

## Approval of request to extend unpaid parental leave – template letter

### Who can use this template

Employers can use this template if:

- their employee has made a written request to extend their period of unpaid parental leave, and
- they want to approve the request.

### How to use this template

- [PART A](#) of this template is a checklist with information for employers. It includes an overview of the rules for responding to requests to extend unpaid parental leave.
- [PART B](#) of this template can be filled out by the employer to approve an extension request. If an employee requests an extension of unpaid parental leave beyond the initial 12-month period, the employer must respond **within 21 days** of the request.

We update our templates from time to time. Make sure you're using the [latest version](#) from [fairwork.gov.au/templates](http://fairwork.gov.au/templates)

## PART A – INFORMATION AND CHECKLIST FOR EMPLOYERS

### Entitlements to extend unpaid parental leave

Employees have rights under the [National Employment Standards](#) (NES) to extend unpaid parental leave. The amount of time they can extend their leave by depends on their original leave period and whether they are:

- extending leave within the first 12 months
- extending leave beyond the initial 12 months.

There are different rules for how to respond depending on whether the request is within the first 12 months or after.

You can use this letter to advise an employee that their request for additional unpaid parental leave has been approved in both situations.

Visit our [Parental leave section](#) at [fairwork.gov.au/parentalleave](http://fairwork.gov.au/parentalleave)



## IMPORTANT

### Check if an award or agreement applies

Before using this resource, check if an [award](#) or [agreement](#) applies to your workplace. If it does, check if it has terms about parental leave that are more beneficial to your employees than the NES. If so, those rules apply. Visit [fairwork.gov.au/awards](http://fairwork.gov.au/awards) and [fairwork.gov.au/agreements](http://fairwork.gov.au/agreements) to find out more.

You should also check the terms of any employment contract or workplace policy about parental leave. If they're more beneficial than the NES, those apply.

### Need more help with unpaid parental leave?

- Visit our [Parental leave section](#) at [fairwork.gov.au/parentalleave](http://fairwork.gov.au/parentalleave)
- Submit an enquiry online through [My account](#) at [fairwork.gov.au/register](http://fairwork.gov.au/register)

### Check out our other resources



- Explore [interactive template tools, downloadable templates and letters](#) available at [fairwork.gov.au/templates](http://fairwork.gov.au/templates)
- Complete our [free online courses](#) available at [fairwork.gov.au/learning](http://fairwork.gov.au/learning) to develop skills and strategies to help you at work

The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing you with advice that you can rely on.

The information contained in this template is general in nature. If you are unsure about how it applies to your situation you can call our Infoline on 13 13 94 or speak with a union, industry association or a workplace relations professional.

## Checklist: Responding to a request to extend unpaid parental leave

Use the checklist to help you respond to a request to extend unpaid parental leave.

### 1 – Know the rules about the employee’s right to request or provide notice of an extension

#### Extension within the initial 12 months

An employee who had originally planned to take less than 12 months of unpaid parental leave has a right to extend their leave up to a total of 12 months.

They have to give at least 4 weeks’ written notice before their planned leave period ends. The written notice needs to state their new leave end date.

An employee can further extend their leave period within the first 12 months of unpaid parental leave with the agreement of their employer.

#### Extension beyond the initial 12 months

An employee who has taken their entitlement of 12 months of unpaid parental leave can apply to extend their leave by agreement. The total period, with the extension, can't be more than 24 months from the date of birth or placement of the child.

The employee needs to give you a written request if they want to extend their unpaid parental leave beyond the initial 12 months. It needs to be given at least 4 weeks before the first 12 months of leave ends.

### 2 – Consider the request

#### Extension within the initial 12 months

If an employee provides notice to extend their unpaid parental leave within the initial 12 months, you cannot refuse the first extension. You are not required to respond to the notice and should not use this template.

Any further requests to extend the leave within the first 12 months are by agreement. While you don't have to respond in writing, it's best practice to do so. Use the rest of this checklist to help you respond.

#### Extension beyond the initial 12 months

If you are approving an employee’s request to extend their unpaid parental leave beyond the initial 12 months, you must respond in writing within 21 days of the request.

You can **only** refuse a request if you have reasonable business grounds (and you have followed the required steps).

If you are considering refusing an extension request beyond the initial 12 months, **don't use this template**. Instead, use our [Refusal of request to extend parental leave beyond initial 12-month period - template letter](#) available at [fairwork.gov.au/templates](http://fairwork.gov.au/templates)

### □ 3 – Meet with the employee

If you are approving the request, you don't have to meet with the employee. But it's a good idea to keep in regular contact with employees who are on parental leave. Talking to the employee about their request is an opportunity to:

- advise them that you have approved their request, and
- keep them up to date about what is happening in the workplace.

**Best Practice Tip:** See our [Parental leave best practice guide](#) at [fairwork.gov.au/bestpracticeguides](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/bestpracticeguides) for best practice advice on managing parental leave in your business.

### □ 4 – Respond in writing

You can use the below [TEMPLATE LETTER – Approval of request to extend unpaid parental leave](#) to help you respond in writing.

If you are responding to a request to extend unpaid parental leave beyond the initial 12 months, you must respond in writing **within 21 days** of the request.



#### IMPORTANT

This template has been colour coded to help you to complete it. You simply need to replace the **red < > writing** with the information that applies to your situation. You should change all the text to **black** when you're finished.

The **purple writing** shows you extra explanatory information and should also be deleted.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing you with advice that you can rely on.

The information contained in this template is general in nature. If you are unsure about how it applies to your situation you can call our Infoline on 13 13 94 or speak with a union, industry association or a workplace relations professional.

## PART B – TEMPLATE LETTER – Approval of request to extend unpaid parental leave

<Print on your business letterhead if applicable>

<Date>

### Private and confidential

<Insert employee's full name>

<Insert employee's residential address>

Dear <Insert employee's name>

### Approval of request to extend unpaid parental leave

I refer to your <letter/email> dated <insert date of request> where you requested to extend your unpaid parental leave <Insert details of extension requested, for example, new end date>.

[Delete this section if not applicable] Thank you for speaking with me on <insert date of conversation with employee> to discuss your request.

I am writing to advise that your extension of unpaid parental leave has been approved.

Your extended parental leave dates are:

**Start date of extended leave:** <Insert date>

**End date of extended leave:** <Insert date>

[Optional – keeping in touch days. You can update this section with business specific details such as links to policies or intranet pages. Delete if not applicable].

We look forward to welcoming you back after your leave. If you would like to keep in touch during your leave (including accessing keeping in touch days), please contact me on the details below. More information about keeping in touch days can be found in the Fair Work Ombudsman's [Parental leave section](#) at [fairwork.gov.au/parentalleave](http://fairwork.gov.au/parentalleave)

Please contact me on <insert phone number> if you have any questions, or there are any further changes to your situation.

Yours sincerely,

<Insert name>

<Insert position>

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS LETTER FOR YOUR RECORDS