

Parental maternity leave policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and support for employees during pregnancy and parental leave. Our service aims to assist employees in maintaining health and wellbeing, managing workplace risks, and accessing entitlements while ensuring continuity of quality care for children. This policy also promotes fairness, equity, and compliance with industrial and anti-discrimination laws.

SCOPE

This policy applies to permanent staff members who have been employed at Bateau Bay Public School OSHC for at least 12 months. It covers pregnancy, parental leave, occupational health and safety, immunisation and infectious disease considerations, and return-to-work arrangements.

Health and safety

The health and safety of pregnant employees is a priority. Potential workplace risks are assessed in consultation with the employee, and measures are implemented to minimise or eliminate hazards. Pregnant employees are encouraged to discuss any concerns with the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider. Workplace modifications, changes to duties, or alternative arrangements may be recommended to protect the health and wellbeing of the employee and their unborn child. Staff are advised to consult their medical practitioner regarding workplace safety and any medical issues arising during pregnancy.

Manual handling

Pregnant employees may be at increased risk of back pain or injury due to anatomical and physiological changes. Strategies to reduce this risk include using correct lifting techniques, avoiding prolonged standing, diversifying tasks and using appropriate workstations and equipment. Pregnant employees are encouraged to seek advice from their doctor if experiencing pain or other health concerns, and the service will provide support to implement safe practices.

Stress management

Pregnancy can increase the risk of stress at work due to changes in physical abilities and responsibilities. Our service assists pregnant employees with leave planning, provides information about entitlements, and supports access to medical advice where required. Flexibility and understanding are offered to ensure employees can manage stress and maintain wellbeing during pregnancy.

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Immunisation and infectious diseases

Pregnant employees are advised to ensure immunity to rubella, measles, chickenpox, and cytomegalovirus prior to pregnancy. Exposure to infectious diseases in the workplace may pose risks, and employees are encouraged to follow rigorous hygiene practices, consult medical professionals, and seek guidance on vaccinations. The service implements strategies to reduce exposure risks and communicates with staff and families regarding infectious disease outbreaks. Pregnant employees are provided with information about potential health risks, including CMV, hand, foot and mouth disease, parvovirus B19, listeriosis, toxoplasmosis, hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, pertussis, and influenza, in accordance with health authority guidelines.

Responsibilities of the approved provider and nominated supervisor

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor ensure that pregnant employees are supported, and their workplace needs accommodated wherever possible. They provide information to medical practitioners, communicate infection control measures to all staff, implement risk management strategies, comply with anti-discrimination laws, and negotiate flexible working arrangements to maintain a safe environment.

Responsibilities of employees

Pregnant employees are responsible for informing management of their pregnancy as early as possible, seeking medical advice regarding workplace risks and immunisations, and providing relevant medical documentation. Employees are required to notify management in writing of their expected date of birth and intention to take maternity leave, including start and end dates. Employees should also raise any concerns regarding health, safety, or work duties and cooperate with management to reduce risks and ensure quality care.

Employee entitlements

The service ensures employees are aware of their entitlements under the Fair Work Act, relevant awards, and government schemes. Pregnant employees are entitled to four weeks paid leave prior to giving birth. This is not part of annual / sick leave. This is provided by the service. Employees have access to the Paid Parental Leave Scheme, and information about Dad and Partner leave. Employees are supported in planning flexible unpaid parental leave, keeping in touch days, and return-to-work arrangements, including the right to their pre-parental leave position or a comparable role.

Paid parental leave scheme

Eligible primary carers may receive up to 18 weeks of paid Parental Leave at the national minimum wage, with flexible days able to be taken within two years of the child's birth or adoption. Additional arrangements may apply if the primary carer returns to work or is no longer the main carer.

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Parental leave and related entitlements

Under the National Employment Standards, employees with at least 12 months' continuous service are eligible for up to 12 months unpaid parental leave, with options to extend up to 24 months. Employees must provide notice to their employer regarding leave commencement, changes, or extensions, with defined notice periods. Keeping in touch days provide an opportunity for employees to maintain connection with the service during leave, while ensuring pay and leave entitlements are maintained. Parental leave provisions also apply in cases of stillbirth, premature birth, or infant death.

Returning to work after parental leave

Employees have the right to return to their pre-parental leave position or a comparable role, maintaining status and pay. Flexible working arrangements may be negotiated to support the employee's physical and emotional wellbeing and ensure continuity of care for children. Employees must confirm their return to work in writing, and temporary replacements are informed of the provisional nature of their employment. The service supports breastfeeding or expressing milk upon return, and provides assistance to settle employees back into the workplace.

Child Safe Standards and Paramountcy Principle

The Service is committed to upholding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and embedding a strong child safe culture across all practices. In accordance with the Paramountcy Principle, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are the primary and overriding consideration in all decisions, actions and practices undertaken by the Service, including those relating to employee wellbeing, pregnancy and parental leave arrangements. This means that while supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, including pregnant staff and those on parental leave, the Service will ensure that all staffing arrangements, role modifications and return-to-work processes continue to prioritise the safety, supervision and quality care of children above all other considerations. The Service will ensure that workplace adjustments, risk management strategies and staffing decisions are implemented in a way that maintains a safe and supportive environment for children. Educators, staff and management are required to exercise professional judgement to ensure that any changes to duties or staffing arrangements do not compromise supervision, child safety or compliance with regulatory requirements. All practices relating to parental leave and employee wellbeing must support a safe, stable and consistent environment for children, ensuring that their safety, dignity and wellbeing remain the highest priority at all times.

Policy review

This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with the National Quality Standard, relevant legislation, and best practice in supporting pregnant employees and parental leave entitlements. Updates are communicated to staff and management to maintain clarity and consistency in policy implementation.



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Review

Date:	Changes:	Reviewed by:
24/01/2023	New policy (All updated)	Travis Broadhurst (P&C President)
07/08/2024	Reviewed - No changes	Orama Daniel
17/09/2025	Policy updated and condensed for famlies & Employees	Charmayne Nathan
29/04/2026	Child Safe Standards & Paramountcy Principle was implemented in align with new laws and regulations	Charmayne Nathan