

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

Are they fair to all staff?

AAB **PEOPLE**

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As most Clubs should know, the policies that usually make up the family-friendly section of their Employee Handbooks are:

- Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental
- Adoption
- Parental leave
- Parental bereavement leave
- Time off for dependants
- Flexible working

As you can see, there are many options available for employees with childcare responsibilities for time off when they need it. However, as work life balance becomes a more important focus for Clubs, staff without childcare responsibilities are beginning to vocalise their concerns about inequality. So how do we approach addressing these concerns?

Below are some key areas that Clubs should keep in mind when discussing these concerns:

Firstly, we should understand this can be a sensitive topic.

The choice to have or not to have children is a personal and private matter. This does not need to be explained by an employee or asked by a Club. There might also be underlying issues as to why certain employees do not have childcare responsibilities and so no assumptions should be made or communicated. Listen to why they feel they are treated unequally, address any points raised and what find out what else they would suggest the Club could reasonably do to make them feel supported.

Flexible working is not just for childcare responsibilities

Any employee within the Club can apply for flexible working as long as they have worked for the Club continuously for 26 weeks before request. Although a common reason, not all flexible working requests are due to accommodating childcare needs. Each request should get the same amount of consideration, if it is for a childcare reason or not. If it cannot be accepted, details of why should be provided to the employee.

GET IN TOUCH

If you have any questions, or would like further support, please get in touch with Georgia Wilson by calling 0141 221 2984 or by email at georgia.wilson@aab.uk.

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Time off for dependants is for all types of dependants

Employees who need to take time off for dependants but do not have childcare responsibilities should not be treated unfavourably. We should speak with the employee on their return about the absence and any support we can provide and their relationship to the dependant. It may be that it is their elderly grandparent that they look after and no one else was available. Just as with childcare reasons, we should probe to see if there was no alternative to them leaving and for them to assess if there are any plans they can put in place to prevent this from reoccurring. The introduction of Hybrid working should help to alleviate the need for time off. This should be accessible to all employees with or without childcare responsibilities.

We need to keep in mind this is legislation

The bottom line to this issue is that in UK legislation there is a requirement for Clubs to provide paid leave for new parents (maternity, paternity etc.) and allow reasonable time off (although unpaid). This is in place to help parents who are unable to attend work due to their childcare responsibilities. But there is not the same legislation for those without childcare responsibilities.

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