

1. Purpose

As the law stands, elected members are not entitled to statutory “parental leave”, as they are not subject to the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987. The purpose of this policy is to remove barriers that deter people running for council and create the right environment that encourages a more inclusive and supportive local government.

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to the Elected Members of Westland District Council (WDC).

This policy assumes that a parental leave of absence will be total leave of absence, where no duties or functions are performed.

The reference to parental leave in this policy does not mean “parental leave” as that term is used in the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987.

1.2 Commencement

This policy comes into force on 20 July 2023

1.3 Definitions

“Remuneration Authority” is the independent body established by the Remuneration Authority Act 1977 whose responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2002, determine remuneration, expenses, and allowance rules for local authority members.

“Leave of absence” means a pre-approved absence for a specified period of time consistent with the council policy.

2. Policy

- 2.1 When an elected member gives birth or adopts a baby under 12 months old, the Council may approve a leave of absence understanding order clause 13.3 parental leave of absence.
- 2.2 A parental leave of absence may be approved for up to 6 months on request.
- 2.3 Approval of a parental leave of absence will mean that the elected member must not carry out any duties, either formal or informal.

This will mean that the elected member will not attend any Council, Community Board, Local Board, or Committee meetings, meetings with external parties or constituent work. The elected member is also not able to speak publicly on behalf of the Council or represent the Council on any issue.
- 2.4 An elected member will not be paid any remuneration or allowances while on an approved parental leave of absence.
- 2.5 If a member continues in their role in a more limited (partial) capacity, such as attending to constituent enquiries, e.g. phone calls and engagements where possible, and reading, but not attending council meetings or workshops. Then their remuneration will revert to the remuneration received by a councillor with minimum allowable remuneration for their council, as set out in its determination.
- 2.6 Council will offer elected members returning from full parental leave, a programme to assist them to transition back into their former role. This may involve a briefing from the chief executive on matters of importance that occurred during the elected member’s absence.

Elected Member Parental Leave of Absence Policy



3. Related Documents and Acts

The following Westland District Council documents relate to this policy:

- Standing orders
- Elected Members Allowances Policy
- Remuneration Authority Determination

The following Legislation relates to this policy:

- Remuneration Authority Act 1977
- Local Government Act 2002

Elected Members are also referred to:

- Local Government New Zealand Parental leave of absence template

4. Policy Review

A review of this policy will take place in June 2026.

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