



**MORECAMBE  
FOOTBALL  
CLUB**

# **MFC MATERNITY LEAVE POLICY**

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## **Maternity Leave Policy**

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## **Maternity Leave Policy**

This policy provides a set of guidelines which replicate your rights and benefits available to Colleagues who become mothers or are expecting a child.

Your right to Maternity Leave will be in accordance with the current relevant statutory regulations which are summarised below.

This policy is designed to support work-life balance and promote family-friendly practices at Morecambe Football Club.

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### **Statutory Maternity Leave (SML) Explained:**

You are entitled to take up to 26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) and up to 26 weeks' Additional Maternity Leave (AML), this is in total your SML. AML begins on the day after OML ends.

Your OML can start at any time after the beginning of the 11th week before your Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

SML will start on whichever is the earliest of:

- your chosen start date (no earlier than the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> week before EWC);
- the day after you give birth; or
- the day after any day on which you are absent for a pregnancy-related reason in the four weeks before the EWC.

Should you give birth before your SML was due to start, you must notify us in writing of the date of the birth as soon as reasonably practicable.

During the period of SML, your contract of employment continues in force and you are entitled to receive all your contractual benefits, except for:

- a) salary/wage; and
- b) pension contributions during the 13 weeks of unpaid AML.

You are encouraged to take any outstanding annual leave due to you before the commencement of your OML.





**Notification:**

On becoming pregnant, you should inform your Line Manager as soon as possible and no later than the end of the 15th week before your EWC (the 'qualifying week') or as soon as reasonably practicable afterwards, you must inform us in writing via letter or email confirming:

- the fact that you are pregnant;
- your EWC; and
- the date on which you intend to start your SML.

You must also provide us with a MAT B1 form, confirming your EWC.

The form must provide your doctor's name and address or your midwife's name and registration number. (Your midwife or GP will normally issue this to you around the 20th week of pregnancy).

You are permitted to bring forward your SML start date, provided that you advise us in writing at least 28 days before the new start date. You may also postpone your SML start date, provided that you advise us in writing at least 28 days before the original proposed start date.

In either case, if it is not possible to advise us with 28 days' notice of the change in date, the notice may be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable.

We will respond in writing to your notification of your SML plans within 28 days. We shall confirm the date on which you will be expected to return to work if taking your full 52-week entitlement to SML.

**Maternity Risk Assessment:**

Once you have informed us of your pregnancy, our HR Manager will meet with you to conduct a maternity risk assessment which will indicate if your job role should be temporarily amended. The terms of your contract or assignment will not change, for example your pay will remain the same.

**Antenatal Care:**

After you have advised us of your pregnancy, you will be entitled to take reasonable paid time off work to attend antenatal appointments as advised by your doctor, registered midwife or registered health visitor. Evidence of the appointments may be requested. You should endeavour to give your Line Manager as much notice as possible of antenatal appointments. If possible, such appointments should be arranged as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.

**Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023:**

The Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023 aims to provide additional leave and pay for eligible Colleagues with babies who are receiving neonatal care.

A baby who is born prematurely or sick will receive neonatal care in hospital or another agreed care setting. Neonatal care leave will be available to Colleagues that are parents of babies who are admitted into hospital up to the age of 28 days, and who have a continuous stay in hospital of seven (7) full days or more. There is no lead-time in employment and as such neonatal care will apply from day one (1). Parents who meet the





qualifying criteria may be eligible to take up to **12 weeks** of extra leave and pay. Should this apply to you, contact your Line Manager and/or HR Manager. Equally, Fathers and Partners have the flexibility to share caring responsibilities by increasing the amount of paid leave they can access beyond the usual two (2) weeks of Paternity Leave.

#### **Transferring to Shared Parental Leave:**

You may be entitled to curtail your SML and opt into the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme.

You must give us at least eight weeks' written notice to end your SML (known as a curtailment notice). The notice must state the date your SML will end. You can give the notice before or after SML starts, but you must take at least two weeks' SML.

Shared Parental Leave is up to 50 weeks, which can be shared between the mother and spouse /partner/civil partner during the first year following the birth, provided you both satisfy the eligibility requirements.

For further information, please contact HR.

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#### **Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP):**

**From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024, SMP is a day one (1) right and you no longer need to have 26 weeks service at week 15 of your pregnancy.**

You will qualify for SMP if:

- You are an employee of the Club, and earn, on average, more than the lower earnings limit, [currently set at £123 per week, 2023-2024]. You are entitled to SMP if your average weekly earnings have been more than the lower earnings limit, on average, for 8 weeks before your qualifying week; and
- Provide us with the correct notice and proof of pregnancy via MATB1 form (usually issued around week 20)

If you earn less than the lower earnings limit, you may not be entitled to SMP, however, you may be entitled to receive Maternity Allowance (MA) payable by the Government (MA & SMP rates are the same).

Your salary will be replaced by SMP for the first 39 weeks of SML, if you are eligible to receive it. The remaining 13 weeks of AML are unpaid.

- **SMP is paid for a total of 39 weeks and is only paid per pregnancy (*not per child*).**
- **For the first six weeks, SMP is paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings.**
- **The following 33 weeks (or less if you return to work sooner) is paid at the rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year (*This normally changes each April*).**

SMP is treated as earnings and is subject to PAYE and national insurance deductions.





Payment of SMP cannot start prior to the 11th week before your EWC and it will commence from the date you start your SML.

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### **Contact During SML:**

Shortly before your SML starts, we will discuss the arrangements for you to keep in touch during your leave, should you wish to do so.

We reserve the right in any event to maintain reasonable contact with you from time to time during your SML. This may be to discuss your plans for returning to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work, or simply to update you on developments at work during your absence.

Except during the first two weeks after childbirth you can agree to work (or to attend training) for up to 10 days during either OML or AML without that work bringing the period of your SML to an end and without loss of a week's SMP. These are known as "keeping-in-touch" days. Any work carried out on a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes.

Any work undertaken, including the amount of salary paid for any work done on keeping-in-touch days, will be a matter for agreement between us. Any keeping-in-touch days worked do not extend the period of your SML. Once the keeping-in-touch days have been used up, you will lose a week's SMP for any week in which you agree to work for us.

### **Returning to Work:**

You will have been formally advised in writing by us of the date on which you are expected to return to work if taking your full 52-week entitlement to SML. You should return on that date. If you are unable to attend work at the end of your SML due to sickness or injury, you should notify us in the normal way. Late return without prior authorisation will be treated as unauthorised absence.

If you wish to return to work earlier than the expected return date, you must give us at least eight weeks' notice of the date of your early return, in writing. If you fail to do so, we may postpone your return to a date which provides us with eight weeks' notice as long as this date is not later than the expected return date.

If you decide not to return to work after SML, you must give notice of your resignation in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment. If your notice period expires after your SML has ended, we may require you to return to work for the remainder of your notice period.

### **Rights on and after return to work:**

On resuming work after OML, you are entitled to return to the same job as you occupied before commencing SML on the same terms and conditions.

On resuming work after AML, you will be entitled to return to the same job as you occupied before commencing SML on the same terms and conditions. However, if it is not reasonably practicable for us to allow





you to return to the same job, we may offer you suitable alternative work, on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than would have applied if you had not been absent.

Should a redundancy situation occur up to and including 18 months after the birth of your child, you should be offered a suitable alternative vacancy, if one is available.

Should you wish to change or reduce your contractual hours, you can apply to work flexibly. The procedure for dealing with such requests is set out in our Flexible Working Policy.



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