



DIGNITY
IN CHURCH LIFE

**Clergy
Parental
Sabbatical
Policy**

Clergy Parental Sabbatical Policy

1. Our Policy

The purpose of this policy is to support the health and welfare of members of the clergy who are pregnant or have recently become parents.

2. To Whom Does the Policy Apply?

This policy applies to all stipendiary members of the clergy (including part time stipendiary members of the clergy) EXCEPT those employed under a Contract of Employment or a deacon serving in an internship ministering in a cure and for the purposes of this policy the definition of stipendiary members of the clergy shall include an archbishop or a bishop.

Note: If a member of the clergy is employed under a Contract of Employment, the relevant procedures under that Contract shall apply.

A deacon serving in an internship ministering in a cure who is pregnant or has become a parent and does not intend to commence or continue their internship shall defer their internship until the deacon is able to commence or continue their internship.

3. What Does the Policy Provide?

The policy provides the three forms of Clergy Parental Sabbatical summarised below. Full details are set out in the subsequent sections. The three forms of sabbatical (maternity sabbatical, paternity sabbatical and adoptive sabbatical) are collectively referred to as 'Clergy Parental Sabbatical'.

3.1 Maternity Sabbatical

Pregnant members of the clergy are entitled to a maximum of 26 weeks maternity sabbatical at Full Stipend. Where the father of the child is also a member of the clergy the parents may choose to combine their respective maternity and paternity sabbaticals and divide the total 28 of weeks among themselves in a manner which best meets their preferences and requirements.

A minimum of 4 weeks must be taken, with at least 2 weeks taken before the expected birth date and at least 2 weeks after the birth date.

3.2 Paternity Sabbatical

Members of the clergy who have recently become fathers are entitled to 2 weeks paternity sabbatical at Full Stipend.

3.3 Adoptive Sabbatical

Members of the clergy who are adopting a child are entitled to a maximum of 26 weeks adoptive sabbatical at Full Stipend.

Adoptive sabbatical may be taken by either male or female members of the clergy but members of the clergy shall not qualify if their spouse/partner, who will be jointly parenting the child, is also taking adoptive leave or sabbatical under a separate adoptive leave or sabbatical policy applicable to the spouse/partner.

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4. What is meant by 'Full Stipend'?

For the purpose of this policy, 'Full Stipend' is defined as the approved stipend received by the member of the clergy together with pension contributions, any locomotory expenses and expenses of office allowance, prior to applying for Clergy Parental Sabbatical.

5. Duties of Office While on Clergy Parental Sabbatical

Clergy who are on maternity, paternity or adoptive sabbatical should not engage in any of their normal duties of office.

It should be made clear to parishioners that although a member of the clergy may still be residing in a clergy residence or see house, they are on sabbatical and all their duties have been reassigned for the duration of that sabbatical.

6. Pastoral Cover

Primary responsibility for arranging suitable pastoral cover whilst a member of the clergy is on Clergy Parental Sabbatical lies with the diocese, through the bishop and the diocesan office. The level of cover provided should be adequate to ensure that a member of the clergy who is on sabbatical does not feel under any pressure to resume their duties prematurely, either in whole or in part.

7. Cost of Providing Cover

The cost of providing alternative cover for a member of the clergy availing of Clergy Parental Sabbatical shall be refunded to the diocese from the Clergy Ministry and Protection Fund subject to a maximum of one week's minimum approved stipend for every week the member of the clergy is on Clergy Parental Sabbatical.

8. State Benefits

If a member of the clergy receives or is entitled to receive any State Maternity, Paternity or Adoptive benefits in respect of any period of Clergy Parental Sabbatical during which stipend payments are being made under the Clergy Parental Sabbatical Policy, there shall be a corresponding reduction in the stipend payment. The member of the clergy shall be responsible for claiming relevant State or private benefits and shall inform the Diocesan Secretary of amounts received. The Diocesan Secretary shall pass this information to the RCB HR Manager.

9. Maternity Sabbatical

9.1 Policy

Maternity sabbatical is available to pregnant members of the clergy, as defined in Clause 2 of this policy, to support their health and well-being by redeploying the duties of their office to another person or persons during the sabbatical period.

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9.2 Entitlements & Conditions

- a) Pregnant members of the clergy are entitled to 26 consecutive weeks maternity sabbatical of which at least 2 weeks must be taken before the expected date of birth and at least 2 weeks after the date of birth.
- b) A member of clergy must give her bishop at least 4 weeks' written notice of intention to take maternity sabbatical and also forward to the bishop a medical certificate confirming pregnancy and specifying the expected date of birth.
- c) A member of clergy must give her bishop at least 4 weeks' written notice of her intention to return to duties at the end of the (26 weeks or shorter) maternity sabbatical period.
- d) Return to duties is dependent on the member of the clergy giving 4 weeks' written notice, which is mandatory.

9.3 Postponement of maternity sabbatical

Maternity sabbatical may be postponed in the event of hospitalisation of the child, subject to the agreement of the bishop.

9.4 Payment during maternity sabbatical

A member of clergy shall receive their Full Stipend for up to 26 weeks of maternity sabbatical.

10. Paternity Sabbatical

10.1 Policy

Paternity sabbatical is available to stipendiary members of the clergy as defined in Clause 2 of this policy, to support their health and well-being by redeploying the duties of their office to another person or persons during the sabbatical period.

10.2 Eligibility to take Paternity Sabbatical

Paternity sabbatical is available to members of the clergy who are:

- The father of the child, or
- The spouse of the mother of the child who will be jointly parenting the child, or
- In the case of adoption, the parent who is not availing of adoptive sabbatical

10.3 Entitlements and Conditions

- a) A member of the clergy may avail of a continuous period of 2 weeks paternity sabbatical. The sabbatical entitlement must be taken as a maximum 2 weeks and cannot be broken into smaller periods of sabbatical.
- b) Paternity sabbatical can begin at the time of the birth/adoption or within 26 weeks of the birth/placement of the child. The sabbatical will commence on the date the member of clergy selects in his written notification. It should be noted that paternity sabbatical cannot commence earlier than the date of birth or date of placement of the child and cannot commence later than 26 weeks after date of birth or the date of placement of the child.

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- c) In the case of multiple births, or where two or more children are being adopted at the same time, the maximum period of up to 2 weeks of paternity sabbatical applies. Paternity sabbatical must be used to assist in the provision of care to the child or to provide support to the mother or adopting mother of the child, as the case may be.

10.4 Applying for Paternity Sabbatical

The member of the clergy must notify their bishop at least 4 weeks before they intend to take the sabbatical. A medical certificate confirming the expected date of birth/ certificate confirming the expected day of placement must accompany this notice. The request must specify the commencement date of the period of sabbatical.

10.5 Early confinement

Where the birth of the child occurs 4 or more weeks prematurely, a member of clergy seeking to bring forward the date that paternity sabbatical commences must notify their bishop of their intention to commence paternity sabbatical in writing within 7 days of the birth.

10.6 Postponement of paternity sabbatical

A member of the clergy may postpone a period of paternity sabbatical where the date of birth occurs after the date selected by them in their notification to the bishop or where the date of placement is postponed in the case of adoption. The member of the clergy shall select another date on which paternity sabbatical will commence.

In the event that a member of the clergy becomes ill before a period of paternity sabbatical has commenced, the period of sabbatical may be postponed. Notification of a request to postpone the sabbatical due to illness must be sent to the bishop as soon as possible after the member of the clergy becomes ill and must be accompanied by a medical certificate. The member of the clergy must follow up in writing confirming the request to postpone the sabbatical as soon as is reasonably practicable but not later than the day on which the postponed sabbatical begins. The sabbatical may be postponed until such time as the member of the clergy is no longer sick. A period of postponed sabbatical must end not later than 28 weeks after the date of birth or date of placement. The member of the clergy must notify the bishop when they intend to take the postponed paternity sabbatical not later than the date they commence the sabbatical.

If a child is hospitalised, the member of the clergy may request in writing to postpone all or part of their paternity sabbatical. Postponement of paternity sabbatical in such circumstances is subject to approval by the bishop. The bishop will respond to the request for postponement as soon as practicably possible with a decision on the matter.

Where the bishop agrees to postpone the sabbatical, the sabbatical shall be postponed with effect from a date agreed by both parties. The member of the clergy shall return to duties on a date agreed by the bishop and the member of the clergy. The postponed sabbatical, which must be taken in a continuous block not later than 7 days after the discharge of the child from hospital or such other date as may be agreed upon between the member of the clergy and the bishop. The member of the clergy must notify the bishop when they intend to take the postponed paternity sabbatical not later than the date the member of the clergy commences the sabbatical.

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10.7 Payment during paternity sabbatical

A member of the clergy shall receive their Full Stipend for the 2 weeks of paternity sabbatical.

11. Adoptive Sabbatical

11.1 Policy

Adoptive sabbatical is available to stipendiary members of the clergy as defined in Clause 2 of this policy, to support their health and well-being by redeploying the duties of their office to another person or persons during the sabbatical period.

11.2 Entitlements & Conditions

- a) 26 consecutive weeks adoptive sabbatical, commencing from the date of placement of a child.
- b) A member of the clergy must give their bishop at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to take adoptive sabbatical and also forward to the Bishop any documentation confirming the adoption of the child and specifying the expected week of adoption.
- c) A member of the clergy must give their bishop at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to duties.
- d) A member of the clergy does not qualify for adoptive sabbatical if their spouse/partner with whom they are adopting the child is taking adoptive or maternity leave or sabbatical in respect of the same child.

11.3 Postponement of adoptive sabbatical

Adoptive sabbatical and/or additional adoptive sabbatical may be postponed in the event of the hospitalisation of the child, subject to the agreement of the bishop. The member of the clergy should request the postponement of the sabbatical in writing as soon as possible. This request should also include a letter of confirmation from the hospital.

11.4 Payment during adoptive sabbatical

A member of the clergy shall receive their Full Stipend for up to 26 weeks of adoptive sabbatical.



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**Clergy
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Guidelines

Clergy Parental Sabbatical Policy - *Guidelines*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to support the health and well-being of members of the clergy by redeploying the duties of their office to another person or persons during a sabbatical period to be taken on the occasion of the arrival of a new child. It strives to provide adequate cover for a member of the clergy availing of Clergy Parental Sabbatical as well as ensuring that adequate pastoral care is provided to parishioners during the period of Clergy Parental Sabbatical.

2. Clergy Parental Sabbatical Policy Explained

2.1 Background

In 2021, a review was undertaken of the '*Clergy Remuneration and Benefits Committee Report*' ('CRAB') which was originally presented to General Synod in 1990. It was noted that much had changed in the intervening years, not least the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Church of Ireland. The need to provide additional care and support for members of the clergy who are pregnant or have recently become parents was also recognised and this policy has been developed for this purpose.

2.2 The Policy

The Clergy Parental Sabbatical Policy has three elements:

- Maternity Sabbatical.
- Paternity Sabbatical.
- Adoptive Sabbatical.

2.3 To Whom Does the Policy Apply?

The policy applies to all stipendiary members of the clergy (including part-time stipendiary members of the clergy) in the Church of Ireland EXCEPT those employed under a Contract of Employment or a deacon serving in an internship ministering in a cure. For the purpose of this policy, the definition of a stipendiary member of the clergy shall include an archbishop or bishop and references to a member of the clergy and the bishop of the diocese, an archdeacon or a nominated other shall, in the case of an archbishop or bishop applying for Clergy Parental Sabbatical, be to the archbishop or bishop and the House of the Bishops.

Where a member of the clergy is employed under a Contract of Employment, the parental sabbatical provisions of that Contract shall apply.

A deacon serving in an internship ministering in a cure who is pregnant or has become a parent and does not intend to commence or continue their internship shall defer their internship until the deacon is able to commence or continue their internship.

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3. Roles and Responsibilities under the Clergy Parental Sabbatical Policy

The specific roles associated with the implementation of this policy are as follows:

3.1 RCB HR Manager

The RCB HR Manager has a responsibility to support the implementation of the Church's policy by:

- Ensuring consistency in application of the policy across the Church.
- Providing advice to diocesan secretaries and bishops.
- Providing advice to members of the clergy wishing to avail of the policy.
- Managing Clergy Parental Sabbatical records held by the RCB and requesting payments to dioceses.

3.2 Archdeacon, Rural Dean or 'Nominated Other'

The archdeacon, rural dean or other person designated by the bishop ('nominated other') shall play a key role in supporting a member of the clergy who is availing of Clergy Parental Sabbatical and in assisting her or him on their return to duty. This support and assistance shall include:

- Arranging cover required in a parish or diocese during the period of parental sabbatical.
- Communicating with select vestries to ensure that they are aware of the provisions of this policy and of the arrangements that have been made for parishioners' pastoral care for the duration of the period of Clergy Parental Sabbatical.
- Arranging a return to ministry meeting and jointly preparing a plan for the resumption of the member of clergy's duties.

3.3 Bishop

The bishop has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the policy in their diocese, including receiving notifications from members of the clergy. The House of Bishops shall have responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the policy where an archbishop or bishop applies for Clergy Parental Sabbatical.

4. Maternity Sabbatical Procedures

4.1 Notification

The policy requires a member of the clergy to provide the bishop with the following notice periods in relation to maternity sabbatical:

- At least 4 weeks' written notice of intention to take maternity sabbatical, including a medical certificate confirming pregnancy and specifying the expected date of birth.
- At least 4 weeks' written notice of intention to return to duties at the end of maternity sabbatical.

The above notice periods are the minimum required by the policy: Members of the clergy are encouraged to inform their bishop as soon as they know they are pregnant. This means that the bishop can ensure that the environment is supportive of all pregnancy requirements during this time.

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The bishop shall inform the archdeacon of the forthcoming absence. In most cases, the member of the clergy will have been in touch with the bishop and/or the archdeacon in the months leading up to the sabbatical. It is important, however, that there is formal notification of commencement of maternity sabbatical. Early engagement can greatly assist in planning the provision of adequate cover during the sabbatical.

4.2 Payment During Maternity Sabbatical

A member of the clergy shall receive their Full Stipend for up to 26 weeks of maternity sabbatical.

4.3 Postponement of Maternity Sabbatical

Maternity sabbatical may be postponed in the event of hospitalisation of the child, subject to the agreement of the bishop.

5. Paternity Sabbatical Procedures

5.1 Notification

The member of the clergy must notify their bishop at least 4 weeks before they intend to take the sabbatical. A medical certificate confirming the expected date of birth/certificate confirming the expected day of placement must accompany this notice. The request must specify the commencement date of the period of sabbatical.

5.2 Payment During Paternity Sabbatical

A member of the clergy shall receive their Full Stipend for the 2 weeks of paternity sabbatical.

6. Adoptive Sabbatical Procedures

6.1 Notification

The policy requires that a member of the clergy must provide the bishop with the following notice periods in relation to adoptive sabbatical:

- At least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to take adoptive sabbatical, including documentation confirming the adoption of the child and specifying the expected week of adoption.
- At least 4 weeks' written notice of intention to return to duties at the end of adoptive sabbatical.

6.2 Payment During Adoptive Sabbatical

A member of the clergy shall receive their Full Stipend for up to 26 weeks of adoptive sabbatical.

6.3 Postponement of Adoptive Sabbatical

Adoptive sabbatical may be postponed in the event of the hospitalisation of the child, subject to the agreement of the bishop. The member of the clergy should request the postponement of the sabbatical in writing as soon as possible. This request should also include a letter of confirmation from the hospital.

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7. Duties of Office Whilst on Clergy Parental Sabbatical

The purpose of Clergy Parental Sabbatical is to support the member of the clergy and the needs of the parish or ministry by fully redeploying the duties of their office during the period of sabbatical. It is recognised that members of the clergy on parental sabbatical, will usually remain living within their communities and may feel pressurised to cut their sabbatical short or to carry out occasional duties whilst on sabbatical. The bishop or archdeacon should make it clear to both clergy and parishioners that a member of the clergy should not feel under any such pressure and ensure that adequate cover is in place during their sabbatical.

8. State Benefits

The Clergy Parental Sabbatical policy states as follows: *'If a member of the clergy receives or is entitled to receive any State Maternity/Paternity/Adoptive benefit in respect of any period of absence from office during which stipend payments are being made, there shall be a corresponding reduction in the stipend payment'. The member of the clergy shall be responsible for claiming relevant State or private benefit and shall inform the Diocesan Secretary of amounts received.'*

9. Policy Review

Progress on the implementation and effectiveness of the Clergy Parental Sabbatical policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed. If you wish to comment on any aspect of the policy, its guidelines, or its implementation you may contact the RCB HR Manager.

10. Useful Contacts

If you have any queries regarding the implementation of this policy, please contact the RCB HR Manager at:

Telephone: +353 (1) 4125 655

Email: hr@ireland.anglican.org

This policy will be subject to review on a regular basis.