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Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave and Benefits Policy

1. Objective

As an employer who is sensitive to the different demands that are placed on our employees in their roles within their families, Hemas intends to support important life events such as the birth or adoption of a child, by exceeding legal requirements through this Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave and Benefits Policy (“Policy”). Hemas believes that an employee who pursues a balanced lifestyle is a better employee and the Policy aims to support employees in the pursuit of that balance.

2. Eligibility Criteria

All Hemas employees who newly enter parenthood after the effective date of joining Hemas, regardless of whether they become parents biologically or through adoption shall benefit from this Policy irrespective of their length of service or probation status. For the avoidance of doubt, permanent employees as well as employees on fixed term contracts are eligible for this Policy.

3. Maternity Leave

Maternity leave for the birth of a child shall be granted as per applicable legislation. As outlined in this Policy, Hemas wishes to exceed the time limits set out in applicable legislation, in order to enhance the benefit of maternity leave available to new mothers.

Eligible female employees shall receive:

1. One hundred (100) working days of paid maternity leave for employees governed by the Shop and Office Employees Act or fourteen (14) weeks and two (02) days for employees for whom Wages Boards legislation is applicable in respect of the birth of their first or second child (“Maternity Leave”).
2. In the case of third and subsequent children, eighty-four (84) working days of paid maternity leave for employees governed by the Shop and Office Employees Act or twelve

(12) weeks for employees for whom Wages Boards legislation is applicable (weeks) would be granted, in excess of the legal requirement to grant only forty-two (42) days (or 6 weeks under Wages Board). Limited Maternity Leave in comparison with the first two (02) children is provided with the reasonable assumption that support systems would already be in place by the time the third child arrives.

3. An additional twenty (20) working days of leave (or 4 weeks) may be taken by mutual consent of the supervisor and the employee, and such mutual consent shall be communicated in writing to HR prior to fourteen (14) working days from the end date of the Maternity Leave. Such leave (“Additional Maternity Leave”) shall be at ‘half-pay’ for the first 10 working days (two weeks) and at ‘no-pay’ for the second 10 working days (two weeks). For the avoidance of doubt, “half-pay” in this instance shall mean half of the basic salary and half of any allowances for which the employee is eligible.
4. Additional Maternity Leave may be taken in addition to any annual leave taken with the prior approval of the supervisor.
5. Of the total Maternity Leave taken, up to a maximum of fourteen (14) days (or two weeks as per applicable law) may be taken before the expected date of confinement. In the event that a longer period of leave is required prior to confinement due to medical reasons, a request should be submitted to HR with supporting medical evidence.

4. Paternity Leave

In order to encourage our male employees to care for their newborns and to support the child’s mother, the company will provide paternity leave for the birth of their children. The leave entitlement would be ten (10) working days for employees governed by the Shop and Office Employees’ Act and 2 weeks for employees for whom Wages Boards legislation is applicable. Such paternity leave should be taken within eight (8) weeks of the birth.

5. Adoption Leave

The addition of a child to the family by adoption poses its own joys and challenges. Hemas seeks to support employees who are going through this special time through adoption leave as follows:

1. Depending on the age of the child being adopted
 - a. Below one (01) year – same duration as Maternity Leave or Paternity Leave granted for a biological child
 - b. One (01) to five (05) years – half of the duration of Maternity Leave or Paternity Leave granted for a biological child
2. The maximum entitlement for each instance of adoption leave would be as specified in 1. above irrespective of whether one or more children are adopted simultaneously.
3. No additional leave would be permitted in the case of adoption leave.
4. The employee seeking adoption leave must
 - a. Provide valid legal confirmation/adoption court order confirming that the adoption has taken place.
 - b. Inform their supervisor and HR team as early as possible in the adoption process and minimum three (03) months in advance of their planned date of leave. This notice is needed to plan for covering work during their absence. In case the adoption does not take place on the planned date, the employee must inform the supervisor and HR of revised timelines if any. Failure to provide notice as outlined above may result in delaying of the adoption leave until work arrangements are planned for smooth operation of business.
5. The earliest date that adoption leave shall commence from shall be the date of placement/adoption. Adoption leave must commence within four (04) weeks of placement/adoption.

6. Sequential Order of Children

For the purposes of deciding the number of days of leave applicable under the Hemas extended leave schemes offered by this policy, no distinction shall be made between biological and adopted children. E.g. if a child is being adopted by an employee who already has two biological or adopted children, this child shall be considered the third child and leave applicable to a third child shall apply.

For all purposes connected to maternity leave entitlement as per statutory provisions, the definitions provided by the applicable law (Shop and Office Employees Act or Maternity Benefits Ordinance) shall apply.

7. Administrative Guidelines

1. In availing of Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave and Adoption Leave, the employee must initiate and obtain approval with a leave application through HRIS or leave card as applicable for record purposes.
 - a. Maternity/ Adoption Leave Cover Arrangements: Managing the workload is the line managers responsibility. Please speak to HR for guidance.
2. Performance management during maternity and adoption leave.
 - a. Goal Setting: If the goal setting period falls within the leave period,
 - i. For self: Agree tentative goals with the supervisor prior to commencement of leave which can be fine-tuned upon return from leave.
 - ii. For direct reports: Set goals for the team in line with goals agreed for self. Any required course corrections to be done upon return from leave.
 - b. Evaluations/ Assessments:
 - i. If the fact that the person is going on maternity / adoption leave is known prior to the mid-year review, the goals should be adjusted to account for it. i.e. adjust deadlines/ projects/ deliverables etc to be “realistic and relevant” as per the SMART principle.
 - ii. If this is not known prior to mid-year and the leave takes place prior to year-end, in the year-end review the employee should not be penalized for the time-off.
 - iii. Any assessments (mid-year or year-end) which will fall due during the Maternity Leave/ adoption leave may be completed and approved by supervisor and reviewer prior to going on leave. If system is not ready, the assessment may be documented in soft copy and shared with HR along with necessary approvals so that the rating can be used for salary increase and bonus decisions.
3. In circumstances where the policy has not covered a specific situation, the supervisor is encouraged to consult HR and jointly take a suitable decision in line with the spirit of the policy.

This policy may be subject to change or withdrawal at the absolute discretion of the management.

8. Effective Date

Effective date: 26th January, 2018