

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY Carer's Leave Policy and Procedure

Policy Version:	1.0
Policy Owner/Policy Leads:	Deputy HR Director (HR Partnering & Reward), HR Policy Managers
Policy Approved by:	Director of Human Resources
Date of Implementation:	6 April 2024
Proposed Date of Review:	24 Months from publication

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1. Introduction

Imperial College London is committed to helping employees achieve a healthy balance between their personal and work commitments. We understand that on occasion, time off work is required in order to deal with responsibilities involving dependants.

This policy sets out the statutory right of employees to carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need.

Staff requiring time off for unexpected or sudden problems connected with dependents should refer to the [Special Leave Policy – Family Emergency Leave](#).

Imperial's [Values](#) are at the very centre of our work and guide our behaviour as a community, across all levels of Imperial. This policy aims to protect and promote our Values of Respect, Collaboration, Excellence, Integrity, and Innovation.

Implementation of this policy and associated procedures must be clear and transparent and line managers and supervisors are required to familiarise themselves with, and understand, this policy and associated procedures.

This policy applies to all members of staff regardless of contract type. It does not apply to agency workers, casual workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers, or interns. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services and may be amended at any time.

2. Equality and Diversity

Imperial is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Implementation of this policy must be clear and transparent and not subject to any unfair discriminatory practices.

This policy is inclusive and applies to all staff irrespective of any protected characteristic.

3. How is a dependant defined?

In the context of Carer's leave, a dependent means:

- Your spouse, civil partner, child, or parent;
- Any person who lives in the same household as you (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder, or employee); or
- Any person who would reasonably rely on you to provide or arrange care.

A dependent has a long-term care need if they;

- Have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than 3 months;
- Have a condition that amounts to a disability under the Equality Act 2010; or
- Require care for a reason connected to their old age.

The statutory right to carer's leave applies to a wide range of caring situations, but excludes general childcare, except where your child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need.

Planned care for a dependant might include:

- Planning for specific care provisions for your dependant(s).

- Making longer term arrangements for your dependant(s).
- To set up or transition/settle your dependant(s) with new care arrangements.
- To address any medical needs your dependant(s) may require such as care following a sudden illness, an operation/injury/accident, care for a chronic condition, care for a long-term disability etc.
- To accompany your dependant(s) to their medical/welfare/social care appointments, to meet with their medical practitioners or to meet with their other external carers.

4. Eligibility

Whatever your length of service, you have a statutory right to take carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant if they have a long-term care need (see section 3).

You do not need to provide evidence of your dependant's care needs.

If you are caring for more than one dependant, you do not have a separate entitlement to carer's leave for each dependant.

5. Contractual entitlements during Carer's Leave

During your period of Carer's Leave, continuity of your employment service will be maintained throughout, and there will be no break in service. You will still continue to accrue the same employment rights, annual leave entitlements, sickness absence benefits, and redundancy entitlements (if applicable), as you would normally accrue as per your length of service, as if you had not taken any leave.

6. Carer's Leave

6.1 Leave and pay entitlements

If you are eligible for Carer's leave, you will be entitled to one working week of unpaid leave (pro rata for part time staff) in any 12-month period.

A 'working week' is defined as the length of time you would usually work over 7 days:

- For full time employees - this would equate to 5 days of leave.
- For part-time employees – if an employee worked 2 days a week for example, the entitlement would be 2 days of leave.
- For anyone who works an irregular working pattern and/or with changing working hours each week - the total number of hours worked in the preceding 12 months will be divided by a total of 52 weeks (or the number of weeks of work which have taken place since the job started) and this will equate to the amount of leave which can be taken. For a new starter who wishes to take leave during their first week, the aforementioned calculation can be applied by using the amount the employee is expected to work in a week instead.

Carer's Leave can commence on any day of the week and the entitlement will begin from the first day leave is taken. The entitlement can either be taken as the whole working week, as full days, or as half days throughout the 12-month period. The leave does not need to be taken on consecutive days.

You can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days or hours throughout the year.

6.2 Requesting leave

You are required to provide notice before you intend to commence carer's leave. As soon as you are aware of the need to take care-related absence, please inform your line manager as soon as possible with the date you would like the leave to commence, and an estimated length of the time required away from work.

If the leave request is for a half day or a full day, you must provide notice at least 3 days in advance. If you are requesting leave for more than one day, notice must be submitted in advance of at least twice the length of the intended leave period. *For example, if the request is for two days of leave, you must provide notice at least 4 days in advance.* The notice period needs to be in full days, even if the request includes half day amounts. *For example, if the request is for 2 ½ days, you must provide notice of 6 days in advance.*

The request does not have to be in writing; however, once your line manager has agreed your request, you will need to complete the Carer's Leave request form and email it to the HR Staff Hub.

The HR Staff Hub will confirm your unpaid leave arrangements and the arrangement for salary deduction in writing. The HR Staff Hub will liaise with the Payroll and Pension team to ensure the appropriate salary deduction is made.

You will also need to ensure you have updated your TeamSeer record with your absence.

6.3 Salary deductions

The unpaid leave will normally be deducted from your payslip in the month, or the month after the leave period has been taken. The salary deductions will be equal to the number of days or half days or hours of unpaid leave taken, and this will be calculated using your normal rate of pay.

6.4 Delaying leave requests

Your line manager is unable to refuse your request for carer's leave, but they can ask for it to be rescheduled for a different time if the requested absence will result in any constraints or undue disruption to the operations of the team/department you work in. If this scenario occurs, your line manager must:

- State the rationale for the postponement of your requested leave within 7 days of your original request, and before the intended start date of your leave.
- Agree a new date for the leave to commence within one month of initial requested start date.

7. Alternative leave options

If you have exceeded the entitlements set out in this policy, and require additional leave or flexibility to accommodate both planned and unforeseen care responsibilities, you may wish to consider the other following options and discuss with your line manager:

- [Annual leave](#)
- Purchasing [additional annual leave](#).
- Family Emergency Leave ([within the Special Leave policy](#)).
- Unpaid Parental Leave ([within the Special Leave policy](#)).
- In the event of a death/bereavement (or to undertake funeral arrangements), separate entitlements are set out within the [Special Leave policy](#) which can be utilised such as Compassionate Leave and Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay.

8. Additional support

- Confidential Care - The College's employee assistance provider, Confidential Care, can offer free professional and confidential help. A free 24-hour confidential advice line is available for practical and emotional support. For further details please visit the [College's Occupational Health website](#).
- [Work+Family membership \(previously known as My Family Care\)](#) – Online portal access to a wide range of back up care services, specialist advice, online resources, webinars, and news updates.
- [Parents and Carers workshops](#) – Free workshops which run three times a year. These are facilitated by a qualified coach to help employees during the transition to and from parental leave in addition to maintaining a balance between their work and caring responsibilities.
- Our chaplaincy offers [free meditation sessions](#) and [mindfulness courses](#). These can help manage stress and improve wellbeing.
- Imperial offers [financial support for anyone identifying as a carer](#) to attend work-related events taking place outside of Imperial and/or outside of core hours and/or during half term holidays.