

## ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE POLICY

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### 1. Introduction

Transparency Maldives recognizes that clients and colleagues count on staff to be at work as scheduled to provide smooth and efficient operations. Although there are varying attendance requirements for different categories of staff, regular and punctual attendance is an on-going expectation for all staff.

It is also important that members of staff take regular breaks from their duties through annual leave.

As such, this manual outlines the policies and the procedures followed by Transparency Maldives in order to promote a professional working environment where employees are encouraged to be punctual and maintain healthy work habits

### 2. Leave categories

Transparency Maldives grants annual vacation and leave days, with pay, to regular full-time employees who meet the eligibility requirements.

Employees are entitled to the following leave categories. An employee may request for a particular category of leave only if they meet the eligibility requirement for such leave. The leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December. The following leave categories are available with the given maximum number of days allowed within a year:

Leave Type	Max. no. of days allowed	Remarks
Annual Leave	30	Accrue 2.5 days per working month.
Sick Leave	30	
Family/Compassionate Leave	10	
Maternity Leave	60	
Paternity Leave	30	
Circumcision Leave	5	
Time off in lieu (TOIL)	N/A	With Approval from Management

**a) Annual Leave**

All full-time employees on a contract longer than 3 months will earn 30 days of paid annual leave granted on a pro-rata basis and will be based on 2.5 days of accrued annual leave per working month.

Annual leave will be prorated based on the below table:

Contract starts on first day of a month	2.5 days
Contract starts on first half of a month	2 days
Contract starts on second half of a month	1 day

Annual leave requests should be discussed with the line manager and requested (via email – copied to HR/HR system) with reasonable notice in order to give ample time to line manager(s) and the organisation to plan for the absence of the employee. Staff must provide advance notice to apply for annual leave as follows:

- For annual leave ranging from 5-10 days, staff must provide 5 days advance notice
- For annual leave exceeding 10 days, staff must provide 10 working days advance notice

The taking of annual leave is by agreement with supervisor, who will take into account both individual preferences and operational/business requirements.

Annual leave requests submitted by staff must not be considered as automatic approval and staff should not start their annual leave unless explicitly approved by their supervisor. Supervisors should ideally approve/reject all annual leave requests promptly in Keplar to ensure that staff can take or re-adjust their leave as required. In cases where supervisors convey their approval verbally or through chat or email to their staff, they should formalize the approval through Keplar latest within a week from the date the staff starts their annual leave. Staff must prepare a handover and share with their line manager and coworkers. They should also send an out of office to all staff via email.

The following rules apply to annual leave:

- The annual leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December.
- Staff will accrue 2.5 days of annual leave per month up to a maximum of 30 days within the annual leave year.
- A recognized public holiday occurring during the requested leave period shall not be counted as Annual Leave.
- While members of staff are expected to take their annual leave in the leave year in which they have accrued, staff may, carry forward a maximum of 10 annual leave days into the next leave year. Any annual leave carried forward must be utilized by 30 April of the subsequent annual leave year or the annual leaves carried forward will be forfeited. Any change to the date or number of days carried forward will be communicated by HR through email following discussion with ED and staff by the end of the respective calendar year.
- Staff on employment contracts less than 1 year will get 2.5 days per working month during the duration of their contract period. All the annual leave must be exhausted within the contract period. Any leave not exhausted should be pre-approved by the supervisor to be compensated.
- If an employee is required to work on a day when he/ she is on annual leave, then he/ she will be entitled to an equivalent period of leave, to be taken at another time agreeable to the employee and line manager.

- All employees are required to take leave they accrue before the end of the project. Staff must plan and take their leaves in a way to minimize overlaps between team members and reduce adverse impact on project delivery and deadlines.
- If an employee is given notice of termination and at the same time Transparency Maldives is due to pay his/her annual leave entitlement from basic salary and benefits, then the employee shall be given his/her annual leave entitlement at the time of termination. His/her annual leave on the month of employee leaving service is computed as below:

Termination of contract on first day of a month	0 days
Termination of contract on first half of a month	1 day
Termination of contract on second half of a month	2 days
Termination of contract on last day of a month	2.5 days

- To systematically plan annual leave arrangements, staff are required to communicate to Line Manager their intended leave dates in advance at the beginning of the calendar year or their contract period. The dates would be compiled by HR in the annual leave calendar plan and disseminated to respective teams and their supervisors.
- Upon request, employees will be entitled to a payment of the basic salary & benefits applicable for the period of the approved Annual Leave, subject to meeting the two conditions :
  - i. the Annual Leave should be approved through the system and request should be Emailed to HR at least five (5) working days ahead of the first day of the intended Annual Leave period; and
  - ii. request should be sent before the 15th of the calendar month to which the first day of the intended Annual Leave period falls.
- The above request if accepted, will be paid to the employee on or before the last working day prior to the applicable Annual Leave.

## **b) Sick Leave**

Sick Leave is granted for conditions such as personal illness, injury, and exposure to contagious diseases that may endanger the health of other employees.

All employees are entitled to up to 30 days of paid sick leave during every year of employment, in accordance with this Policy. Any unused Sick Leave at the end of a leave year cannot be carried forward to the next year.

The following rules apply to Sick Leave:

- In the following cases where employees report sick, employees are required to submit a medical certificate specifying the nature of the employee's illness and recommended duration of sick leave from a registered medical practitioner immediately upon reporting to work:
  - i. any absence from duty due to sickness which exceeds two (2) consecutive days; or
  - ii. if the total number of Sick Leave during any given leave year exceeds a total of fifteen (15) days, irrespective of whether (i) above applies.
- Failure to submit the Medical Certificate will void the sick leave and all absences in such regard shall be considered as unauthorised leave.
- An employee who is unable to report to work due to sickness must notify his/her supervisor(s) within 60 minutes of the expected start time via phone call, SMS, or teams chat. In addition, the employee must formally log sick leave on 'Fahi Keplar' HR System on the same day, preferably at the start of the day.
- If staff doesn't inform supervisor within 60 minutes of reporting time, it will be considered as an unauthorized leave and may be cause for forfeiture of pay or other disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- Where possible, routine medical, dental and optical appointments should be scheduled outside working hours. Where this is not practical, staff can notify their supervisor(s) ahead and arrange their schedule in a manner to minimize interference with urgent-work related tasks.
- Staff may request for half-day leave, sick leave or any other authorized leave if a staff expects the appointments to be time-consuming.

**c) Family/ Compassionate Leave**

An employee may be given a maximum of 10 days of family/compassionate leave to attend to a member of his/her family who is sick or in a serious medical condition or due to a death in the family.

For the purposes of this policy, the following will be defined as family members: parents, spouse and children.

Any other requests for family/compassionate leave involving family members outside the above defined category will be considered on case-by-case basis.

If an employee's family member gets sick, in which the presence of the employee is required, he/she may be excused from work as a family/compassionate leave subject to the approval from supervisor(s). An employee who is unable to report to work due to a family emergency must notify his/her supervisor(s) within 60 minutes of the expected start time or immediately via phone call, SMS, or teams chat.

In addition, the employee must formally request for family leave on TM HRMS 'Fahi Keplar', preferably on the same day.

In cases where staff wishes to take family/compassionate leave exceeding 5 days consecutively, staff are required to give an advance notice of 3 days to their supervisor.

If a staff doesn't inform supervisor within 60 minutes of reporting time or provide advance notice as required under this policy, it will be considered as an unauthorized leave and may be cause for forfeiture of pay or other disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

If the family/compassionate leave exceeds the permissible number of days, then Transparency Maldives may deduct the extra days from future or cumulative paid annual leave of the employee provided that annual leave request procedures are followed.

**d) Paternity Leave**

A male employee shall be entitled to a maximum of 30 working days (excluding public holidays) of leave on the occasion of the birth of his child.

The employee may choose to take 15 working days of paternity leave effective from the date of birth of the child and utilize the remaining 15 working days within the first year after the birth of the child after which the leave will expire.

To ease workload handover and alternative arrangements, the employee must communicate to their supervisors their expected or intended leave date as early as possible. The employee must also formally request for leave through 'Fahi Keplar' HR System, preferably within 10 days before the requested leave date. Leave is approved once supervisor approves the leave from the HR system.

In case of emergencies, or in the event of changes to the expected delivery date, the employee must immediately notify their supervisor(s). The employee should also update their leave dates through the HR system or email the revised dates to [hr@transparency.mv](mailto:hr@transparency.mv)

**e) Leave for Child Circumcision**

All employees shall be eligible for a maximum of 5 days of leave on the occasion of the circumcision of his/ her son.

The employee must formally request for leave through 'Fahi Keplar' HR System, preferably within 10 days before the requested leave date. Leave is approved once supervisor approves the leave from the HR system. The employee is required to submit supporting document immediately upon return to work

In case of emergencies, or in the event of changes to the expected date, the employee must immediately notify their supervisor(s). The employee should also update their leave dates through the HR system or email the revised dates to [hr@transparency.mv](mailto:hr@transparency.mv).

**f) Maternity Leave**

- i. On becoming pregnant, employees must notify their line manager as soon as they feel able to do so. This is important because there are health and safety considerations for the organisation.
- ii. Employees shall be granted 60 working days maternity leave based on a medical certificate specifying the estimated date of giving birth issued by a licensed medical practitioner. If the employee wishes, leave can commence 30 days prior to the estimated date of giving birth. This section does not prevent the employee from returning to work prior to expiration of the duration of her maternity leave.
- iii. Maternity leave is a leave granted to female employees in addition to other forms of leave. The following rules apply when a maternity leave of absence is granted:
  - The employee's doctor should determine the period required for maternity leave and document such determination in written form. In order to plan ahead and arrange smooth handover, employees should keep their supervisor(s) updated for their expected leave date.
  - The employee must formally request for leave through 'Fahi Keplar' HR System, preferably within 10 days before the requested leave date. Leave is approved once supervisor approves the leave from the HR system.
  - In case of emergencies, or in the event of changes to the expected delivery date, the employee must immediately notify their supervisor(s). The employee should also update their leave dates through the HR system or email the revised dates to [hr@transparency.mv](mailto:hr@transparency.mv), with appropriate medical documentation (eg: birth certificate).
  - A further leave of 30 days unpaid leave (in addition to the maternity leave specified in f. ii) shall be granted to an employee where a licensed medical practitioner certifies the employee's inability to return to work either due to ill health of the mother or the baby. Such leave can be granted prior to the estimated date of delivery or after delivery. An employee is also eligible to request for unpaid leave of upto 30 days immediately following their maternity leave, if the employee is unable to find a care giver for the baby while the mother returns to work.
  - If an employee gives birth to a stillborn baby after 27 weeks of pregnancy the employee will be entitled to 60 (sixty) calendar days of maternity leave.



- During the late-term of pregnancy (third trimester), if an employee is advised to rest or work less, flexible working arrangements including work from home can be considered, and will be subject to approval from the line manager and the ED. Such request must be made along with a doctors recommendation (medical document).
- An employee's rights, benefits, promotion and other privileges shall not be affected due to her absence from work during maternity leave. An employee's maternity leave shall not cause a break in her employment with Transparency Maldives.
- All salaries and benefits due to the employee on maternity leave shall be paid on the due date of salary.
- An employee who returns after her maternity leave shall be reinstated with the same salary and benefits as before her leave, unless she is unable to comply with the requirements of the job.
- If an employee's job is abolished or revised while she is on maternity leave, then Transparency Maldives shall find her a suitable employment in another section. In the event this is not possible or the employee refuses such suitable employment, Transparency Maldives shall issue a notice of termination to the employee.
- When the employee returns, post maternity, and commencing from the date she returned, the employee is entitled to take two (2) child-care breaks of thirty (30) minutes each during the working day, until the baby is 1 year old. If the employee wishes to do so, she may combine the two 30 minutes break to a 1-hour break after notifying her supervisor to ensure that any disruption to work due to the break is minimal.

**g) Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)**

Transparency Maldives recognises that the nature of its work means that on occasion's staff will be needed to work outside standard working hours. Working additional hours is voluntary at Transparency Maldives. However, Transparency Maldives also acknowledges its duty to protect the health and safety of its employees by ensuring that they do not work excessive hours, and that any additional hours are agreed in advance and monitored appropriately.

Transparency Maldives' Time off in Lieu (TOIL) procedure below will be considered and followed as the mechanism for ensuring that employees are given the applicable time off for excessive hours of work and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

- To encourage staff to rest, any staff who works for more than six consecutive days (48 hours) a week will be eligible and encouraged to apply for TOIL.
- No employee shall be required to work more than 6 consecutive days (48 hours) a week (on a day that is normally a day off or has been agreed as a day off), without being provided with twenty-four consecutive hours of leave.
- TOIL is not entitled for staff to complete their routine tasks or tasks which can be planned and managed during official working hours or for tasks which require a few hours of work after official hours.
- The additional hours to standard working hours are sporadic or required for a limited period of time only – if it is for a period longer than a month then the line manager should review the overall staffing needs for the department/project to ensure working practices are effective.
- TOIL may only be accumulated within a plan agreed with the line managers. and granted only for exceptional circumstances, such as putting extra-long hours during off hours or public holidays, working round the clock during field trips and other such visits, or for special tasks such as elections projects which requires additional hours to be put on to meet deadlines for the longer part of the day.
- When an employee identifies additional hours, which might justify TOIL, he/she should raise this with his/her line manager in advance of the requirement to work them via e-mail. TOIL will only be granted if agreed in advance with the relevant manager.
- Time off accumulated through TOIL arrangements must be equal to time actually worked.
- TOIL should be taken as soon as practicably possible after it has been accrued. If this is not possible it must be taken within 2 weeks of accrual.
- TOIL accrued and not redeemed as outlined will be considered lost and no monetary compensation will be offered. TOIL not taken within 2 weeks of accrual will be lost.

- Line managers should ensure that employees are given reasonable opportunities to take any accrued TOIL within the approved period.
- Staff should communicate with their supervisor beforehand of any work that may require them to request for TOIL. Staff should also keep a log of the work done in 'Fahi Keplar' HR system and request for supervisor's approval promptly.
- The operation of TOIL depends on mutual trust. Any suspected abuse of TOIL will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

#### **h) Working from home**

Transparency Maldives understands that due to exceptional circumstances/conditions employees may be required to work from home. Requests to work from home will be considered based on issues such as the type of work and the amount of work; whether the employee's work requires face to face contact with clients and team members; and whether the employee's work needs supervision.

Work From Home requests must be pre-approved by the line managers, and will be granted for a duration of 1 day, unless in exceptional / special circumstances.

For all work from home requests, the Line Manager must agree on the tasks/work to be completed during this period, and submit daily updates on the work completed during the day via email.

Where staff fall sick or are required to stay home due to a family responsibility, staff are encourage to apply for the applicable medical or family responsibility leave as per this policy.

All work from home request must be pre-approved by the supervisor and applied through the Fahi Keplar preferably an hour before the start of the working day, and will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

#### **i) Unauthorized leave**

Any leave taken by the employee without the approval of designated supervisor(s) or in line with this policy will constitute unauthorized absence from work.

Unauthorised leave from work will be deemed as absenteeism from work and as such salary will be deducted to commensurate to the time absent from work.

Considerations may be given for special circumstances (for example if staff could not report on time due to extreme ill health) and in such cases, staff have to submit written requests to HR for consideration before the close of the respective month.

In the event an employee abstains from work on an unauthorized period of leave, the matter should be referred to the Executive Director, to decide on the nature of disciplinary action to be initiated against the employee as per Transparency Maldives' disciplinary policy. The disciplinary action taken in such regard could result in his/her employment being terminated should grounds be established for negligence and nonconformity to acceptable work ethics.

### **3. Public and Government Holidays**

Transparency Maldives recognizes all public holidays observed by the government of Maldives and employees are entitled to time off from work during public holidays.

For clarity, public holidays are all holidays announced beforehand at the start of each year and pre-scheduled in calendar. Public holidays are differentiated from government holidays, whereby the government may declare certain days as government holidays outside the pre-scheduled public holidays. In such cases, HR will notify all employees if staff are granted time off from work during government holidays.

### **4. Employee reporting time and duration**

The official working hours of Transparency Maldives is 8 hours from 9.00am to 5.00pm, including a one-hour lunch break. Staff are required to report to work during the official office hours, and a flexibility of one hours will be considered on both the start and end time. If for any reason the employee is not able to report on time, the employee should notify and get approval from their line manager to start work later than the normal reporting time.

The following rules apply to attendance:

- If an employee is late for more than 10 days in a month beyond 2 hours of reporting time and fail to notify their respective line manager, he/she may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Employees should ensure to plan and manage their workload, especially routine tasks, during the official working hours and ensure task completion by the end of the working hours.

## **5. Breaks**

Every employee may take a one-hour lunch on all working days. Wherever possible, employees shall take turns going for lunch break so that office(s) can remain open and all departments functioning during lunch hours. Transparency Maldives discourages any of its employees to work during lunch breaks.

All employees are allowed 15 minutes to pray during each prayer period in such a manner that it does not disrupt work.

## **6. Procedure of application of leave and endorsement**

Employees are required to notify their supervisor(s) of their leave, copied to the HR team, as follows:

- For sick leave and family emergency leave, employees are required to notify at least 60 minutes before the start of working hours via phone call, SMS or teams chat. In addition, employees have to record their leave request in TM HR system 'Fahi Keplar' System on the same day, preferably at the start of the day.
- For annual leave exceeding 10 days, paternity leave, maternity leave, and child circumcision leave, employees are required to give minimum 10 days advance and log their leave request in 'Fahi Keplar' HR system.
- Supervisors should ensure that the leave application of their staff are attended to promptly before their requested leave date.

A request for leave by staff should not be considered as automatic approval and staff should not start their leave unless approved by their supervisor in accordance with this policy.

If employees have difficulty or trouble, recording their leave in Fahi Keplar HR system, such employees should immediately email to their supervisor(s), copied to [hr@transparency.mv](mailto:hr@transparency.mv). The email should indicate the type of leave, leave dates and duration and the reason for requesting for leave via email. HR will update Fahi Keplar system once leave is approved by respective supervisor(s) via email.

All leave, apart from Sick Leave, will need to be authorized by the respective line manager and approved by the Executive Director

Employees may not be allowed to take leave on impulse without due procedure followed in relation to the requested leave, unless under exceptional circumstances and subject to approval from line manager and Executive Director

### **7. No-pay leave**

In cases of special circumstances, such as medical treatments, where staff have exhausted all their eligible leaves under this policy, TM may consider granting no-pay leaves for staff upon request, subjected to availability of fund and time left on the staff contract. This will be reviewed and decided on case by case.

Staff should submit written requests with their intended leave dates and reason as soon as possible, latest within 15 days of their intended leave date or period. The request will be considered internally by management and staff will be notified in writing if their request is approved or rejected.

### **8. Implementation of the policy**

This policy will be implemented following approval of the policy by Board and after circulation of the policy to all TM employees.

Any subsequent changes brought to the policy will be approved by the Board and disseminated to all employees.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or if there are any amendments to the Employment Act requiring subsequent changes.