

National Education Union Jersey – 30th April 2025

We, at the NEU, have discussed the policy, which overall we feel has had a positive impact on our members who are new parents and the ability to bond effectively with their child in the early months. We do see this as significantly important, and we value the positive steps forward that this policy has had in implementing a more caring approach by the employer in order to facilitate this for new parents. Ultimately, this should improve the health and well-being of the child and strengthen the family bonds.

There are, however, issues with the support put in place to cover the role of the individual when the staff member goes on parental leave. Within schools there is often a lack of capacity to adequately cover the individual due to the difficulty to attract suitable candidates to fill the role, especially in the short term. This puts a lot of pressure on our members (the staff) that are left in the department, and this additional burden is not being suitably supported due to the very limited availability (especially in secondary schools) of subject specialists on the island. Sometimes, due to the additional costs associated with head count for a school whilst staff are on parental leave, roles that the individual on leave had, will not be replaced and so other staff (teachers through to Head teachers) will shoulder these extra responsibilities without a new role being appointed. This means that staff are pulled very thin and the service to children cannot be at the same level as it was before the member goes on parental leave. Often timetables are adjusted and are increased to absorb the capacity, especially when there is no one who has the adequate skill set to replace the individual. This puts enormous pressure on head teachers and middle leaders to maintain provision when there is limited or no scope to replace the individual. Providing more capacity in the system with more teachers generally, would create a better work life balance for those individuals on parental leave and those staff (including those who are parents) who are left to cover those individuals on parental leave.