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## MATERNITY, ADOPTION AND PARENTAL LEAVE

DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA & PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

### **Pertains to:**

CLERGY and DIOCESAN STAFF

**Purpose:** The Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island recognizes the need of clergy and other employees of the church to balance the demands of parish or diocesan life with family responsibilities associated with the birth or adoption of children. The Diocese has provided for maternity and parental leave and allowances to clergy and others for time away from their duties but with compensation in order to care for their children free from undue financial or church-related concerns.

### **Policies:**

#### MATERNITY LEAVE

Maternity leave applies only to the birth mother who has worked for the Diocese or Parish for six months prior to becoming pregnant. A pregnant woman is entitled to 16 weeks of maternity leave and this leave shall commence no earlier than 20 weeks before the expected due date and must commence on the birth date if not started before the birth. This leave must stop no later than 16 weeks after the birth. An employee that suffers a still-birth or miscarriage within 20 weeks of the expected due date is also eligible for maternity leave. Maternity leave must be taken in a consecutive period, i.e. a person on maternity leave cannot return to work during this leave and then recommence the leave.

#### PARENTAL LEAVE

Parental leave applies to the birth mother or partner or for either or both parents in an adoption. Those who have worked for the Diocese or Parish for six months prior to the birth or adoption are eligible to take parental leave. Parental leave is a period of unpaid leave for up to 35 weeks for the standard benefit or 61 weeks for the extended benefit. This leave can be taken any time within 52 weeks of the birth or adoption. This leave can be combined with maternity leave but cannot exceed 52 weeks for the standard benefit and 78 weeks for the extended benefit. Parents can split this leave between the two parents but the total time on parental leave cannot exceed 35 weeks for the standard benefit or 61 weeks for the extended benefit. Parental leave must be taken in a consecutive period, i.e. a person on parental leave cannot return to work during this leave and then recommence the leave.

#### PROCEDURES

Those employees wishing to take maternity or parental leave will be required to give their Parish or the Diocese at least four weeks' notice of the intended start date. This will permit the Parish or Diocese the

opportunity to find a replacement worker, if required, and for the employee to start an orderly transition to the leave. This notice period is waived in the case of pregnancy complications, premature birth or the sudden arrival of an adoptive child or a short notice requirement to make arrangements to receive an adoptive child.

Those employees on maternity and or parental leave are also required to give the Parish or Diocese at least four weeks' notice of the intended return to work date. Those employees not intending to return to work are encouraged to provide as much notice as possible to the Parish or Diocese of that decision.

#### Benefits and Allowances:

Those employees proceeding on maternity and or parental leave will keep all benefits earned up to the start date of the leave. During the leave period, years of service will continue to accrue. Anniversary dates for those on maternity or parental leave do not change. If a salary increase, economic adjustment or anniversary review is due during the leave period it will take effect on the date the employee returns to work.

To maintain coverage in the medical plan during the leave(s), the employee will be required to pay his or her share of the premiums. Similarly, continuation in the group insurance or the pension plan will require that the employee pay his or her share of the premiums for the leave period.

For those employees on maternity leave the Parish or Diocese will pay 90% of the weekly salary/stipend during the first week of leave, the Employment Insurance waiting period, less any other earnings received by the employee during the waiting period. This benefit will also be paid to adoptive parents taking parental leave during the first week of that leave. This benefit is not payable to a partner taking parental leave after the birth partner has taken maternity leave.

During the remaining 15 weeks of maternity leave, the Parish or Diocese will top-up the employee's income to 90% of the weekly salary/stipend less the employment insurance benefits that the employee receives or any other earnings received. The employee must report the employment insurance benefits and other earnings received to the pay office so that accurate top-up payments may be calculated. This benefit is also payable to adoptive parents during the first 15 weeks of parental leave, i.e. after the one week waiting period. This benefit is not payable to a partner on parental leave after the birth partner has taken maternity leave.

For those employees on parental leave only the Employment Insurance benefits will be received by the employee.

Employees on maternity or parental leave and living in church accommodations will be entitled to remain in these accommodations for the duration of the leave. For those employees in receipt of housing allowance they will continue to receive this allowance for the duration of the leave taken. Parishes may request assistance from the Diocese in the case where it is considered that undue financial hardship may be placed on the Parish due to the continuation of these benefits.

Employees with more than three years' service in the Diocese and who not return to work after maternity or parental leave are not required to reimburse the Parish or Diocese for the top-up payments received. Those with less than three years' service will be required to reimburse the Parish or Diocese for one half of the top-up payments received.