



Policy Document:

Bereavement Policy

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Staff

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Bereavement Policy - Staff.



Policy Statement

The Meadows Day Care Centre acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical ways.

What the law says:

The ACAS publication "Managing bereavement in the workplace – a good practice guide" states:

Section 57(A) of the Employment rights Act 1996 gives a "day one" right for an employee to have 'reasonable' time off work to deal with an emergency, such as a bereavement involving a dependant. This could be a spouse, partner, child, grandchild, parent, or someone who depends on the employee for care. 'Reasonable' is not defined and will depend on the situation. An employer does not have to pay an employee for this time away from work but many employers offer paid special or compassionate leave.

1. Leave Entitlement

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.

The Meadows Day Care Centre 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 Meadows Day Care Centre 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 death.

In the event of the death of an immediate relative, 5 working days paid leave will be granted. An immediate relative includes a spouse, civil partner or partner (inc. same sex partners)¹, child², parent, step-parent, sibling or a person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency.

2 days of paid leave will be allowed on the death of a mother/father-in-law, grandparent, grandchildren, and son/daughter-in-law.

1 day of paid leave will be allowed on the death of an uncle/aunt to facilitate attendance at the funeral.

In exceptional circumstances, 1 to 5 days paid 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.

¹ Spouse also includes a partner with whom the employee is co-habiting, but who is not the employee's legal spouse.

² Child includes children in respect of whom the employee is the adoptive parent and legal guardians and carers.

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

Paid bereavement leave can only be taken for normal working days.

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 Centre Manager.

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

Unpaid Leave.

Under the Employment rights Act 1996 all employees are entitled to take 'reasonable'³ time off work to deal with an emergency, such as a bereavement involving a dependant⁴.

An employee may be granted unpaid leave on compassionate grounds in the case of a bereavement involving a non-dependant, or person not detailed above in the paid leave section. In such circumstances an employee must consult with the Centre Manager before starting any 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 circumstances The Meadows Day Care Centre 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 Centre Manager, would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days or weeks and would be managed in line with The Meadows Day Care Centre's flexible working/part-time working policy.

3. Employee support.

The Meadows Day Care Centre 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 Centre Manager, to ensure that any reasonable

³ There is no definition of 'reasonable' and will depend on the situation.

⁴ A dependant could be a spouse, partner, child, grandchild, parent, or someone who depends on you for care. See www.gov.uk/time-off-for-dependants.

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 Centre Manager.

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 considerations of the impact of bereavement on employees, their duties and the context in which they are working.

An employee who is concerned about their ability to conduct their duties safely in the weeks following a bereavement must discuss this with the Centre Manager.

The Meadows Day Care Centre reserves the right to request an employee to meet the organisations medical representative, or their own GP, before resuming duties.

5. Culture and Diversity

The Meadows Day Care Centre recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways.

The Centre Manager 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 Centre Manager is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to the Centre Manager's attention as soon as possible.

Line Managers 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.

References.

The following are points of reference when managing bereavement in the workplace:

- ACAS publication *"Managing bereavement in the workplace – a good practice guide"*.
- www.gov.uk