



**uniting  
church**  
in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

# Annual Leave

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For full-time, part-time and fixed-term employees

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## 1. Overview

The Synod of NSW and ACT (**'Synod'**) believes that holidays are important to employees' overall state of wellbeing and we encourage employees to take regular, scheduled breaks such that their annual leave balance is always less than four weeks. To allow for a sufficient break away from work, we also encourage employees to use their annual leave entitlement in the form of at least one unbroken period of two weeks each year.

## 2. Purpose of Policy

This policy sets out the annual leave entitlements of employees and describes the process of applying for and taking annual leave. It also sets out the circumstances under which the Synod may direct employee(s) to take annual leave.

## 3. Applicability (scope)

This policy applies to all permanent and fixed-term full-time and part-time employees who are employed by the Synod of NSW and ACT (**'Synod'**). It does not apply to casual employees, independent contractors, volunteers or individuals engaged through external agencies.

## 4. Responsibilities

People Managers have a responsibility to:

- ▶ Consider and not unreasonably withhold approval for requests for annual leave
- ▶ Where a request for annual leave can't be approved (e.g. because of it falling within a peak period, too many others taking leave concurrently, etc.), the People Manager is to discuss other suitable alternatives with the employee
- ▶ Monitor employee leave balances and encourage employees to take annual leave particularly where annual leave balances are at or above four weeks
- ▶ Develop an annual leave plan for their team to assist with workflow
- ▶ Ensure that appropriate coverage is provided for employees on annual leave such that they don't feel compelled to work while on leave or return to an unreasonable backlog of work.

Employees have a responsibility to:

- ▶ Consider the needs of the team before requesting annual leave
- ▶ Make an application for annual leave, using the appropriate Leave Request Form as soon as practicable but no later than four weeks before the leave is due to commence
- ▶ Refrain from making bookings or paying any deposits before annual leave is approved. The Synod will not be responsible for any lost deposits in the event leave can't be approved at the dates requested
- ▶ Discuss reasonable alternative options with their People Manager in the event that leave cannot be approved
- ▶ Take regular annual leave to allow proper opportunity for rest and recharge
- ▶ Where possible, to take at least one break of two weeks' duration each year
- ▶ Notify their People Manager immediately of any desired or necessary changes to annual leave.

## 5. Principles

### 5.1 Entitlement and Accruals

Unless otherwise stipulated in an employee's contract of employment, those employed on a permanent full-time basis are entitled to four weeks' (20 days or 152 hours) annual leave per annum. Part-time employees accrue annual leave on a pro-rata basis, reflecting the working hours outlined in their contract of employment e.g. a part-time employee working three days' per week accrues 12 days (91.20 hours)' paid annual leave per year.

Employees employed on a fixed term basis accrue annual leave on a pro-rata basis reflecting the length of their employment as outlined in their contract of employment. e.g. a full-time fixed-term associate employed on a six month contract accrues 10 days' (76 hours) paid annual leave during the contract.

Annual leave entitlements accrue on a continuous basis, based on the employee's contracted ordinary hours of work.

Employees may purchase additional leave. Details are available in the Purchased Leave Policy

### 5.2 Impact of public holidays on annual leave

In circumstances where a public holiday falls within an employee's planned leave schedule, the public holiday will be paid with the effect that there will be a corresponding reduction to the number of annual leave days taken.

### 5.3 Taking annual leave

Annual leave is to be taken at a time mutually agreeable to both the employee and the Synod. To help with planning for annual leave, we ask employees to give their People Manager as much notice as possible and, as a general rule, at least four weeks' notice.

Whilst every endeavor will be made to approve annual leave requests, it is not always possible (e.g. where annual leave would fall within a peak period or where others in the same role or same team have already had annual leave approved). For this reason, we suggest not confirming any travel plans and bookings until the annual leave is approved. In circumstances where leave isn't approved, the Synod won't provide reimbursement of any cancellation fees in the event the booking needs to be changed or cancelled.

### 5.4 Direction to take annual leave

The Synod reserves the right to direct employees to take annual leave when:

- ▶ more than eight weeks' annual leave has been accrued, or
- ▶ it is deemed appropriate as part of a close-down of operations (e.g. during Christmas/New Year break)

In such circumstances, the Synod will provide four weeks' notice of the requirement to take leave.

### 5.5 Interplay between Annual leave and Personal Leave

In circumstances where an employee elects to take annual leave in substitution for personal leave (that is where an employee has zero personal leave balance), the requirement for a medical certificate will still apply as the underlying reason for the absence is personal leave. See Personal leave policy for more information.

In circumstances where an employee has a need to take Personal leave while on annual leave, on production of a medical certificate, the relevant portion of the annual leave may be credited to the employee, and the corresponding amount of personal leave deducted.

### **5.6 Additional annual leave**

For those needing additional annual leave, we offer the following options:

- ▶ The opportunity to take leave without pay ('LWOP'). For more information, please see our LWOP policy.
- ▶ The opportunity to purchase additional leave under our Leave Purchasing Scheme. For more information, please see our Leave Purchasing Guidelines.

### **5.7 Other employment during annual leave**

Employees may not take up other paid employment whilst on leave without prior written permission from their Executive Director. While undertaking volunteer activities is supported, it is our hope that employees will use at least some of their leave to rest and re-charge.

### **5.8 Termination of Employment**

On termination of employment, any unused annual leave entitlements will be paid out at the employee's rate of pay at that time. Annual leave accrues up until the employee's last day of employment.

In circumstances where an employee has a negative annual leave balance, either a deduction will be made from their final pay, or they will be required to reimburse the Synod directly.

## **6. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner as circumstances or legislative changes require.

## **7. Terms and Conditions**

This Policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract of engagement and may be amended, replaced or revoked at any time by the Synod at its discretion.