

**PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY FOR MEMBERS OF CHAMBERS**

**Definition**

1. “**Parental leave**” refers to leave taken by the main carer of a child following birth or adoption. This could be the mother, father or adoptive parent of either sex.

**Aims and purpose**

1. This policy aims to:
	1. encourage members following parental leave to return to Chambers and continue to build successful practices;
	2. prevent discrimination on grounds of parental responsibility;
	3. encourage and support members taking time off following the birth or adoption of a child without suffering financial hardship;
	4. comply with the requirements of rule C110(3)k of Section D of Part 2 of the Bar Standards Board Handbook and other relevant BSB rules and guidance.

**Circulation**

1. This policy shall be circulated to all members, clerks and staff, all of whom are required to:
	* 1. read and understand the policy; and
		2. understand their role in relation to the policy.

**Review**

1. This policy shall be reviewed for effectiveness by Chambers’ Equality and Diversity Officer every two years.

**Policy**

1. Every member of chambers is entitled to return to Chambers within a period of one year after giving birth or adopting a child for whom they are the primary carer.
2. Parental leave may extend for up to 2 years after the date of birth or adoption. In the event of subsequent children being born or adopted, parental leave may extend up to 4 years without the member returning to Chambers. The 4-year period shall be increased as necessary to permit a member to take at least 1 year of parental leave per birth or adoption.
3. Members are encouraged to inform their clerks of their intention to take a period of parental leave not less than 2 months before the commencement of the period of leave, indicating the estimated commencement date and estimated date of return and to update such estimates if they change.
4. If a member wishes to take parental leave for a period longer than permitted under paragraph 6 above, he or she must apply in writing to the Management Committee for permission, explaining in sufficient detail the reasons for such application.
5. Each application will be considered on its merits. In exercising its discretion, the Management Committee will comply with any applicable BSB rules on equality and diversity and have regard to any applicable BSB guidance, and, in particular, exercise its discretion in a way that does not discriminate unlawfully on prohibited grounds.
6. If a member is absent from Chambers for longer than permitted under paragraph 6 above without agreeing an extension with the Management Committee, his or her right to return to Chambers ceases.
7. Where membership ceases under paragraph 10 above, a former member may reapply to Chambers in the usual way.

**Arrangements during parental leave**

1. Members on parental leave are encouraged to maintain contact with Chambers. The Senior Clerk and Heads of Practice Groups will ensure that members on parental leave are:
	1. offered opportunities to do appropriate work during parental leave, as requested by the member;
	2. given access to Chambers’ IT resources invited to Chambers’ training events, social occasions, marketing events and meetings;
	3. consulted on any significant issues affecting Chambers as any member not on parental leave would be; and
	4. given all necessary clerking and other support to assist with the re- establishment of her or his practice on return to work, including (where requested) the arrangement of a meeting with her or his clerking team within two weeks before returning to work.
	5. Informed of chambers meetings. Members on parental leave will continue to have full rights to attend and vote at such meetings.
2. A member of chambers taking a period of parental leave is entitled up to 12 months free of chambers rent.
3. Any earnings received during parental leave, or on returning from parental leave, will be subject to the payment of Chambers’ expenses and clerks’ fees in the usual way.
4. Informal working arrangements during a period of leave do not affect a member’s entitlement to the 12 month period free of rent, provided that the Head of Chambers is kept informed of the arrangements by the member of chamber and is satisfied that the level of work being undertaken does not constitute a return to practice.
5. Members taking parental leave are encouraged to satisfy the CPD requirements which would be necessary for the retention of their Practising Certificate, whether or not they retain their Practising Certificate during parental leave.

**Return from leave**

1. It is the policy of Chavasse Court Chamber to enable parents to work reduced hours on return from a period of parental or adoption leave. This should be discussed with chambers’ management committee and clerks.

**Complaints**

1. Any member who wishes to make a complaint regarding a breach of this policy or in relation to this policy should in the first instance contact Chambers’ Equality and Diversity Officer. Members are also entitled to pursue a complaint under Chambers’ grievance procedure, which is contained in a separate document.