

PIRSA KEEPING IN TOUCH POLICY

PIRSA is committed to giving employees the opportunity to keep in touch with the workplace while on prolonged periods of leave without pay. This assists employees to remain up to date with workplace news and changes, maintain their connections with the workplace and help their transition back to work.

This policy is one of PIRSA's suite of human resource management policies, procedures and guidelines that commit PIRSA to the ongoing pursuit of family friendly employment.

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REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description

1. TITLE

PIRSA Keeping in Touch Policy HR P 005. This policy is one of PIRSA's suite of human resource management policies, procedures and guidelines that commit PIRSA to the ongoing pursuit of family friendly employment.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

PIRSA is committed to giving employees the opportunity to keep in touch with the workplace while on prolonged periods of leave without pay. This assists employees to remain up to date with workplace news and changes, maintain their connections with the workplace and help their transition back to work.

3. PURPOSE

To provide options for employees to keep in touch with the workplace while on leave, and the protocols to follow for an employee's participation in Keeping in Touch (KIT) work.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to employees within PIRSA who are on prolonged periods of leave without pay.

5. OBJECTIVES

To maintain employee connections with the workplace and to assist with the transition back to work for employees who have been on a prolonged period of leave.

6. POLICY DETAILS

6.1 *Contact during leave*

Managers and employees have a shared responsibility to communicate information that will impact on an employee's employment with PIRSA whilst on leave. Other information may also be conveyed if the employee expresses a wish for this to occur.

6.1.1 Essential communication during leave

In accordance with [Commissioner's Standard 3.4 – Responsive and Safe Employment Conditions: Leave](#), the manager and employee have responsibilities to communicate certain information to each other. These include:

- *Manager's responsibility:* the manager must contact an employee who is on prolonged leave (e.g. parental leave, long service leave) where a review and/or change in the workplace is to occur which may have a significant impact on the status or responsibility level of the position that the employee held before commencing leave.
- *Employee's responsibility:* an employee must notify the manager of any changes of address or other contact details.

6.1.2 Other information

By mutual agreement between the manager and the employee, other information that may be communicated whilst the employee is on prolonged leave may include:

- PIRSA news and publications
- branch meeting minutes and team/office updates
- learning and development opportunities
- new policies and initiatives that may be relevant to the employee
- invitations to participate in employees surveys
- social functions organised by the work team
- health and wellbeing activities, such as flu vaccinations
- notice of vacancies.

6.1.3 Ways to keep in touch

The employee and the manager should mutually agree on the appropriate means of communicating during the employee's period of leave. Some ways to keep in touch may include:

- the employee periodically checking in with the manager or a colleague (or vice versa) by phone, email or by meeting face to face
- accessing work emails over the Internet (e.g. from home, libraries, Internet cafés) by setting up Outlook Web Access (OWA).¹ [PIRSA Outlook Web Access Instructions](#) are available to employees via the PIRSA Intranet [Welcome to the PIRSA Helpdesk Information Centre](#) or from the PIRSA ICT Helpdesk
- the manager or a colleague forwarding relevant emails to an employee's private email address.

6.2 Keeping in Touch (KIT) work

6.2.1 KIT work

- The employee may wish to have the opportunity to participate in 'Keeping in Touch' (KIT) work, as defined in section [6.2.2](#), while on leave without pay.
- No employee is required to work while on leave, and managers are not to require an employee to engage in work while the employee is on approved leave.
- KIT work may only take place by prior mutual agreement between the employee and the manager. An employee does not have a right to KIT work if the manager does not agree.

¹ The current cost for the Outlook Web Access service ranges between 90c and \$1.50 per month, which equates to a total maximum cost of \$36 over a two year period. The employee is responsible for associated costs, such as Internet connection, a home Internet plan and any impact of Outlook Web Access activity on a home Internet plan.

- Where it is agreed for an employee to engage in KIT work, the number of occasions that this can occur should not exceed ten and the total time must not exceed 30 hours.
- KIT work is to be credited to the employee's banked flexitime balance. The banked flexitime is to reflect the actual time spent on work.
- This banked flexitime must be used within the first three months of the employee's return to work. The employee may choose to use this flexitime as a way of gradually building up hours at work, to assist in the transition back to the workplace. The employee may use up to one day (7.5 hours) of flexitime per week during this period.
- KIT work may not be undertaken during a period of paid leave, such as maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave, long service leave or recreation leave.
- KIT work may not extend the total duration of any leave period.

6.2.2 Eligibility for KIT work

- The KIT work that the employee will undertake must be mutually agreed and clearly defined by the manager and the employee prior to commencing such work.
- KIT work may only be undertaken where it contributes to the professional development of the employee.
- The types of activities that can be defined as KIT work include:
 - participating in work related training or awareness sessions
 - attending conferences or seminars relevant to work
 - participating in team planning days.
- The types of activities that may *not* be defined as KIT work include:
 - attending social functions such as Christmas lunches
 - making a social visit to the workplace
 - undertaking normal work duties
 - reading and/or responding to emails and other information (such as that described in section [6.1.2](#) of this policy), which have been provided or accessed simply for the purposes of staying informed of workplace news and events.

6.3 Preparing to return to work

Prior to returning to work, the employee and the manager should discuss how the workplace can best accommodate any new circumstances of the employee. This may include flexible workplace arrangements that help employees balance their preferred participation in the workforce with their personal responsibilities, while still meeting the needs of the organisation.

More information on PIRSA's flexible work policies is available on the [PIRSA Flexible Work Practices](#) Intranet site.

6.4 Induction on return to work

When an employee completes a prolonged period of leave and returns to work, the manager is responsible for ensuring the employee is provided an induction regarding any relevant workplace changes and requirements that the employee should be made aware of.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Party / Parties	Roles and responsibilities
PIRSA Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approving this policy.
PIRSA Deputy Chief Executives, Executive Directors and Senior Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementing and supporting this policy.
PIRSA Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementing and supporting this policy.• Mutually agreeing with the employee on the appropriate means of communicating during the employee's period of leave.• Contacting an employee who is on prolonged leave (e.g. parental leave, long service leave) where a review and/or change in the workplace is to occur which may have a significant impact on the status or responsibility level of the position that the employee held before commencing leave.
Director, Organisational Change and Development, and Manager, Strategic Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing advice on this policy.• Managing, evaluating, monitoring and reviewing this policy.
PIRSA Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhering to this policy.• Notifying the manager of any changes of address or other contact details.

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

PIRSA Human Resources will undertake a post-implementation review of this policy after six months. The policy will be reviewed again every two years.

9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [PIRSA Employment](#) Intranet site
- [PIRSA Flexible Work Practices](#) Intranet site
- [PIRSA Outlook Web Access Instructions](#)
- [Welcome to the PIRSA Helpdesk Information Centre](#) Intranet site

10. REFERENCES

- [Commissioner's Standard 3.4 – Responsive and Safe Employment Conditions: Leave](#)