Applecroft School



Neonatal Care Policy

Review Cycle:	**Annually**
Person Responsible:	**Finance & Business Manager**
Date of Issue:	**October 2026**
Review Date:	**October 2027**

The Professional Associations and/or Trade Unions have been consulted on this policy, and the school has adopted the contents based on HFL Education recommendation.

Neonatal Care Policy

1) Introduction:

School Vision:
'To be a positive and inspiring community that nurtures each individual and empowers leaders for life'.

School Mission Statement:
'Nurturing Potential, Inspiring Minds, Changing Lives'.

School Values:

- Ambition and Leadership
- Kindness and Supportiveness
- Respect and Honesty
- Determination and Resilience.

2) Scope:

We recognise the challenges that parents face when their newborns require extended hospital stays and ensuring they can be present at critical times.

The Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act is effective from 6th April 2025.

Neonatal care is defined within this policy, as medical care received in hospital and medical care received in any other place which meets the following criteria;

- The child was an inpatient in hospital and the care needs to continue after leaving hospital
- the care is under the direction of a consultant; and
- the care includes ongoing monitoring by and visits to the child from healthcare professionals arranged by the hospital where your child was an inpatient.
- palliative or end of life care.

This policy applies to all our employees. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for us.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

3) Eligibility for neonatal care leave:

An employee has a statutory right to neonatal care leave if, at the date of the child's birth, they:

- are the child's parent and/or intended parent and have the responsibility for the upbringing of the child; or
- are the partner of the child's mother and have the responsibility for the upbringing of the child (apart from the mother).

Neonatal care leave may be taken where a child has been adopted, including from overseas, as well as in parental order (surrogacy) cases.

The baby's neonatal care must start within 28 days of birth (the 28 days are counted from the day after the child is born) and the time the baby is admitted for must last for a continuous period of 7 days or more.

The new right will only apply to children who are born on or after 6th April 2025 and is a day one entitlement so will apply to all employees regardless of how long they have worked for us. For those eligible you will have the right to one week's neonatal leave for every week your child spends in neonatal care capped at a

maximum of 12 weeks, even if multiple children from the same pregnancy require neonatal care. A week is defined as a period of 7 days starting from the day after the neonatal care began.

4) How to take neonatal care leave

Neonatal care leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week.

The leave can be taken when the child is still receiving neonatal care or after any other parental leave that the parent may be eligible for such as maternity leave.

Neonatal care leave may be taken in addition to other types of statutory family leave but must be taken within the first 68 weeks of a child's birth.

Neonatal care leave can be taken in two tiers:

Tier 1 – This relates to the period beginning with the day the child starts receiving neonatal care and ends with the 7th day after the child stops receiving neonatal care ie the initial care from birth.

Where an employee intends to be absent in their tier 1 period, they must give notice in respect of each week of such leave;

- Before the employee is due to start work on the employee's first day of absence from work in that week, or
- When it is not reasonably practicable for the employee to give notice in that week, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so.

You can take the neonatal care leave in one continuous block or a number of non-continuous blocks of a minimum of one week at a time.

If the newborn stops receiving care but then resumes neonatal care within 28 days of birth a subsequent Tier 1 period begins.

There is not a requirement to provide for such notice to be in writing.

Tier 2 – This relates to any period of time after the Tier 1 period ends and extends up to 68 weeks after the baby's birth.

Where an employee intends to be absent in the tier 2 period, notice must be given in writing;

- For a single week of neonatal care leave, employees must give no less than 15 days' notice before the first day of the week to which the original notice relates.
- For two or more consecutive weeks of neonatal care leave taken, notice must be given no later than 28 days before the first day of the neonatal care leave to which the notice relates.

Leave must be taken in one continuous block and there is a requirement to provide for such notice in writing.

5) Withdrawing notice of taking leave

When an employee has given notice to take leave in the tier 2 period, they may also withdraw the original notice in writing and not take this leave.

If an original notice was given relating to one week – a notice withdrawal must be given by the employee at least 15 days before the first day of the week in which the original notice relates to.

If an original notice was given relating to two or more consecutive weeks – a notice withdrawal must be given at least 28 days before the first day of the first week to which the original notice relates to.

6) Statutory neonatal care pay

There will be a new statutory payment, Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP) for parents taking time away from work following a child's admission into neonatal care.

To be eligible for statutory neonatal care pay;

- The employee must have a parental or other personal relationship with a child who is receiving, or has received, neonatal care. This includes adoption and parental order cases.
- The neonatal care must begin within 28 days of the child's birth and last for a continuous period of at least seven days.
- The employee must have at least 26 weeks' continuous service ending with the relevant week. The relevant week in birth cases is the week immediately preceding the 14th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth. In adoption cases the week in which the adopter is notified of being matched with the child for the purposes of adoption and in any other cases, the week immediately before the week in which the neonatal care starts.
- The employee must have received normal weekly earnings, for a period of eight weeks ending with the relevant week, of not less than the lower earnings limit.
- SNCP is paid at the same rate as statutory paternity pay or statutory shared parental pay.
- SNCP may be paid for a maximum of 12 weeks and is only payable within the first 68 weeks after the child's birth.
- Employees must comply with the notice requirements.

Provided you meet the eligibility criteria, the Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP) will be paid at the statutory rate or at 90% of average earnings calculated over a set reference period, whichever is lower, whilst absent from work.

Statutory Neonatal care pay is not payable in any week during any part of which the employee is entitled to receive statutory sick pay.

7) Returning to work after neonatal care leave

You are entitled to return to work on the same terms and conditions, and the same or equivalent role, as if you had not been on Neonatal care leave. This applies to a period of neonatal care leave or a combined period of qualifying family related statutory leave if you are absent from work for a period of 26 weeks or less. Your continuity of employment is not affected.

If you return from a period of neonatal care leave that follows on immediately from another period of statutory leave (such as maternity, adoption, paternity, parental bereavement or shared parental leave) and your total time on leave is more than 26 weeks, you have the right to return to the same job wherever possible. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, we will offer you a suitable alternative job on terms and conditions that are no less favourable and in priority to other employees in redundancy situation. Employees are protected from detriment or dismissal relating to neonatal care leave.

This also applies if you have taken neonatal care leave consecutively with a single period of more than four weeks of ordinary parental leave.

8) Contact during neonatal care leave

It is a requirement that a reasonable level of contact between ourselves is maintained during your neonatal care leave. This may be to discuss your plans for taking leave, to discuss any special arrangements to ease your time away from work, or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

9) Flexible working

Prior to or when you return from a period of neonatal care leave, if you wish to be considered for a change in your working pattern, you must apply in writing under the Flexible Working Policy.

10) Requesting support

We recognise that this will be a very challenging time for you and if you are finding it difficult, please speak with your line manager.