Parental Leave Checklist

Flinders University is committed to supporting parents through their journey into parenthood and transitioning back to work. Whether you are expecting a baby, adopting, if you are the birth mother, primary carer, or partner our family friendly policies offer a range of ways to support your family responsibilities.

This toolkit should be used by staff and supervisors to assist staff in planning for parental or adoption leave and supporting staff returning to work. The aim is to facilitate supportive conversations and ensure staff are provided with flexibility and support based on their needs to minimise impact on career continuity and encourage an inclusive working environment.

The Parental Leave Checklist includes:

- **Preparation** – information staff and supervisors should review to ensure understanding of parental leave entitlements and resources
- **Discussion – Transition to Parental Leave** - conversations staff and supervisors should have to support staff transitioning to parental leave
- **Discussion – Returning to Work** – conversations staff and supervisors should have to support staff returning to work

These guidelines have been developed by the College of Health and Enablement Athena SWAN (now Diversity & Inclusion) Working Group.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact your People and Culture Business Partner.

PREPARATION

Staff and supervisors should ensure they are aware of parental leave entitlements and resources including:

	The provisions in the Enterprise Agreement (Clause 33 – Parental Leave)
	Reviewing the information on the Flinders University website to understand support and resources available to support staff prior to commencing parental leave, including • Antenatal leave • Flexible employment • Special parking permit • Midwifery support • Pregnancy & parenting online community
	Instructions on how to request, amend or extend Parental Leave in Service One
	Reviewing the information on the Flinders University website to understand support and resources available to support staff during parental leave, including • Keeping in touch • Funding support schemes (replacement fund, and research support scheme)
	Reviewing the information on the Flinders University website to understand support and resources available to support staff returning to work from parental leave, including • Flexible employment • Facilities for feeding • Childcare on campus
	Reviewing relevant policies to support flexible employment, as well as the process to request flexible working arrangements (EA Clause 7) relating to caring responsibilities or pregnancy. Flexibility may include changes to hours, work pattern or location of work

DISCUSSION – TRANSITION TO PARENTAL LEAVE

Staff and supervisors should consider discussing the following areas before commencing parental leave:

- Regular wellbeing check-ins and supportive conversations
- Intended parental leave dates / length
  - Anticipated dates to support planning handover/backfill
  - Ensure understanding of eligibility, entitlements (including antenatal leave), and application process
- Handover and backfill of duties
  - Develop plan for duties requiring backfill / handover expectations / recruitment requirements
  - Explore funding support schemes (replacement fund / research support scheme)
- Keeping in touch / maintaining career continuity
  - Discuss how staff would like to keep in touch, acknowledging some staff will prefer no communication during their time on leave. Develop a plan by exploring:
    - Do they want to receive regular updates (if so, discuss preferred communication method, frequency, and type of information)?
    - Do they want to attend any conferences / workshops while on leave?
    - Do they want support to apply for academic promotion while on leave?
    - Do they want to access formal Keeping in Touch Days (staff can access up to 10 days to support training and connection while on unpaid parental leave – more information on Fair Work website)?
    - Are there any other activities staff want to engage in to support career continuity?
- Expectations / plans for returning to work (can be valuable to discuss, although does not have to be confirmed until 8 weeks prior to return)
- Flexible work arrangements (if required)
  - Staff can request flexible working arrangements during pregnancy (change to hours, work pattern, location)
  - Ensure awareness of antenatal leave entitlements to provide flexibility for pregnancy related reasons (e.g., attending appointments)
- Fitness for work (certificate required if working during 6 weeks prior to due date)

DISCUSSION – RETURNING TO WORK

Staff and supervisors should consider discussing the following areas before staff return to work from parental leave:

- Around 4-6 weeks prior to the staff member returning from leave, touch base to schedule a meeting to discuss their return to work plan, including:
  - Any changes to return date – instructions to submit extension (if required)
  - Any changes to work pattern / flexibility (if returning at reduced FTE, consider support required regarding backfill)
  - Breastfeeding facilities (if required) as well as breaks
  - Allocation of work / handover
  - Plans for any required training or development (e.g., new systems)
  - Any other supports they will require upon return
- Once the staff member returns, consider strategies that can support their transition
  - Providing time to catch up (e.g. check emails, complete required training, familiarise themselves with new processes, meet new team members)

- Ensure support is provided for feeding (e.g. avoid scheduling back to back classes, meetings etc). Supervisors should also review the 'Supporting Breastfeeding Employees: Checklist for Managers'
- Where possible ensure team meetings are scheduled to support staff with caring responsibilities (i.e. avoid early or late meetings), and encourage a family friendly work environment for all staff
- Schedule regular check-in conversations to ensure they feel supported and provide an opportunity to discuss any adjustments or additional support needed