

7.1 Special Leave

Paid Leave for Family Illness/Injury

In the event of serious and unforeseen illness of or injury to a staff member's immediate relative (and where force majeure leave has been exhausted or does not apply), a staff member **may** be granted special leave with pay in any year up to the following limits at the discretion of the line manager: (ref: [Circular 05/2010](#))

- (a) 5 working days in the case of a spouse, child (including adoptive child or child to whom the staff member is in 'loco parentis') or partner (including co-habiting partner or same sex partner)
- (b) 3 working days in the case of other immediate relative*

*For the purpose of special leave for family illness/injury, the definition of immediate relative includes: father, step-father, mother, step-mother, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandmother and grandfather

The amount of special leave granted to a staff member in any one year, together with their annual leave entitlement (excluding leave carried over), and any force majeure leave, will not exceed a total of 26 days. Where the annual leave allowance of the staff member has been exhausted and they are the only person who can offer the necessary support, the line manager will look at the specific case to establish whether or not special leave will be granted.

The line manager should, before granting such leave, satisfy themselves that the circumstances which give rise to the application are justified. Force Majeure leave where applicable should be claimed before any leave under this provision.

Special Leave may only be granted at the time of the illness or injury. A staff member who is absent on statutory or non-statutory leave may not be granted special leave at the end of, or instead of that leave.

Staff members on annual leave at the time of the illness or injury may be allowed special leave, subject to the limits and conditions applying to the granting of such leave, instead of annual leave. In such cases the staff member's annual leave entitlement will be adjusted accordingly.

Where the line manager is satisfied that special circumstances exist, special leave may be granted in the event of the serious and unforeseen illness or injury of a more distant relative.

How to apply

- A staff member must notify their line manager as soon as is practicably possible, that they wish to avail of Special Leave.
- Due to the urgency of such leave, the leave may be granted verbally by the staff member's line manager
- On the staff member's return to work, they should create a new leave request for special leave on Employee Self Service
- The leave will be noted on the staff member's personnel file.

Unpaid Leave for Domestic Reasons

A staff member may be granted special leave without pay for domestic reasons, subject to the following conditions and upper limits:

- (a) 6 months to cope with difficulties arising from the death or serious illness of an immediate relative*;
- (b) 6 months to care for an immediate relative* during sickness or old age (if no suitable person other than the staff member is able to provide the care);
- (c) 6 months to cope with difficulties arising from the birth of a child with a serious illness;
- (d) 2 months to travel abroad to visit an immediate relative* who is suffering from serious and unforeseen illness (provided the staff member is the only person who can make the visit);
- (e) To deal with urgent domestic problems other than those mentioned above.

The provisions of this unpaid leave, which relate to death, old age and illness of an immediate relative* may also be applied, in exceptional circumstances, in respect of more distant relatives.

*The definition of an immediate relative includes: father, step-father, mother, step-mother, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandmother and grandfather.

The granting of special leave (paid or unpaid) is subject to the operating requirements of Teagasc not being adversely affected. In considering the granting of special leave, Teagasc should:

- (a) Be satisfied that the circumstances which give rise to the application are justified;
- (b) Grant the maximum period of paid or unpaid leave only where the situation warrants this; and
- (c) Ensure that the different forms of leave are not combined to as to exceed the maximum period allowable in a particular situation

Special leave without pay for domestic reasons does not reckon as service for the purposes of increments, annual leave or superannuation.

How to apply

- A staff member must notify their line manager as soon as is practicably possible, that they wish to avail of Unpaid Leave.
- If the line manager is agreeable to granting the unpaid leave, the "Special Unpaid Leave Application Form", [available here](#), should be completed, signed by the line manager and submitted to schemes@teagasc.ie
- It is important that the HR Department is notified as soon as possible, so that the staff member's salary can be adjusted accordingly.
- The leave will be noted on the staff member's personnel file.

Version	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Policy Owner
2.0	October 2020	Change to application process	HR