

## EDIA Parents and Carers Discussion Group Notes and Action Points

### CONFERENCES/MEETINGS

Athena Swan actions include to try and get funding for extra childcare for academics attending Conference – ongoing

A new approach was proposed: to lobby University, Research Councils etc to not fund attendance at conferences where there is not an option of attending online. Recent online meetings have had more diverse attendance. Would tax payers be happy to know how much money is spent to get academics/researchers to fly/stay and attend in person? One option would be to boycott meetings where an online meeting isn't an option.

Online conferences and meetings allow people on Parental/Caring leave to attend if they want to. There is an issue with anonymous voting at School Board meetings but there are ways around this – we should investigate whether the university constitution allows this.

**ACTION: Take the proposal that all meetings/events should offer an online alternative to all meetings after the pandemic to the Department Leadership Team and School EDI Committee.**

A letter is going to the Research Councils to propose that they only fund conferences that offer an online option.

Timings of meetings need to take in to account caring commitments. Although core hours are 10 – 4, it would be better if meetings stuck to 10 – 2 as this will ensure that more people are available. Many parents cannot attend meetings around the end of the school day, and most meetings are not compulsory, so if you have caring commitments you just don't attend.

**ACTION: Take proposal to Dept/School that they should take the lead in implementing a rule that the norm is to hold meetings 10 – 2 where possible. If meetings *have* to be scheduled after 2, more notice should be given to allow parents to make childcare arrangements.**

### PARENTAL LEAVE

Details of support for maternity/paternity/shared parental leave are hidden and not easily accessible. Easily accessible information should be available on the Department Intranet and University Internet pages. It would be good to include case studies to further emphasise the point that it is possible and it is a valuable thing to do.

**ACTION: Take proposal to Dept/School managers that line managers should proactively encourage staff to take shared parental leave when they know an employee is going to become a parent.**

**ACTION: Include details of support for parents and carers, including case studies on the updated Dept of Materials Intranet pages**

It is important to highlight Unpaid Parental Leave. <https://www.gov.uk/parental-leave/entitlement>  
Parental leave is unpaid. You're entitled to 18 weeks' leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday. The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child (unless the employer agrees otherwise). You must take parental leave as whole weeks (eg 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless your employer agrees otherwise or if your child is disabled. You don't have to take all the leave at once. A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over 7 days.

**ACTION: Include details of Unpaid Parental Leave on the Intranet**

### **BRINGING CHILDREN INTO WORK**

There used to be a lot of emphasis of making the family part of the experience of working at the university – bringing children to work day was a great way of doing this. It has been stopped because of health and safety concerns.

It has been a nice part of lock down to see the occasional family member on Zoom calls, showing the human side of colleagues/managers/Department leaders.

**ACTION: Take proposal to Dept/School that bringing kids to work is brought back.**

### **BREASTFEEDING FACILITIES**

There are very few/no breastfeeding facilities on North Campus. People are reduced to doing it in toilets, which is not acceptable.

**ACTION: Propose that more breastfeeding friendly areas are created, and made more accessible.**

### **WORKING HOURS AND WORK PLACE**

Can timetables take into account caring commitments? We are not sure if it is possible with central timetabling, but it should be possible to feed this in. HR Services record who has recently taken parental leave, so it should be possible for flexibility to be built in automatically rather than requiring parents to request priority. Working hours for timetabled for classes are until 6pm, whereas the University's own nursery shuts at 5.30pm – this can make it impossible for some staff to fulfil their teaching commitments if their classes are scheduled 5-6 pm

PS Staff are not given the chance to work flexibly and are told to complete work within hours but are still expected to work until work is done – it is impossible to complete all duties within the normal working day at busy times such as during the exam period. During lockdown some PS staff were told they had to go in to the University and they were not consulted on this decision. PS staff are often told that working hours have to be fair to all and that changes can't be made for carers, but the opportunity to work flexibly would benefit *everyone*. Managers should be taught how to manage and accommodate different people with different working requirements.

**ACTION: The above points are to be raised with the Department Leadership Team and with the School EDI Committee**

### **HOW TO MANAGE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS**

A question was asked on how to manage childcare in school holidays.

**ACTION: Create an advice sheet for parents/carers that gives advice/guidance and include this on the University webpages**