



Maternity Policy

Statement of Intent

Playhouse Pre-School is committed to supporting employees who are pregnant, taking maternity leave or returning to work following maternity leave.

This policy sets out employees' statutory maternity rights and the procedures to be followed before, during and after maternity leave. Playhouse Pre-School will comply with current employment legislation relating to pregnancy, maternity leave, maternity pay, health and safety, and protection from discrimination.

This policy applies to employees who are pregnant or taking maternity leave. It should be read alongside the employee's contract of employment and any relevant policies concerning flexible working, health and safety, absence and family leave.

Notification of Pregnancy

An employee does not have to inform Playhouse Pre-School that they are pregnant immediately. However, employees are encouraged to inform the Manager as early as they feel comfortable doing so, particularly where this will allow appropriate health and safety measures or workplace adjustments to be put in place.

To exercise the statutory right to maternity leave, the employee must normally notify the Manager by the end of the 15th week before the week in which the baby is due.

The employee should provide:

- the expected week of childbirth;
- the date on which they intend to start maternity leave; and
- confirmation of their pregnancy, where required for Statutory Maternity Pay (usually an MATB1 certificate).

Playhouse Pre-School will confirm the employee's maternity leave dates in writing within 28 days of receiving the required notification.

If the employee needs to change their intended maternity leave start date, they should give at least 28 days' notice where reasonably practicable.

Health and Safety During Pregnancy

Playhouse Pre-School has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of employees who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

Once an employee informs the Manager that they are pregnant, an appropriate individual health and safety risk assessment will be completed and reviewed as necessary throughout the pregnancy.

The assessment will consider the employee's individual circumstances and the work they undertake, including, where relevant:

- lifting and carrying children;
- moving equipment and furniture;

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- working at floor level;
- prolonged standing or physical activity;
- exposure to infectious illnesses;
- toileting and personal care;
- food preparation and other activities;
- working alone or opening/closing the setting;
- outdoor activities and outings;
- workplace stress and fatigue; and
- any other risks identified for the individual employee.

Where a significant risk is identified, Playhouse Pre-School will first consider whether the employee's working conditions or hours can be adjusted to remove or reduce the risk.

Where necessary, suitable alternative work will be considered. If a significant risk cannot be adequately controlled, the employee may have to be suspended from work on maternity grounds in accordance with employment law.

The risk assessment will be reviewed if the employee's circumstances, duties or working environment change.

The same principles will be considered for an employee who has recently given birth or is breastfeeding where relevant.

Antenatal Appointments

Employees have the right to reasonable paid time off to attend antenatal appointments made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered nurse.

This includes appointments connected with antenatal care and may include antenatal classes where they are recommended as part of the employee's care.

Except for the first appointment, Playhouse Pre-School may ask the employee to provide reasonable evidence of the appointment, such as an appointment card or other confirmation.

Appointments should be arranged, where reasonably possible, to minimise disruption to the setting. However, employees will not be required to use annual leave for statutory antenatal appointments.

Statutory Maternity Leave

Eligible employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks of Statutory Maternity Leave, regardless of how long they have worked for Playhouse Pre-School.

Statutory Maternity Leave consists of:

- Ordinary Maternity Leave - the first 26 weeks; and
- Additional Maternity Leave - the following 26 weeks.

An employee does not have to take the full 52 weeks.

Employees must take at least two weeks of compulsory maternity leave following the birth of their baby.

The earliest maternity leave can normally begin is 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth.

Maternity leave will also start automatically:

- on the day after the baby is born if the baby is born before the employee's planned maternity leave date; or
- in certain circumstances, where the employee is absent from work because of a pregnancy-related illness during the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth.

The employee should discuss their intended maternity leave arrangements with the Manager as early as possible.

Maternity Pay

Statutory Maternity Pay

Employees who meet the statutory eligibility requirements may receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks.

Eligibility for SMP depends on factors including:

- continuous employment with Playhouse Pre-School for at least 26 weeks up to the qualifying week;
- being employed during the qualifying week;
- average earnings meeting the statutory threshold;
- giving the required notice; and
- providing evidence of the expected date of childbirth where required.

SMP is normally paid:

- for the first six weeks at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings; and
- for the following 33 weeks at the statutory weekly rate or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

The statutory rate is subject to change each year. The current rate will be applied at the time maternity pay is due.

Playhouse Pre-School will provide the employee with written confirmation of their SMP entitlement and payment dates.

Employees who do not qualify for SMP may be entitled to Maternity Allowance or other financial support. Employees should obtain further information from GOV.UK or the relevant government service.

Keeping in Touch During Maternity Leave

Playhouse Pre-School recognises that employees may wish to maintain an appropriate level of contact during maternity leave.

Before maternity leave begins, the Manager and employee will discuss how they would like to keep in touch. This will take account of the employee's preferences and circumstances.

Playhouse Pre-School will ensure that employees on maternity leave are kept informed of important workplace matters that may affect them, such as:

- significant changes within the setting;
- relevant training opportunities;
- changes to policies or procedures;
- organisational changes;
- job opportunities; and
- arrangements for their return to work.

Information relating to an employee's maternity leave and personal circumstances will be treated confidentially.

Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days

An employee may work up to 10 Keeping in Touch (KIT) days during maternity leave without bringing their maternity leave to an end.

KIT days may be used for activities such as:

- attending staff meetings;
- completing training;
- undertaking relevant professional development;
- keeping up to date with changes at Playhouse Pre-School; or
- carrying out agreed work.

KIT days must be agreed between the employee and Playhouse Pre-School. Neither the employee nor the Manager can require the other to undertake a KIT day.

The type of work, date and payment arrangements will be agreed in advance.

Any work undertaken for part of a day counts as one KIT day for the purposes of the statutory limit.

An employee cannot work a KIT day during the compulsory two-week maternity leave period immediately following the birth.

Payment for KIT days will be agreed in advance and will comply with statutory requirements.

Annual Leave During Maternity Leave

Employees continue to accrue their contractual annual leave entitlement while on maternity leave.

Employees should discuss with the Manager how they wish to use any annual leave accrued before, during or after maternity leave.

Where appropriate, accrued annual leave may be taken immediately before or after maternity leave, subject to the normal arrangements for requesting annual leave.

Maternity leave does not remove an employee's entitlement to annual leave.

Pregnancy-Related Illness

If an employee is absent from work because of a pregnancy-related illness, this will be recorded and managed appropriately.

Pregnancy-related sickness absence will not automatically be treated in the same way as ordinary sickness absence for disciplinary or attendance-management purposes.

Where pregnancy-related sickness occurs during the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth, maternity leave may automatically begin from the relevant date in accordance with statutory requirements.

The employee should follow Playhouse Pre-School's normal absence reporting procedure unless there is a reason why this is not reasonably practicable.

Contact During Maternity Leave

Playhouse Pre-School will agree with the employee how and when contact will take place during maternity leave.

The employee can let the Manager know what type and frequency of contact they would prefer.

Playhouse Pre-School will continue to communicate information that the employee is legally entitled to receive, including important workplace changes and opportunities.

The employee's maternity status and personal information will be treated confidentially and will only be shared where necessary and appropriate.

Return to Work Following Maternity Leave

An employee who wishes to return on the date originally notified does not normally need to provide further confirmation.

If an employee wishes to return earlier than their planned return date, or wishes to change their planned return date, they should normally give at least eight weeks' notice.

Employees returning after up to 26 weeks of maternity leave are normally entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions.

Employees returning after more than 26 weeks of maternity leave are also normally entitled to return to the same job. Where this is not reasonably practicable because of a genuine reason, the employee will be offered suitable alternative employment on terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

Maternity leave will not be used as a reason to disadvantage an employee in their employment.

Playhouse Pre-School will consider any training or updates that are reasonably necessary to support the employee's return to work, particularly where policies, procedures, safeguarding arrangements, legislation or working practices have changed during their absence.

Flexible Working Following Maternity Leave

An employee returning from maternity leave may wish to request a change to their working arrangements, such as:

- different working hours;
- different working days;
- part-time working;
- changes to start or finish times; or
- another form of flexible working.

Any request will be considered in accordance with the statutory flexible working procedure and Playhouse Pre-School's Flexible Working Policy.

A request for flexible working will be considered fairly and without discrimination.

Breastfeeding and Expressing Milk

Playhouse Pre-School will support employees who wish to continue breastfeeding or expressing milk when they return to work.

Where required, the Manager will discuss suitable arrangements with the employee, including:

- appropriate time to express milk;
- a suitable private and hygienic space;
- safe storage of expressed breast milk; and
- any practical arrangements required to support the employee.

A toilet will not be used as a designated space for expressing milk.

Shared Parental Leave

Employees may be eligible to take Shared Parental Leave with their partner instead of taking some of their available maternity leave.

Shared Parental Leave can allow eligible parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of statutory pay.

Employees who are considering Shared Parental Leave should discuss their plans with the Manager as early as possible so that the appropriate statutory notice and arrangements can be followed.

Neonatal Care Leave

Where a baby requires neonatal care, an employee may have additional statutory rights to Neonatal Care Leave and, where eligible, Statutory Neonatal Care Pay.

These rights will be considered separately where they apply. Employees should speak to the Manager as soon as reasonably practicable if their baby requires or has required neonatal care.

Resignation Following Maternity Leave

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An employee who decides not to return to work following maternity leave must follow the resignation procedure and provide the notice required under their contract of employment. Statutory Maternity Pay does not have to be repaid if an employee chooses not to return to work.

Any contractual or enhanced maternity payment provided by Playhouse Pre-School would be subject to the terms of the employee's contract or any separate written agreement.

Protection from Discrimination

Playhouse Pre-School will not discriminate against an employee because of pregnancy, maternity leave or any associated statutory rights.

Employees will not be disadvantaged because they:

- are pregnant;
- take maternity leave;
- attend antenatal appointments;
- take KIT days;
- request flexible working following maternity leave; or
- exercise any other statutory maternity or family-related right.

Any concerns about discrimination, treatment at work or maternity rights should be raised with the Manager.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-School Broadwater.

Adopted on 22nd February 2016 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 29th September 2026 by Z. Munford