



Neonatal Care Leave Policy

1 Purpose

We recognise that the birth of a child requiring neonatal care can be an emotionally and physically challenging time for families. We wish to support our people through these moments with empathy, flexibility, and practical assistance. The purpose of neonatal leave is to ensure that our employees who have babies, or who are adopting babies who need to receive specialist care in hospital during the first weeks of life, can take leave to spend time with them during those first weeks, or at a later stage.

If you would prefer to speak to a member of the People team directly to talk through support, please do contact us on 01626 870317 (option 5) or via people@ivyeducationtrust.co.uk. Support is also available from your line manager. Any information shared with us about your circumstances will be treated as confidential. Details will only be shared with those who need to know to provide appropriate support in terms of your employment. If you would like wider members of the school/trust community to be aware and would like us to let them know on your behalf please do let us know.

2 Support

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The Trust recognises having a baby (babies) who is/are under neonatal care can be a worrying and stressful time. As a Trust we have an Employee Assistance Programme all staff can access. This service includes access to emotional and psychological support through counselling, financial guidance, legal enquiries and access to general help. Confidential help can be accessed 24/7, 365 days a year on 08000 856 148.

<https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/helping-you/telephone-support-counselling>

Unions: All the trade unions for teachers, school leaders and support staff can offer guidance and support to their members.

South West Neonatal network: Links to local support groups and charities

<https://www.swneonatalnetwork.co.uk/local-support-groups-charities>.

Bliss: Supporting parents and families of premature or sick babies: <https://www.bliss.org.uk> can provide support. Their contact email is hello@bliss.org.uk.

The Smallest Things: A premature baby charity dedicated to creating a better world for premature babies and their families after neonatal care <https://www.thesmallestthings.org/>

3 Definitions and scope

Neonatal care is the name given to care for newborn babies which starts in the first 28 (calendar) days after birth. This may be for:

- Hospital care - any medical care received in hospital (including a maternity home, as well as clinics and outpatients' departments).
- Any medical care received after leaving hospital where the baby has been an inpatient where the care continues after they have left hospital. The care must be under the direction of a consultant and include ongoing monitoring and visits of the child by health care professionals arranged by the hospital; or
- Palliative or end-of-life care.

Scope / eligibility:

All employees are eligible for **neonatal care leave** if their baby is born on or after 6th April 2025 and requires neonatal care for seven days or more.

Eligibility for neonatal care leave and pay is a day one right and can be taken in addition to other leave entitlements.

To be eligible you must be the baby's parent (or adopter or prospective adopter) or partner of the baby's primary carer and have caring responsibilities for the baby.

If you are already on maternity leave or adoption leave, neonatal care leave must be taken at the end of that entitlement.

The leave must be used to provide care for the baby.

If you have more than one baby in neonatal care at the same time, you can only claim neonatal care leave and pay for one baby, up to a maximum of 12 weeks. If the babies are in neonatal care at separate times, the employee will be able to claim for each of them, up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

If you are employed on a fixed term contract or your employment ends during your neonatal care leave, your employment and any payment of Contractual neonatal care leave will end

on the expiry date of the fixed term contract or end date of the contract, although statutory neonatal care pay will continue to be paid, if eligible.

3 Principles

Communication and support: We appreciate that if your baby is admitted to neonatal care this is likely to be a difficult time for you. Please do let us know and keep in touch, we can then ensure we have ongoing conversations about support available.

4 Neonatal care leave entitlement

The entitlement to neonatal care leave applies after the baby has been in neonatal care for 7 consecutive days (calendar days).

Neonatal care leave can only be taken to care for the baby who received neonatal care.

Both parents can take neonatal care leave.

If eligible, you will be entitled to neonatal care leave for the equivalent number of weeks your baby received neonatal care for, with a maximum per parent of 12 weeks, and a minimum of one week (7 calendar days).

Eligible employees must take the neonatal care leave before the end of the 68th week after the birth (*this is just under 16 months*).

How you can take neonatal care leave

While your baby is in neonatal care, or up to a week after leaving, leave can be taken in separate blocks of at least one week at a time.

After this, you must take leave in a continuous block.

Please note the leave is equivalent to the weeks of care received, not days.

When you can take neonatal care leave

Neonatal care Leave can be taken from the day after the first qualifying period (*the first 7 consecutive full days the child receives neonatal care*). This means that you can start neonatal leave from the 8th full day your baby is receiving neonatal care.

If a baby is admitted for a period of more than 7 days and then are readmitted for another period of more than 7 days within the 28-day window, both periods will count towards the total leave allowed.

Neonatal care leave can be taken at the time the baby is receiving the care or can be taken at a later date, *i.e., following a different type of family leave*.

Leave can be taken in 2 tiers:

Tier 1 leave: This is neonatal care leave taken when the baby is still receiving neonatal care, and including 1 week after the care has ended. It can be taken in one block **or** taken as non-consecutive weeks of at least one week.

Tier 2 leave: This is neonatal care leave taken outside tier 1, and before 68 weeks of the baby's birth/placement (*this is just under 16 months*). Tier 2 leave must be taken in consecutive weeks. It can be taken after another type of family leave.

Entitlement to Neonatal care pay

Employees who have 26 weeks of continuous service with Ivy Education Trust before the 'relevant week' and earn above the Lower Earning Limit over an 8-week period ending with the end of the 'relevant week' are eligible to receive statutory neonatal care pay at the statutory rate or 90% of weekly earnings whichever is lower, [see GOV.UK for current rates](#). They must still be in employment in the week before the neonatal care pay period. The 'relevant week' will be different depending on the type of family leave the employee is already entitled to.

Employees with one year of continuous service with Ivy Education Trust before the date your baby / babies are admitted to neonatal care will be entitled to take up to 12 weeks NCL on full contractual pay (enhanced neonatal care pay).

In line with our Maternity and Adoption Leave Policies, if, after receiving contractual neonatal care leave pay you decide not to return to work for at least 3 months after all the family leave has been taken, you will be required to repay the contractual pay element of the neonatal care leave pay received. You will not be asked to repay the statutory neonatal care payment received. In recognition of the circumstances in which an individual takes neonatal care leave there may be exceptional reasons when an employee is not required to repay the contractual pay, this will need to be authorised by a Headteacher/ or the CEO for the Central Team, in consultation with the People Team.

Employee rights

- All employees who take neonatal care leave have the right to return to work to the same job, or in the case of redundancy to a suitable alternative (where one exists).
- You would retain your terms and conditions of employment during any neonatal care leave, including accrual of annual leave where applicable.

5 Implementation - Procedure

How to apply: notification and communication

Please let your line manager know as soon as possible if you need to take neonatal care leave.

Neonatal care leave can be taken at different times and there are different notification procedures according to when the leave is taken.

The notice period will depend on whether you are taking leave:

- while your baby is in neonatal care, or up to a week after leaving (Tier 1 leave)
- more than a week after your baby has left neonatal care (Tier 2 leave)

We understand that it may be difficult to comply with notice periods, however, where possible we would ask that the following notice is provided:

Tier 1 leave

For a Tier 1 period of leave, you must notify the Trust as soon as reasonably practical and before the first day of absence.

The initial notification does not need to be in writing and the leave can be taken non-consecutively. The leave can be taken while the baby is receiving neonatal care and for 7 days after the baby is discharged. Verbal notification needs to be followed up within 28 days with written notification covering the information set out below.

Tier 2 leave

To take a week's leave you must give a minimum of 15 calendar days' notice

To take more than a week you must give 28 calendar days' notice. This leave can only be taken in one consecutive block.

Tier 2 leave is taken at the end of other family leave. If another type of family leave has started, i.e., maternity, adoption or statutory paternity leave it cannot be stopped to take neonatal leave, the neonatal leave will have to be added to the end of the relevant family leave.

The request for leave must be given in writing (email) and contain the following, the details of the person claiming leave and pay, the date(s) you want to start taking NCL and the number of weeks you want to take, the child's date of birth, evidence of adoption, the date the child started to receive neonatal care or dates if more than once, the date it ended (if it has, if it has not this must be followed up when care has ended) and a declaration that you intend to care for the child during the weeks requested and that you meet the eligibility criteria.

The Headteacher / CEO for the Trust Central team, will ensure that your written notification is recorded on your employee file.

Annual Leave and public/bank holidays entitlements

Any contractual annual leave and entitlement to public/bank holidays continues to accrue during NCL.

Annual leave can be carried over to a new leave year but must be taken by 31st August of that year. Equivalent arrangements can be made for employees who are on an April to March leave year.

It will not be possible for employees to obtain payment in lieu of any untaken annual leave instead of taking leave before or after neonatal care leave (and other family leave if applicable).

Pension

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) members

During any period of paid neonatal care leave, LGPS members will continue to pay basic pension contributions on the pay received. The Trust will pay contributions based on the pay they would have received had you been at work (Assumed Pensionable Pay). The service will count as normal for pension purposes, ie as if you had been at work.

During any period of unpaid neonatal care leave, pension will not accrue, unless the employee elects to pay Additional Pension Contributions (APC) by buying the 'lost' pension. If the employee elects to buy the "lost" pension by paying an APC within 30 days of returning to work, the Trust will pay two-thirds of the total cost with the remaining third being paid by the employee. If the election is not made within the 30-day period, then the employee will pay the full costs.

If the you wish to buy the 'lost' pension please read: [Buying Lost Pension for an Absence from 1st April 2014](#) which can be found on the Peninsula Pensions website. This explains how to calculate the cost and then what the process is.

Teachers Pensions

During the period of paid neonatal care leave, pension contributions will continue and will be deducted from the teacher's pay in the usual manner.

Any unpaid period will not be pensionable/reckonable.

If you would like further information on this please, this is available on line at www.teacherspensions.co.uk. The contact number for Teachers' Pensions is 0845 6066166.

6 Associated documentation / points of reference

Maternity policy

Shared parental leave

Adoption leave

Acas guidance: [Pay - Neonatal care leave and pay - Acas](#)

7 Monitoring, review and evaluation

This policy was originally adopted by the trustees of Ivy Education Trust on 16 December 2025. The policy will be reviewed periodically, and the Trade Unions will be consulted about any proposed changes.

POLICY HISTORY/AMENDMENT RECORD

Date	Reviewed by	Nature of review	Next review
Nov 2025	DoP, P&V Committee	New policy	Nov 2028 or sooner as required.