

PARENTAL LEAVE for non-birthing parents

Frequently asked questions for staff members

These FAQs are based on the policies and procedures of WHO at the time of writing based on WHO eManual III.6.15 Parental Leave policy revision of 1 January 2023. These FAQs are for guidance only. In the case of a conflict between the FAQs and the eManual provisions, the eManual provisions take precedence.

1. As a non-birthing parent what leave am I entitled to?

The duration of the entitlement varies depending on the type and length of the appointment you hold:

- **Continuing and fixed term** staff members benefit from 16 weeks for the arrival of a single child, and 18 weeks in case of multiple children;
- For **temporary** staff members:-
 - i. Temporary appointments of 12 months or more **prior to the due date or date of legal parenthood**, including temporary appointments of less than one (1) year which are extended resulting in an uninterrupted period of service of one (1) year or longer – 16 weeks single birth/18 weeks multiple.
 - ii. Temporary appointments of **less than one year but more than 6 months prior to the due date or date of legal parenthood**, including those which are extended up to a period of less than 12 months– 8 weeks single birth/10 weeks multiple.
 - iii. Temporary appointments of **6 months or less prior to the due date or date of legal parenthood** – 4 weeks single birth/6 weeks multiple.

2. When, how and who should I inform about intention to take parental leave?

You must provide a full 4 to 5 months' notice to your supervisor. This is essential for planning purposes in order that backfilling options may be optimized. You should then enter your request for parental leave into GSM. When you enter your leave request please enter your contact details in case the Organization needs to contact you during your absence.

If you have any questions about the process, entitlements or about your leave, please contact your HQ Division Business Partner/Associate, Regional HR Manager or Country Office HR focal point to ensure that you receive explanations and clarity where necessary.

3. What actions should I take before I actually depart on parental leave?

- **Contact details**

Please provide contact details in your leave request and ensure your personal details are updated in GSM so that the Organization can get in touch if necessary during your absence. It is important to provide your personal email and/or telephone number to ensure that important information concerning you can be communicated to you during your absence if necessary.

- **Performance review**

You should ensure that the performance review has been undertaken and adjustments made to the objectives and performance review cycle dates if necessary due to the start date of parental leave. If it is not possible to assess performance before departure, you should agree with your supervisor upon a delay in completion of the PMDS regular cycle.

- **Leave requests**

Ensure that all leave is entered and approved prior to departure.

- **GSM - Vacation rules/Outlook - Out of office/Telephone - voicemail**

Ensure that you have put in place all the necessary "out of office" messages or vacation rules for the planned period of absence. Delegate your GSM worklist as agreed with your supervisor.

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4. Do I need to inform anyone when my child arrives?

Yes. It is essential to declare your child as a recognised WHO dependent in order to ensure that your benefits and entitlements are correctly implemented as quickly as possible after your child arrives. This will ensure that your child is registered for mandatory health insurance purposes and is on the record for other entitlements, e.g. dependency allowance, home leave, etc.

The child must be registered as a new family member as soon as possible as is reasonably practical after the final legal parenthood documentation has been received. You will need this as supporting documentation. The declaration has to be made through the GSM 3-step process as follows (if you do not have access to GSM, contact your HR focal point who will facilitate the process for you):

1. Record the new family member:- navigate to Employee Self Service>Recognized Family Members>My Family Members>Add to add a Family Member here prior to requesting recognition by WHO for benefits. There is no approval required on step 1.
2. Request “recognition” of the new family member:- navigate to Employee Self Service>Recognized Family Members>Request for Recognition of My Family Member. You must upload the supporting documentation at this stage. Global Human Resources will approve and you will receive a notification in your GSM worklist.
3. Apply for dependency status for your child:- navigate to Employee Self Service>Recognized Family Members>Apply for benefits for my Recognized Child>Child (0-18) Apply for Dependency Status>Add>complete the mandatory fields and submit.

5. What happens if I am on probation when I go on parental leave?

Any decision to defer the completion of the probationary period and confirmation of appointment will be taken in accordance with procedures for performance evaluation. See III.5 Performance and Change in Status. In principle, this should be discussed when reviewing your objectives after the approval of parental leave.

6. Will I still get my WIGI while I am on parental leave?

Your performance should have been assessed prior to your departure on leave, which will enable your supervisor to take a decision on your WIGI. If it was not possible to assess your performance before your departure the supervisor may discuss with you and defer the WIGI in accordance with the performance evaluation procedures pending your return to work.

7. What if there is a change in date of the child’s arrival?

You may amend your leave request upon agreement with your supervisor. You must advise your HQ Division Business Partner/Associate, Regional HR Manager or Country Office HR focal point of the change as soon as reasonably practical in order that they may provide assistance where necessary.

8. What if I am ill during my parental leave, can I amend the dates?

No. Certified sick leave does not apply during parental leave.

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9. What if I my appointment is due to end before my parental leave ends?

If you are eligible for parental leave your appointment may be extended to cover the full entitlement to parental leave. Please liaise with your HQ Division Business Partner/Associate, Regional HR Manager or Country Office HR focal point in this case.

10. What happens if I need to change my return to full time work date?

If you wish to change the return date of your leave because you wish to come back earlier at 50% or end your 100% parental leave for whatever reason, on the condition that the early return to work has been discussed with and agreed to by your supervisor you may submit an amended parental leave request for approval. If you return to work full-time, you will not be able to revert to full-time or half-time parental leave. If you return to work half-time, you will not be able to revert to full-time parental leave.

11. What if I am unable to return to work on the foreseen return date due to illness?

Normal certified sick leave provisions would apply in accordance with WHO eManual III.6.9 Certified Sick Leave. You must inform your supervisor and submit a certified sick leave request along with a medical certificate in GSM for approval by Staff Health and Wellbeing/Regional Staff Physician.

12. Can my supervisor contact me during parental leave?

A supervisor may contact you for certain issues e.g. to discuss return to work options. A supervisor may also wish to keep you informed of any important structural changes or developments at work which have happened during your absence or administrative obligations that staff members are required to be aware of. A discussion with your supervisor should in any case take place prior to your departure on parental leave how you could be contacted if necessary e.g. personal email, telephone etc. A supervisor may not, however, request you to carry out any duties during your parental leave.

13. How long can I take time off for feeding and nurturing my child?

All staff members eligible for parental leave are entitled to fully paid time off on a daily basis up to the child's 1st birthday for the purpose of feeding and/or nurturing.

This time off is for a maximum of 2 hours per day (depending on the working hours per day). No time off will be granted where a working day is less than 6 hours per day. Time off is granted per work day and cannot be accumulated to take off a full or half day. The entitlement to paid time-off ends and staff are required to return to work full time work on the child's 1st birthday.

14. Can I take certified sick leave to attend medical appointments for my child?

No. Certified sick leave applies only to staff members, not other family members. You may take annual leave, discretionary leave or flexi leave if applied at your duty station, as appropriate. If the appointment is an emergency you could also take uncertified sick leave for family emergency.

15. What leave options do I have after my parental leave?

In the event, after your parental leave you are planning to extend your period of absence, you have the following leave options available, provided your manager approves your request in GSM and you make the request **at least 4 weeks** in advance of the absence dates. Staff members should note that retroactive requests for special leave without pay or leave without pay will not be accepted.

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Annual leave - you may request to use your accrued annual leave balance up to the end of the year (or as accrued up to the end of your contract if earlier). Annual leave is subject to manager approval.

Special leave without pay to take care of a child (absence at 100%) - for up to one year or the end date of your contract whichever is earlier. This leave does not require the staff member to exhaust annual leave balance prior to the leave without pay commencing and the position is normally kept open for the staff member's return. See WHO e-Manual III.6.20 for conditions and details. Staff members must complete the Special leave/Leave without pay – social security declaration request form and submit it to the HR Leave Specialist ensuring to indicate the options (Yes or No) on continuation of health insurance coverage, accident and illness insurance coverage, and/or pension fund contributions. The HR Leave specialist submits the leave request on behalf of the staff member in GSM. Before submitting your leave request, if you opt to continue contributions you must organize with Insurance and Pension teams to pay in advance your own contributions and those of the Organization for the period of absence.

16. How can I amend or enter leave if I do not have access to GSM?

If during your parental leave you do not have access to GSM, you may ask your HR Business Partner/Associate, your Regional HR focal point or your Leave Administrator to enter or amend leave requests on your behalf for approval.

17. Can I travel on home leave during parental leave?

Parental leave cannot overlap with home leave therefore home leave should be requested separately from parental leave.

18. What if I decide not to return to work at the end of the parental leave period?

You must provide your written resignation in accordance with the notice period applicable to your contract i.e. one month for temporary appointments and three months for fixed-term.

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