GEMS TINEY HOME NURSERY

HOME FROM HOME CHILDCARE

Maternity Policy

Purpose and scope

Gems tiney Home Nursery supports pregnant employees, those on maternity leave and those returning to work, while maintaining safe care for children. This policy describes employee rights and employer arrangements. Gemma's own position as a self-employed childminder, and genuine volunteer arrangements, differ from employee entitlements and are considered separately.

Notification and planning

An employee should tell Gemma as early as they feel able so risks and support can be discussed. Normally, by the end of the fifteenth week before the expected week of childbirth, they must notify the due date and intended leave start date, or as soon as reasonably practicable if that is not possible. Gemma confirms leave dates in writing within 28 days.

Pregnancy information is handled sensitively and shared only where needed. We discuss health advice, work adjustments, leave, reasonable contact, cover and the employee's preferences. Employees are entitled to reasonable paid time off for antenatal care advised by an appropriate healthcare professional, subject to applicable evidence rules.

Health and safety

Once notified in writing of pregnancy, recent birth or breastfeeding, Gemma carries out an individual risk assessment and shares it with the employee. It is reviewed as circumstances change. Risks include lifting children or equipment, prolonged standing,

fatigue, infection, chemicals, animal waste, temperature and the ability to respond in an emergency.

We first remove or control a risk, then adjust working conditions or hours where needed. If that is insufficient, suitable alternative work on the same terms, including pay, is considered. If no safe suitable alternative is available, an employee is suspended on full pay for as long as necessary under the applicable health and safety requirements. This is not treated as ordinary sickness absence.

Rest facilities and arrangements for expressing or storing milk are discussed on return, with privacy and hygiene protected. Pregnancy-related illness is recorded separately from other sickness for relevant employment decisions.

Leave entitlement and start dates

Eligible employees may take up to 52 weeks' statutory maternity leave, comprising 26 weeks' ordinary and 26 weeks' additional leave, regardless of length of service. At least two weeks after birth are compulsory for this setting.

Leave can normally start from 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. It starts automatically the day after an early birth, or where the statutory rule for pregnancy-related absence in the final four weeks before the expected week applies. Changes to the planned start date normally need 28 days' notice where practicable.

Pay and employment benefits

Statutory Maternity Pay is paid for up to 39 weeks if the employee meets the service, earnings and notice conditions. Payroll uses the applicable statutory rates and rules at the time; any contractual enhancement is confirmed separately. The employee normally gives 28 days' notice for pay and appropriate pregnancy evidence, such as MATB1.

Gemma confirms entitlement and payment details and supplies form SMP1 within the required timescale if SMP is refused. The employee may be able to claim Maternity Allowance through the relevant government route; it is not an employer-paid substitute.

Contractual terms other than normal pay continue as required by law, including holiday accrual. We discuss holiday dates and applicable pension contributions. Employees must not be disadvantaged because of pregnancy or maternity leave, and any redundancy situation must follow the special protections and current law.

Contact and keeping in touch days

Before leave we agree reasonable contact and how the employee will receive important workplace information. Up to ten keeping in touch days may be worked by mutual agreement without ending maternity leave, subject to the statutory pay rules. Neither party can insist on them.

We agree duties, hours and pay in advance and explain how SMP is treated. Any work on a day counts as a whole KIT day for the ten-day limit. No work is carried out during compulsory maternity leave.

Returning to work

An employee returning on the confirmed expected date does not have to give eight weeks' notice simply to return then. At least eight weeks' notice is normally needed to change that return date. We arrange a discussion about duties, training, wellbeing, breastfeeding needs and safe work arrangements.

After up to 26 weeks' leave the employee has the right to return to the same job on the same terms. After longer maternity leave, the same job is the starting point; if return to it is not reasonably practicable, a suitable appropriate alternative on no less favourable terms must be provided as required by law.

Employees can make a statutory flexible working request from the first day of employment, including before return. Requests are considered under the current legal process, with consultation before refusal, rather than treated as available only after maternity leave. Other relevant family leave options can be discussed separately.

Cover concerns and review

Maternity cover is planned with suitable recruitment, checks, training, first aid, ratios and agency requirements. Cover does not remove the employee's return rights, and an assistant's sole care cannot exceed the permitted two hours per day merely to cover leave.

Employees should raise concerns with Gemma under the relevant workplace procedures and may seek independent Acas advice. This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if law changes. References: GOV.UK Maternity pay and leave and employer guide; HSE Protecting pregnant workers and new mothers; Acas statutory maternity leave and pay guidance.

Policy owner: Gemma Bayley
Reviewed: November 2026
Next review due: November 2027