

## **Employees' entitlement to Parent's Leave will increase from 7 weeks to 9 weeks from Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024**

Parent's Leave can be taken by a qualifying employee during the first two years of a child's life, or, in the case of adoption, within two years of the placement of a child with their family. Parent's leave is unpaid. However, depending on their PRSI contributions, employees who qualify for parent's leave may now claim parent's benefit from the Department of Social Protection for nine weeks. Parent's benefit is currently paid at a rate of €274 per week.

The leave will also apply retrospectively to parents who have taken seven weeks' Parent's Leave prior to August 2024 (i.e. they will now have an entitlement to an additional two weeks) if their child had not reached the age of two when the leave is taken (in the case of an adopted child it is still within two years of the date of placement of the child when the leave is taken).

### **Who is eligible to take Parent's Leave?**

- a parent of the child
- the spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of a parent of the child
- a parent of the child where the child is a donor-conceived child
- the qualifying adopter of the child
- the spouse, civil partner, or cohabitant as the case may be of the qualifying adopter of the child.

An employee needs a PPS number to apply for State Parent's Benefit and have the required number of PRSI contributions or credits. The child must also have a PPS number.

Parent's Benefit can be paid for either seven consecutive weeks or seven separate weeks within the first two years of the child's life.

There is no obligation on an employer to pay an employee while on parent's leave, although some employers may have a policy of 'topping-up' employees' pay during the leave.

### **Other points of note:**

- There is no minimum service requirement before a person is eligible to take the leave
- The leave cannot be transferred between parents.
- The leave may be taken in a single block or in periods of no less than one week
- An employee must notify their employer of their intention to take Parent's Leave and of intended dates no later than 6 weeks before the start date of the parent's leave.
- Parent's Leave is a statutory entitlement – an employer cannot refuse the leave but may postpone the leave for up to 12 weeks if satisfied the granting of the leave would have a substantial adverse effect on the operation of the business.

### **Reasons to postpone may include:**

- seasonal variations in the volume of work concerned,
- the unavailability of a person to carry out the duties of the employee in the employment during the period of the leave,
- the nature of the duties referred to in paragraph (b) the number of employees in the employment or the number thereof whose periods, or parts of whose periods, of parent's leave will fall within the period specified in the said notification, or
- any other relevant matters.

If this postponement results in the child reaching two years before the leave has been drawn down, the 104 weeks will be extended by up to 12 weeks.

Postponement must be in writing, no later than four weeks before the proposed date of

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commencement of the leave, specifying the grounds for the postponement. Consultation with the employee must take place before any notification of postponement.

Please click [HERE](#) for a sample template for Parent's Leave.