prepare for or undergo treatment yourself, we'll give you a reasonable amount of paid time off to attend. We ask you to use our agile working policies to accommodate these where you can. However, we know that this is not always possible, and you are entitled to paid time off to attend these appointments, please ensure that your line manager is made aware of the appointments and that your Outlook Calendar is up to date.
- d) We know that you may also want to accompany your partner if they are undergoing IVF/fertility treatment. We ask that you use our agile working policies to accommodate these where possible. It is expected that no more than half a day will be needed for an antenatal appointment, including travelling and waiting time. For time off work of up to half a day you will be paid, however longer absence for this reason may be taken from annual leave. Please ensure that your line manager is made aware of the appointments and that your Outlook Calendar is up to date.
- e) We recognise that you may need some extra support during this time and so please do use the support available in the Family Toolkit. This resource developed by employees of Teach First who have been through IVF and Fertility treatment.
- f) We also understand professional help is important, so do use the support available through the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) if needed. We stress that this is a completely confidential service available to all employees.

Part B: Looking after your family

6) PARENTAL LEAVE & PAY

- a) If you are a parent, or foster parent, of a child under 18, you have the right to take pre-planned unpaid time off work to care for them.
- b) All Teach First employees can take 18 weeks off work (unpaid) for each child born, up to their 18th birthday.

Eligibility for Parental Leave

- c) The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is four weeks for each child (unless the employer agrees otherwise). You must take parental leave as whole weeks (e.g. one week or two weeks) rather than individual days, unless your employer agrees otherwise or if your child is disabled. You don't have to take all the leave at once.
- d) You have the right to take parental leave if you:
 - i. Are a parent named on the child's birth certificate
 - ii. are a registered foster carer for a child under 18; or
 - iii. Have legal parental responsibility for a child under 18 or
 - iv. Are named on the child's adoption certificate.

Either parent has the right to parental leave. If you're separated and your ex-partner looks after the children, you have the right to parental leave if you keep formal parental responsibility for the children.

Pay and Benefits during Parental Leave

- e) Parental leave is different from maternity or paternity leave, which is related to the birth of a new baby, and from Adoption leave, which applies when an employee adopts a child. Whilst on parental leave, you will get all your normal employment benefits, apart from salary.

Returning to Work following Parental Leave

- f) Unless there is an organisation or department restructure (in which case we will consult with you on the impact and implications for you and your role) you will return to your substantive post on the same terms and conditions as before you went on leave.

Notification for Parental Leave

- g) You must give at least 21 days' notice to your manager and hradvisors@teachfirst.org.uk when you want to take parental leave.
- h) If you get a new job, you can carry over untaken parental leave, although you will not be able to take leave until you have been with your new employer for a year. Teach First will normally be asked to disclose the amount of parental leave that has been taken.

If you do not qualify for Parental Leave

- i) If you don't qualify for parental leave but need time off to care for your child, your alternatives are to take paid holiday, request unpaid time off or, if it is on an ongoing basis, request flexible working.
- j) If there is an emergency and you need to take time off at short notice, your line manager may let you take emergency leave or you may have the right to take emergency time off for dependents (please see Section 7 for more information).

7) EMERGENCY TIME OFF FOR DEPENDENTS

- a) Teach First understands there may be occasions where you need to leave work, or not come to work, to deal with an unforeseen emergency involving a dependent. This is not the same as Parental Leave, which is pre-planned.
- b) We encourage you to use [agile working](#) as much as possible in the first instance. Where this is not feasible, you will need to inform your line manager of the need to take emergency leave.
- c) Whilst there is no set limit on the amount of time which you can take off for dependents, in most cases leave is expected to last no more than one or two days. This should be sufficient for you to deal with the immediate problems and arrange alternative longer-term care if necessary and does not mean, for example, that you are entitled to take two week's leave to look after a sick dependant.
- d) You will be paid for a maximum of two days during any occurrence of emergency time off for dependents. You should enter this absence in People Platform as normal. Any time in addition to this should be taken as unpaid or annual leave.