



Neonatal Care Leave Policy

Applies to: All employees of Abbot's Lea School

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1. Introduction

1.1

Abbot's Lea School recognises that having a child in neonatal care is an extremely difficult and challenging time and is committed to supporting employees who experience this.

1.2

This policy sets out the support available to employees whose child requires neonatal care, including neonatal care leave, neonatal care pay and workplace support.

1.3

Abbot's Lea School is committed to ensuring that employees are treated with compassion, flexibility and fairness during this period.

2. Scope

2.1

This policy applies to all employees of Abbot's Lea School, regardless of length of service, in respect of entitlement to Neonatal Care Leave, subject to the qualifying criteria set out in this policy.

2.2

Eligibility for Neonatal Care Pay is subject to the qualifying service and other requirements set out in this policy.

2.3

This policy should be read alongside the school's other relevant family leave policies, including the Maternity Leave Policy, Paternity Leave Policy and Shared Parental Leave Policy, where appropriate.

3. Legal Framework

3.1

This policy is underpinned by relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023
- Employment Rights Act 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

3.2

The school will review and update this policy where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance or the applicable Liverpool City Council terms and conditions.

4. Definitions

4.1

The following terms are used within this policy:

Neonatal Care

Medical care provided to a baby after birth, typically within the first 28 days of life, in a hospital setting such as a neonatal unit, special care baby unit (SCBU) or neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Neonatal Care Leave

A statutory entitlement, subject to eligibility, allowing parents to take additional time away from work when their baby requires neonatal care. This is separate from maternity, paternity and shared parental leave.

Neonatal Care Pay (NCP)

Statutory pay provided to eligible employees during a period of Neonatal Care Leave.

Parent/Eligible Employee

An individual who has responsibility for the child, including birth parents, adoptive parents, intended parents, for example through surrogacy, or partners where they meet the statutory eligibility criteria.

Qualifying Neonatal Care

Medical care provided to a newborn baby in a hospital setting that meets the statutory criteria for neonatal care leave entitlement, usually involving an overnight stay for medical treatment.

Qualifying Period

The timeframe within which neonatal care must take place for Neonatal Care Leave to apply.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1

Abbot's Lea School has a duty of care to support an employee who has a child in neonatal care. The school and the employee have roles and responsibilities to ensure appropriate support is in place.

Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school has a compliant Neonatal Care Leave Policy.
- Providing oversight and assurance of fair and consistent implementation.
- Monitoring equality and staff wellbeing outcomes.
- Delegating the operational management of the policy to the Headteacher.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is implemented consistently and sensitively.
- Ensuring that the HR Manager is aware of their responsibilities and has appropriate guidance.
- Making decisions on leave arrangements and, where appropriate, flexible working requests.
- Ensuring that employees are aware of available support.
- Promoting a supportive culture within the school.

HR Manager

The HR Manager is responsible for:

- Acting as the main point of contact for employees regarding Neonatal Care Leave and Neonatal Care Pay.
- Ensuring employees are aware of their entitlements and responsibilities under this policy.
- Responding sensitively and flexibly to notifications and requests.
- Advising employees and managers on leave arrangements and any relevant workplace adjustments.
- Maintaining appropriate and supportive contact with the employee during absence, as agreed with the employee.
- Maintaining confidentiality and ensuring information is handled appropriately.
- Supporting the school with any necessary administrative and payroll arrangements.

Employee

The employee is responsible for:

- Informing the school as soon as reasonably practicable of the need for Neonatal Care Leave.
- Providing information and documentation required to support their application, where appropriate.
- Providing the required notice for Neonatal Care Pay.
- Keeping in reasonable contact with the school where appropriate and as agreed.
- Keeping the school informed of any changes that may affect their leave arrangements.

6. Eligibility for Neonatal Care Leave

6.1

Parents are entitled to Neonatal Care Leave where the following criteria are met:

- Neonatal care starts within 28 days of the child's birth.
- The child is in neonatal care for seven continuous days or more. Partial weeks are not included.
- Medical care is received in a hospital, another setting as a result of an inpatient stay in hospital under the care of a consultant, or for palliative or end-of-life care.

6.2

Neonatal Care Leave is a day-one right for a parent, including adoptive parents, parents fostering to adopt and intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement, where the statutory eligibility criteria are met.

6.3

After seven full continuous days of neonatal care, eligible employees can take between one and 12 weeks of paid leave.

The leave can be divided into two tiers:

Tier 1

This applies where the child continues to receive neonatal care and includes one week after the care has ended.

There may be more than one Tier 1 period if the child stops receiving neonatal care for a period of more than seven days and then starts to receive neonatal care again, provided this takes place within 28 days of birth.

Tier 1 leave can therefore be taken in an unlimited number of blocks of a week to allow the employee to stop work at short notice to care for their child in neonatal care.

Tier 2

This applies for the period outside the Tier 1 period and before the end of 68 weeks from the date of the child's birth.

Tier 2 leave must be taken in one continuous block.

6.4

In instances of multiple births, where babies are receiving care simultaneously, the entitlement will be accrued in respect of one of the babies.

Where babies are receiving care at different times, the leave and pay entitlement can accrue separately, provided each baby meets the threshold.

The employee can only accrue a maximum of 12 weeks' entitlement.

7. Eligibility for Neonatal Care Pay (NCP)

7.1

To be eligible for Neonatal Care Pay, the employee must have 26 weeks' continuous service.

7.2

Neonatal Care Pay is paid at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings or the rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, whichever is greater.

8. Notice Requirements for Neonatal Care Pay

8.1

An employee must provide written notice for Tier 1 Neonatal Care Pay within 28 days beginning with the first day of the week in which Neonatal Care Pay is being claimed.

For Tier 2 Neonatal Care Pay, an employee must give notice at least 15 days in advance to claim pay for one week's leave.

8.2

Notice must be given at least 28 days in advance to claim pay for two or more weeks' leave.

8.3

Employees should complete the school's Neonatal Care Leave Application Form to request leave.

The completed form should be sent directly to the HR Manager at hrm@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Where the employee is unable to complete the form due to the circumstances, the HR Manager may complete the form on the employee's behalf, on their instruction, and should provide a copy to the employee for their records.

8.4

The HR Manager will confirm the employee's leave arrangements and support the necessary administrative and payroll arrangements.

9. Additional Support for Parents

9.1

Abbot's Lea School recognises that having a child in neonatal care is an extremely difficult and challenging time and is committed to supporting employees who experience this.

9.2

Where additional support is required, the school may refer the employee to the school's occupational health provider or employee assistance programme, where available.

9.3

Employees may also wish to access confidential external support services. These include, but are not limited to:

Bliss

www.bliss.org.uk

National Childbirth Trust (NCT)

www.nct.org.uk

Tommy's

www.tommys.org

Rainbow Trust

www.rainbowtrust.org.uk

PANDAS Foundation UK

www.pandasfoundation.org.uk

Family Lives

www.familylives.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

10. Policy Management and Review

10.1

This policy is owned by Abbot's Lea School and will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation, statutory guidance and the applicable Liverpool City Council terms and conditions.

10.2

The Governing Board is responsible for approving the policy and monitoring its implementation.

10.3

The Headteacher, supported by the HR Manager, is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policy.

10.4

The policy will be updated where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory entitlements or the applicable local government terms and conditions.