



BEREAVEMENT POLICY

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This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Personnel Committee.

Adopted: Personnel Committee meeting 8th October 2024 Minute ref S24/05 (c)

Reviewed:

INTRODUCTION

Great Horkesley Parish Council (GHPC) recognises that bereavement is an emotional matter and will treat all applications for bereavement leave with sensitivity. This policy describes our approach to bereavement and grief at the end of life and sets out provision for employees who lose a loved one. It outlines circumstances in which the leave can be granted and the support available to bereaved employees.

It is expected that managers will take all relevant circumstances into account when granting paid leave for bereavement. GHPC embraces flexible working and encourages employees and the Parish Clerk to discuss how this flexibility can also support the employee whilst continuing to ensure the organisational needs are met.

DEFINITIONS

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 their family dies or is nearing the end of their life.

A working week is the contractual weekly hours.

An immediate relative includes, but is not limited to, a spouse, civil or co-habiting partner, parent, step-parent, sibling, person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency, or a child (including grandchildren and children in respect of whom the employee is the adoptive parent, legal guardian or carer).

PAID BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

GHPC 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. GHPC is aware 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.

In the event of the death of an immediate relative, employees can apply for up to two working weeks' bereavement leave with pay. This may be extended at the discretion of the Parish Clerk or Personnel Committee Chairman. GHPC recognises that the impact of bereavement can change for different people in different circumstances so bereavement leave can be taken as one block of two weeks, or as two separate weeks, and is available for a period of up to 54 weeks after the death of a loved one.

In the event of the death of an extended family member, such as a parent-in-law, grandparent, son or daughter-in-law or a close friend, employees may apply for up to three days' paid bereavement leave. These circumstances would include (but are not limited to) situations where the employee is responsible for funeral arrangements or must travel to attend the funeral.

Employees are entitled to any additional parental bereavement leave and pay as stated in current legislation.

ANNUAL LEAVE & TOIL

If necessary, employees may take annual leave or time off in lieu (toil) at short notice in addition to bereavement leave, and subject to approval from the Parish Clerk and the immediate needs of the Council.

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.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees will speak to the Parish Clerk and seek authorisation for bereavement leave as soon as possible.

The Parish Clerk will deal with requests for bereavement leave promptly and with empathy and compassion and advise employees whether agreed time off will be paid or unpaid.

The employee and Parish Clerk will agree how to communicate their absence to the rest of the team and to council members and the Parish Clerk will ensure that adequate cover is arranged, where appropriate.

Where the relevant employee is the clerk themselves, requests for bereavement leave should be made to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee and the same principles as above apply.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT & RETURN TO WORK

GHPC acknowledges that bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death of a 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 Parish Clerk 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 that their duties and responsibilities are adjusted as necessary.