**PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

This policy is intended to provide a **summary** of employees Parental Leave entitlements in accordance with the National Employment Standards.

After 12 months of continuous service with the Company an employee, including a long-term casual employee, is eligible to up to 12 months unpaid parental leave. To be eligible an employee must have at least 12 months service before the expected date of birth of the child if the employee is pregnant, before the date of the adoption or when the leave starts if the leave is to be taken by another eligible person. Each parent can take up to 12 months unpaid parental leave, or up to 24 months, if their employer agrees.

**Unpaid Parental and Adoption Leave**

For a pregnant employee, unpaid parental leave may start no earlier than six weeks before the expected day of birth of the child (unless the employee is eligible for unpaid special parental leave) and no later than the date of the child’s birth. For an employee other than the pregnant employee, on the date of the child’s birth. Parents can take unpaid parental leave concurrently for part or all of their period of unpaid parental leave.

Applications for parental leave must be made in writing to the employee’s manager at least 10 weeks prior to commencement of the leave and be accompanied by a certificate from a registered medical practitioner certifying the employee, or the employee’s partner, is pregnant and stating the expected date of birth.

Unpaid adoption leave must start on the day of placement of the child and an employee must provide written notice to take unpaid parental leave at least 10 weeks before the expected child’ s date of placement.

Employees can take up to 12 months’ unpaid parental leave if they experience a stillbirth or infant death of a child during the first 24 months of life.

**Flexible Unpaid Parental Leave**

Employees can take up to 100 days of their unpaid parental leave flexibly at any time within 24 months of a child’s birth or adoption. Flexible unpaid parental leave can be taken as a single continuous period of one day or longer or as separate periods of one day or longer each.

**Interaction with other forms of Paid Leave**

An employee may take any other kind of paid leave (such as annual leave) while they are taking a period of unpaid parental leave. If the employee does so, the taking of that other forms of paid leave do not break the continuity of the period of unpaid parental leave. The initial period of parental leave, including another form of paid leave must not exceed 12 months.

**Requesting an Extension to Unpaid Parental Leave**

An employee may extend a period of unpaid parental leave by giving their employer written notice of the extension no later than 4 weeks before the end date of the original leave period. Such an extension is only permitted once. Any further extensions within the initial available period of unpaid parental leave (12 months) are at the discretion of the Company. Where the employer is unable to accommodate a request, the employer will provide a written response that includes:

* The associated reasons and how these relate to the employee’s request.
* Where applicable, alternate arrangements / extension the employer can accommodate relating to the request.
* Information about referring the matter to the Fair Work Commission relating to dispute resolution.

**Reduction of Approved Parental Leave**

An employee whose period of unpaid parental leave has started, may request to reduce the period of their unpaid parental leave. Approval of such requests will be at the Company’s sole discretion.

**Transfer to a Safe Job or No Safe Job Leave**

If a pregnant employee provides a certificate from a registered medical practitioner stating that there are potential risks or the possibility of illness connected with the employee’s normal work making it inadvisable for them to continue, the Company will, wherever practicable, transfer the employee to a different job on commensurate pay and conditions.

**Unpaid Special Parental Leave**

An employee can take unpaid special parental leave if they are not fit for work due to a pregnancy related illness if they have been pregnant and their pregnancy ends after at least 12 weeks because of miscarriage or termination. Any unpaid Special Maternity Leave taken by an employee does not reduce an employee’s entitlement to unpaid parental leave.

**Obligations during Parental Leave**

Where an employee is on Parental Leave the Company will keep them informed of any decisions made that will have a significant effect on their status, pay or the location of their pre-parental leave position. Employees must at all times act in line with their contact of employment during parental leave.

**Keeping in Touch Days**

Employee’s taking unpaid parental leave can make a written request to the Company to return to work for a ‘keeping in touch day.’ For further information visit <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/parental-leave/during-parental-leave/keeping-in-touch-days>.

**Return to Work**

An employee must notify the Company in writing of their intention to return to work or extend an initial period of Parental Leave not later than 4 weeks prior to the expiry of the period of Parental Leave. Upon return to work, will be entitled to the position they held immediately before commencing Parental Leave.

If an employee wishes to return to work on either reduced or flexible hours the employee must submit a request for flexible working arrangements.

**Policy Approver:** Insert Title