



## Burton upon Stather Parish Council

### Bereavement/Compassionate Leave Policy

Burton upon Stather Parish Council recognises that bereavement is an emotional matter and will treat all applications for bereavement leave or compassionate leave with sensitivity and on an individual basis.

#### 1) Leave Entitlements:

##### 1. Paid Leave

Bereavement leave is paid leave that allows an employee time off to deal with their personal distress and related practical arrangements, primarily, but not limited to, when a member of the family dies.

Burton upon Stather Parish Council acknowledges that bereavement impacts all individuals differently and the guidelines below are intended to show the minimum paid leave an employee is entitled to in different circumstances.

The Parish Council acknowledges that not all employees will need to take the full allowance and some employees will need additional time, depending on their relationship with the person who has died and the circumstances of the death.

- 1.1 Paid leave of absence of up to five working days shall be granted in the case of any close relative of an employee eg spouse, mother, father, daughter, son, grandchild
- 1.2 Paid leave of absence of up to three working days for example for grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law

Each employee will need to keep the Clerk/Chair informed should an extended period of leave be necessary.

##### 2. Unpaid Leave

Depending on the circumstances an additional further five days unpaid compassionate leave may be granted. The following circumstances should be taken into account:

- The distance the employee has to travel to attend the funeral
- If the employee has to organise funeral arrangements
- If the individual has responsibility for executing the will
- Knowledge of the employees personal circumstances gained from conversations

The employee must consult with the Clerk/Chair prior to starting unpaid leave

##### 3. Parental Bereavement Leave

The Council will pay statutory parental bereavement leave to eligible employed parents and primary carers, including guardians and those who have adopted children, who have

suffered the loss of a child under the age of eighteen. This entitlement also applies to parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

#### 4. Annual Leave

In the event of a bereavement, an employee will be able to take unpaid leave or annual leave at short notice to supplement their bereavement leave. Requests should be directed to the Clerk/Chair.

An employee who suffers a family bereavement while on annual leave can convert their annual leave into bereavement leave and take their annual leave at a future date.

#### 5. Compassionate Leave

In other circumstances not covered by any of the specific leave provisions, approval of up to two weeks paid leave or six weeks' unpaid leave can be approved for other compassionate reasons.

### **2) Return to work**

In certain circumstances, a full return to work may not be possible for an employee following the death of an immediate relative. In such circumstances, the Parish Council will allow a phased return to work on a part-time or reduced hours' basis where practicable. Alternative duties may also be considered. Any such arrangement would need to be agreed in advance by the Clerk/Council and be subject to an agreed maximum number of days. It would be managed in line with the Flexible Time Working Regulations.

### **3) Employee Support**

Burton upon Stather Parish Council acknowledges that bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death of relative. However, the process of grief, the natural reaction and adjustment to loss and change may take a significant time and will be personal to each individual.

An employee with any concerns about the grieving process impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with the Clerk and/or Chair to ensure that any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and put in place and that the employee is supported in their return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement or their duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with prior agreement with the Clerk and/or Chair.

### **4) Health and Safety**

Bereavement can have an impact on concentration, sleep and decision making. The health and safety assessment of the workplace will include consideration of the impact of bereavement on employees, their duties and responsibilities, and the context in which they are working, eg do they operate machinery?

Any employee who is concerned about their ability to conduct their duties safely in the weeks following a bereavement must discuss this with the Clerk and/or Chair.

Burton upon Stather Parish Council reserves the right to request that an employee visit a doctor before resuming full duties.

## **5) Culture and Diversity**

Burton upon Stather Parish Council recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways.

The Clerk and/or Chair will check whether the employee's religion or culture requires them to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements which would necessitate them being off work at a particular time. Employees should not assume that the Clerk and/or Chair is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to the Clerk's and/or Chair's attention as soon as possible.

If the Clerk and/or Chair is unsure of how to respond to a bereaved employee from a different culture, they should ask the bereaved employee or someone else from the cultural group about what is appropriate.