



Banc Ceannais na hÉireann
Central Bank of Ireland

Eurosystem

Parents & Guardians Leave Policy

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Introduction

As an organisation, the Central Bank seeks to provide colleagues, insofar as possible, with fair, transparent and progressive leave supports to fulfil their role of parent and/or guardian. At a minimum, we align to legislation and practice in the wider Civil service in relation to the leave provisions for parents and/or guardians.

This policy aligns to Civil Service Circular 14/2022: Revision of Working Hours in the Civil Service.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the leave provisions and/or facilities available to colleagues related to their role as a parent and/or guardian.

Scope

This policy applies to all Bank employees.

Policy Statement

Maternity, Adoptive & Surrogacy Leave

- The Maternity Protection Acts, 1994 & 2004, as amended outline entitlements for expectant mothers in respect of maternity leave and related matters;
- The Adoptive Leave Acts, 1995 and 2005, as amended outline entitlements for an adopting parent in respect of adoptive leave and related matters;
- The Parental Leave Acts, 1998-2019 outline entitlements for parents. These entitlements extend to adoptive parents and to persons acting in 'loco parentis' or as a guardian for a child; and
- The Parent's Leave and Benefit Act, 2019 outlines entitlements for 'relevant persons' i.e. a parent of the child, the spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of a parent of the child, a parent of the child where the child is a donor-conceived child under section 5 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, the adopting parent or

parents of a child, the spouse, civil partner or cohabitant as the case may be, of the adopting parent of the child (if the parents have not jointly adopted).

The Central Bank applies the provisions contained in these Acts, the main elements of which are set out in this policy. In addition, we provide Surrogacy Leave, of an equivalent nature to adoptive/maternity, to colleagues who meet the required conditions.

Maternity Leave - Key Points

In the case of maternity leave, colleagues are entitled to the following:

- 26 weeks paid maternity leave which must commence no later than two weeks before the end of the expected week of confinement and end no sooner than 4 weeks after the childbirth . Colleagues must apply for paid maternity leave no later than four weeks before the expected date of commencement;
- An optional additional period of unpaid leave of 16 weeks may be taken. If availed of, this leave must be immediately after the period of paid maternity leave. This unpaid leave will not qualify as service towards pension and must be applied for no later than 7 weeks before the end of the period of paid maternity leave;
- For the period of paid maternity leave eligible colleagues (PRSI Class A) are obliged to claim Social Welfare Maternity Benefit and nominate the Central Bank to receive this payment;
- A risk assessment of the health and safety of pregnant or breastfeeding women. The completed assessment form, and any questions arising from this, should be directed to the Environmental Health and Safety Office in the Workplace Services Division;
- Reasonable time off (paid) to attend maternity clinic appointments for ante or postnatal care once reasonable notice is provided and it is agreed in advance with the line manager;
- Reasonable time off (paid) to attend antenatal classes. This entitlement is for the purpose of attending one set of antenatal classes (other than the last 3 classes in each such a set) for the first pregnancy;
- Continued accrual of entitlements in respect to annual leave, public holidays and increments for the duration of the paid and unpaid maternity leave period; and
- Breastfeeding breaks on return to work (without loss of pay) until the child reaches 2 years of age. These can be in the form of an adjustment of working hours (up to 60 minus) or a 60 minute break each day.

Adoptive Leave - Key Points

In the case of adoptive leave, colleagues will be entitled to the following:

- 24 weeks paid adoptive leave from the date of the placement of the child. Colleagues must apply for paid adoptive leave no later than four weeks before the expected date of commencement;
- An optional additional period of unpaid leave of 16 weeks may be taken. If availed of, this leave must be immediately after the period of paid adoptive leave. This period of unpaid leave will not qualify as service towards pension and must be applied for no later than 7 weeks before the end of the period of paid adoptive leave;
- For the period of paid adoptive leave eligible colleagues (PRSI Class A) are obliged to claim Social Welfare Adoptive Benefit and nominate the Central Bank to receive this payment;
- In the case of a foreign adoption colleagues may take some or all of the optional additional unpaid leave before the date of placement of the child. Colleagues will be required to provide HR Support with sight of the declaration of suitability and eligibility (issued pursuant to the Adoption Act, 1991), which should indicate the expected date of placement, before the start of the adoptive leave period;
- Reasonable time off (paid) to attend pre-adoption classes or meetings once reasonable notice has been provided and the time required is agreed with the line manager; and
- Continued accrual of entitlements in respect to annual leave, public holidays and increments for the duration of the paid and unpaid adoptive leave period.

Surrogacy Leave - Key Points

In the case of surrogacy leave the Central Bank provides the following:

- 24 weeks paid surrogacy leave from the date of the placement of the child. Colleagues must apply for paid surrogacy leave no later than four weeks before the expected date of commencement;
- An optional additional period of unpaid leave of 16 weeks may be taken. If availed of, this leave must be immediately after the period of paid surrogacy leave. This period of unpaid leave will not qualify as service towards pension and must be applied for no later than 7 weeks before the end of the period of paid surrogacy leave; and

- Reasonable time off (paid) to attend pre-surrogacy classes or meetings once reasonable notice has been provided and the time required is agreed with the line manager.

Entitlements in respect to annual leave, public holidays and increments will not accrue for the duration of the (paid or unpaid) surrogacy leave period. This period of Surrogacy Leave will not be counted as reckonable service for redundancy calculation or pension purposes and colleagues will not receive additional entitlements than would be provided if the child were adopted.

Paternity Leave

- The Paternity Leave & Benefits Act, 2016 sets out a range of entitlements in respect of paternity leave and related matters;
- The Central Bank applies the provisions contained in the Acts, the main elements of which are set out in this policy
- Note: Paternity leave entitlements can only apply to one person deemed to be a 'relevant parent' of a child:
 - in the case of a child who is or is to be adopted, the relevant parent is: the spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of the adopting mother or sole male adopter; married same sex couples, the spouse chosen by them;
 - in the case of a birth, the relevant parent is: the father of the child; spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of the child's mother; and
 - in the case of surrogacy, paternity leave does not apply unless the Father is the biological father of a surrogate baby.

Paternity Leave - Key Points

In the case of paternity leave, colleagues are entitled to the following:

- A single period of 2 weeks paid paternity leave to be taken within 6 months of the birth or placement of the child/ children. This must be taken as one block of leave and cannot be fragmented into smaller periods;
- Eligible colleagues (PRSI Class A) are obliged to claim Social Welfare Paternity Benefit and nominate the Central Bank to receive this payment on their behalf; and
- Continued accrual of entitlements in respect to annual leave, public holidays and increments for the duration of the paternity leave period.

Parental Leave

- The Parental Leave Acts 1998-2019, set out a range of entitlements in respect of parental leave and related matters to parents, adoptive parents and to persons acting in ‘loco parentis’ or as a guardian for a child; and
- The Central Bank applies the provisions contained in the Act (as amended), the main elements of which are set out in this policy.

Parental leave Key Points

In the case of parental leave, colleagues are entitled to the following:

- Colleagues with at least one year’s continuous service are entitled to take 26 weeks unpaid parental leave in respect of their child;
- Parental Leave may only be used to care for the child concerned and if taken/ intended for another purpose the Central Bank reserves the right to refuse or cancel parental leave;
- Where both parents are employed in the Central Bank colleagues may apply to transfer part of their parental leave entitlement to the other parent;
- This leave must be taken before the child reaches 12 years of age, or 16 years of age in the case of a child with a disability:
 - in the case of an adoption which commences when the child is aged between 10 and 12 the parental leave may be taken within two years of the commencement of the adoption;
 - for colleagues working reduced hours (i.e. part-time working/ job-sharing) the entitlement to 26 weeks will be pro-rated based on their specific working arrangement; and
 - where colleagues don’t meet the one year service requirement, and their child is reaching the age threshold, they will be entitled to take one week’s parental leave for every month of service they have completed.
- Colleagues should avail of Parental leave for their eldest child first and then each subsequent child thereafter;
- Colleagues are entitled to take their parental leave entitlement as follows:
 - as one continuous block of 26 weeks unpaid leave
 - as two separate blocks of at least 6 weeks provided there is a 10 week break

- In general, a maximum of 26 weeks parental leave may be taken in any one year except in the case of twins/ triplets etc. or if management specifically agree to a longer period being taken
- The Central Bank may, at its discretion, accommodate more flexible or favourable means of taking parental leave. Each request for such arrangements will be subject to business needs and will require line manager approval. Examples include:
 - Weekly parental leave arrangement subject to review on a regular basis
 - Allowing a new colleague to avail of a parental leave arrangement before they meet the minimum service requirement
 - Reserving of up to 2 separate blocks of 2 weeks of the parental leave entitlement for a child's Junior or Leaving Certificate examinations (or equivalent)

Colleagues will not be entitled to remuneration or superannuation entitlements during parental leave. They will continue to accrue entitlements in respect to annual leave, public holidays and increments for the duration of the parental leave period.

Colleagues availing of parental leave are entitled to be credited PRSI contributions from the Department of Social Protection (DSP) – this will preserve their record for social insurance purpose. Colleagues are responsible for contacting the DSP directly to ensure appropriate credits are applied.

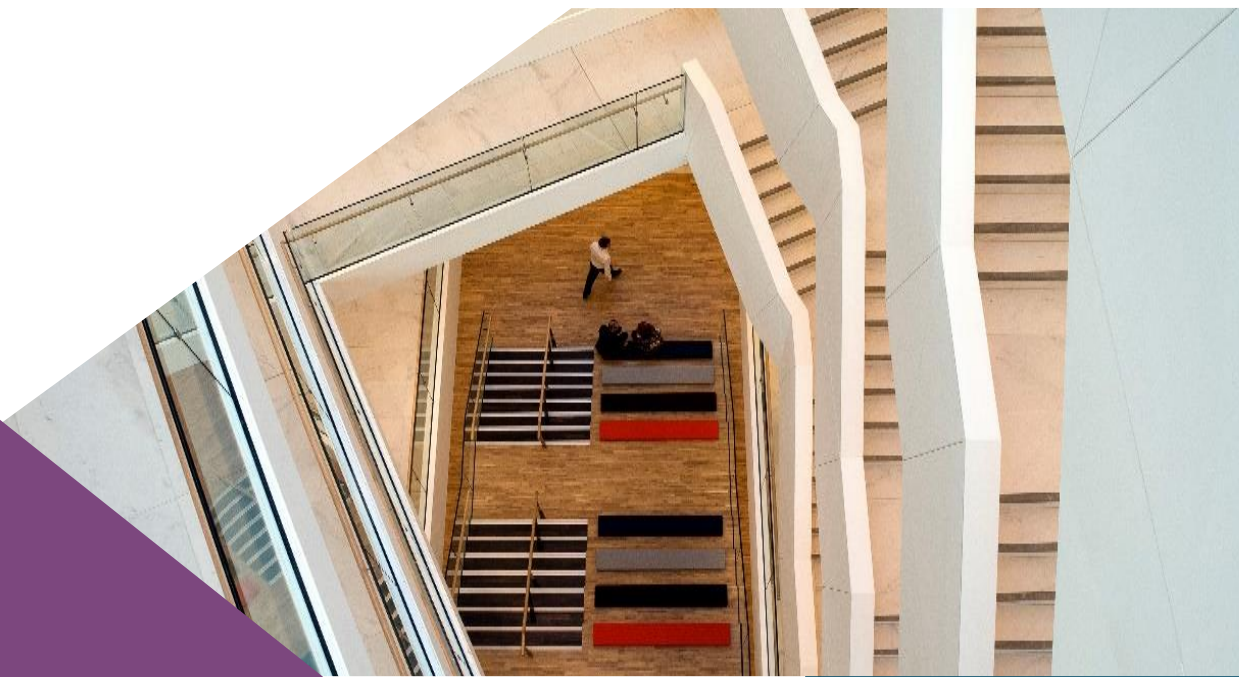
Parent's Leave

The Parent's Leave and Benefit Act 2019 provides an entitlement for each 'relevant parent' to take seven weeks (rising to nine during 2023) parent's leave within 104 weeks of the child's birth or placement of the child with the family in the case of adoption.

In the case of parent's leave, colleagues are entitled to the following:

- 2 weeks paid parent's leave which must commence within 104 weeks of the child's birth or placement of the child with the family in the case of adoption. Eligible colleagues will be obliged to claim Parent's Leave Benefit (€245 per week) from the DSP and nominate the Central Bank to receive this payment on their behalf;
- An optional additional period of 5 weeks unpaid leave may be taken which must also commence within 104 weeks of the child's birth or placement of the child with the family in the case of adoption. Eligible colleagues may also claim Parent's Leave Benefit (€245 per week) from the DSP for the weeks that they are unpaid (i.e. any Parents Leave taken following the first two weeks of Parents Leave);

- This leave can be taken as one continuous seven week period of leave or as separate weeks of block leave;
- Parent's Leave can only apply to a person deemed to be a 'relevant parent' of the child;
- Parent's Leave may not be transferred between parents.



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