

St Anne's College

Fertility treatment leave policy

This framework aims to support women who are undergoing fertility treatment, and clarifies the types of leave that are available. The College recognises the emotional and physical challenges which may arise from undergoing fertility treatments, and supports members of staff who wish to undertake fertility treatment. The College's Fertility Treatment Leave framework is intended to assist eligible staff members in the logistical and emotional aspects of undergoing treatment.

Eligibility and entitlement

Investigations regarding infertility, consultations exploring treatment options and medical interventions aimed at assisting conception should be regarded as medical appointments and entitlement to time off to attend such appointments is covered by the College's usual procedures. In addition, female members of staff who have worked continuously at the College for 26 weeks or more, and who are personally undergoing fertility treatment are entitled to up to 2 working days' of paid leave in any 12 month period. This might be used, for example, to allow the individual some time to deal with the physical or emotional effects of fertility investigations or interventions.

In the case of IVF, once a fertilised egg has been implanted in the uterus, the woman is deemed legally to be pregnant. From that time, she is legally protected from unfavourable treatment for the duration of her pregnancy, and is entitled to time off for antenatal care and pregnancy-related sickness, as per the College's maternity leave guidance.

In the unfortunate event that the IVF cycle is not successful, or the pregnancy is not sustained, the woman remains legally protected for a further 2 weeks. In the event that she needs to take time away from the workplace, the woman may use fertility leave or sickness leave as appropriate.

The entitlement does not cover partners of women undergoing fertility treatment. Partners of expectant mothers are entitled to unpaid leave for up to two antenatal appointments.

Requesting leave

Eligible employees are encouraged to discuss their situation with their line manager or HR. Managers should treat such information with sensitivity and confidentiality. In common with other leave options, staff should request leave in advance where possible. The College recognises that eligible members of staff may require unforeseen time off before or after fertility treatment. Whilst the normal arrangements concerning absence notification will apply, employees may request retrospectively that up to 2 days of their absence is treated as fertility treatment leave upon their return to work. Leave for fertility treatment is designed to be flexible, and managers are advised to discuss the leave options available with the employee, and to grant leave at their discretion and with sensitivity. Managers should bear in mind the usual Health and Safety procedures associated with women who are or who may be pregnant, and should follow the College's guidance on this.

Staff members may wish to combine the 2 days' fertility treatment leave with other types of leave to suit their needs. This may include annual leave, unpaid leave, time off for medical

appointments and sickness leave. Below are examples of how an employee might structure their leave for the purposes of undergoing fertility treatment.

Type of leave - Medical Appointment

Reason this type of leave might be used: Investigating reasons for infertility; initial exploratory consultations regarding treatment options; collecting ova; ova implantation; IUI; other treatment options

Type of leave - Fertility treatment leave

Reason this type of leave might be used: Monitoring; taking time to rest after a procedure, or to recover from some of the emotional effects

Type of leave - Sickness leave

Reason this type of leave might be used: Physically recovering from the effects of a procedure; illness arising from pregnancy; illness arising due to fertility treatment

Type of leave - Annual leave

Reason this type of leave might be used: Need for leave associated with fertility treatment once the annual 2 day entitlement has been exhausted