

Compassionate Leave Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose of Policy and Procedure

1.1. The aim of this policy is to establish a clear policy for compassionate leave. It is intended to assist staff in the event of bereavement or serious illness of a family member. In such circumstances it is reasonable to provide leave with pay in addition to normal holiday entitlement.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all staff employed by the University irrespective of length of service.

2.2. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and the University may amend it at any time.

3. Principles

3.1. The University will act sympathetically in situations envisaged by this policy and will apply the policy in a fair and reasonable manner.

3.2. Each request will be judged on its merits. There is no specified entitlement to compassionate leave as such and each case will be considered according to the relevant circumstances of the individual concerned.

3.3. The operational needs of the university will be considered however leave will not be withheld unreasonably.

3.4. Staff who are given paid or unpaid compassionate leave will not be disadvantaged in relation to opportunities for promotion, training or other benefits.

3.5. A Compassionate Leave Form should be completed as soon as practicably possible. The University recognises that by the nature of the leave it may not always be possible to complete the form prior to taking compassionate leave. In such cases the form should be completed upon the staff member's return.

4. Compassionate Leave for immediate family members (not including children, this is dealt with under s5)

4.1. In consultation with their line manager staff members will be entitled to up to 5 days paid compassionate leave where a member of their immediate family dies, is seriously ill or in severe distress.

4.2. For the purpose of this policy, "immediate family" will usually mean spouse, civil partner or partner, parent, parent-in-law, brother, sister, grandparent and grandchild (this list is not exhaustive).

4.3. Additional days' unpaid leave

Additional days' unpaid leave may be granted at the discretion of the Dean of Faculty/ Head of Service in consultation with Human Resources.

Consideration of whether, and if so, how much compassionate leave will be granted, will be based upon the personal circumstances of the individual. In the case of bereavement, factors such as the extent of the individual's involvement in the making of funeral plans or other arrangements and the need to travel beyond the local region will be taken into account. The University will therefore consider each case according to the relevant circumstances of the individual concerned.

Staff members should contact their Dean of Faculty/Head of Service as soon as possible if they need to make use of this provision.

5. Parental Bereavement Leave

5.1. Employees will be granted 2 weeks full pay in the event of the death of a child who is under the age of 18.

5.2. In order to be eligible for paid leave, employees must be:

- The parent; or
- The partner of the child's parent, who lives in an enduring family relationship with the child and their parent; or

- The "parent in fact", which means that, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child passed away, they have been living with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for the child (but who is not being paid to look after the child); or
- An adoptive parent; or
- A parent of a child born through surrogacy; or
- A parent who has suffered a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

5.3. What leave a bereaved parent can take

You can take two weeks of parental bereavement leave. You can take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks; or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times.

5.4. You cannot take the leave as individual days

You can take the leave at the time(s) you choose within the 56 weeks after your bereavement. You might choose, for example, to take it at a particularly difficult time such as your child's birthday.

If you have lost more than one child, you have a separate entitlement to bereavement leave for each child who has passed away.

5.5. Notice to take parental bereavement leave

If you need to take parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days after your bereavement, you can take the leave straight away. You do not have to provide any notice. Please let your line manager know no later than when you are due to start work on the first day on which you wish to take leave or, if that is not feasible, as soon as you can.

To take leave more than 56 days after your bereavement, please give your line manager at least one week's notice.

5.6. Changing your mind about taking parental bereavement leave

You can cancel your planned leave and take it at a different time (within the 56 weeks after your bereavement). Where your planned leave was due to begin during the first 56 days after your bereavement, please let your line manager know you no longer wish to take it before your normal start time on the first day of the planned leave.

5.7. Pay during parental bereavement leave

We recognise the need to provide bereaved parents with as much support as possible, and we will continue to pay normal pay during your leave.

5.8. Rights during parental bereavement leave

During your leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract will continue.

This means that, for example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

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