

Stambridge Parish Council

Bereavement policy

Stambridge Parish Council acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways.

I. Leave entitlements

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 their family dies.

Stambridge 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.

Stambridge 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.

In the event of the death of an immediate relative, seven working days paid leave will be granted. An immediate relative includes a spouse, civil partner or partner (including same sex partners), child (*), parent (**), step-parent, sibling or a person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency.

*Partner includes someone with whom the employee is co-habiting but is not the employee's spouse or civil partner.

**Child includes children in respect of whom the employee is the adoptive parent and legal guardians and carers

Two days leave will be allowed on the death of an uncle/aunt to facilitate attendance at the funeral.

In exceptional circumstances, leave may be granted on the death of someone outside the immediate family. These circumstances would include (but are not limited to) situations where the employee is responsible for funeral arrangements or has to travel abroad to attend the funeral.

An employee should notify the Chair of the Parish Council of their need to take leave as soon as possible or, at latest, on the first day of absence. In exceptional circumstances, applications for leave will be considered after the first day of absence. The Chair of the Parish Council in consultation with the Chair of the HR Committee have the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances as outlined above. Leave days do not have to be taken consecutively.

Annual leave

In the event of 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 Chair of the Parish 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.

Unpaid leave

Unpaid leave on compassionate grounds may be granted after bereavement. An employee must consult with the Chair of the Parish Council before starting unpaid leave.

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 – for example, when the employee's grief is likely to impact on their ability to perform their role, or where new child care arrangements have to be sourced or responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to the employee.

In such instances Stambridge 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 Chair of the Parish Council and would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days.

3. Employee support

An employee with any concerns about the grieving process impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with either the Chair of the Parish Council or any member of the Human Resources Committee, 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 the prior agreement of the Chairs of the Parish Council and the HR Committee.

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. Any employee who is concerned about their ability to conduct their duties safely in the weeks following bereavement must discuss this with the Chair of the Parish Council or any member of the HR Committee.

Stambridge Parish Council reserves the right to request an employee to see their doctor before resuming full duties.

5. Culture and Diversity

Stambridge Parish Council recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways. Councillors who are unsure of how to respond to a bereaved employee from a different culture should ask the bereaved employee or someone else from their cultural group about what is appropriate.