

## **BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

New Waltham Parish Council ('The Parish Council') acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways.

### **2. Leave Entitlements**

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

The Parish Council acknowledges that bereavement impacts all individuals differently and the guideline below is intended to show the minimum paid leave an employee is entitled to.

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.

Additional time off can include annual leave.

We will normally grant up to 5 working days of paid leave in the event of the death of an immediate relative.

This could be a:

- spouse, partner\* or civil partner
- child\*\*
- parent
- step-parent
- sibling
- grandparent

brother or sister

Mother / Father - in -law

\*Partner includes someone the employee is cohabiting with but is not the employee's spouse or civil partner.

\*\* Child includes children the employee is the adoptive parent, legal guardian or carer for.

### **3. Giving notice for Bereavement Leave**

An employee should notify the Clerk (or the Chairman of the Parish Council and Personnel Committee in the Clerk's absence or where the concerned employee is the Clerk) 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 Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Personnel Committee has the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances as outlined above. Leave days do not have to be taken consecutively.

### **4. Additional 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 Clerk (or the Chairman of the Parish Council and Personnel Committee in the Clerk's absence or where the employee is the Clerk). 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 on compassionate grounds may be granted after bereavement. An employee must consult with the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman of the Personnel Committee before starting unpaid leave.

### **5. 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 childcare arrangements have to be sourced or responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to the employee.

In such instances, 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 either the Clerk or the Chairman of the Parish Council and Personnel Committee and would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days.

### **6. Employee Support**

The Parish Council 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 either the Clerk or the Chairman of the Parish Council and Personnel 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 Clerk/Chairman of Parish Council and Personnel Committee

## **7. Health and Safety**

Bereavement can have an impact on concentration, sleep, and decision-making.

Any employee who is concerned about their ability to conduct their duties safely in the weeks following bereavement must discuss this with the Clerk/Chairman of the Parish Council and Personnel Committee.

The Parish Council reserves the right to request an employee to seek medical advice before resuming full duties.

## **8. Culture and Diversity**

The Parish Council recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways.

The Clerk or Chairman of the Parish Council and Personnel Committee will check whether the employee's religion or culture requires them to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements that would necessitate them being off work at a particular time.

Employees should not assume that the Clerk or Chairman of the Parish Council and Personnel Committee is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to the Clerk or Chairman of the Parish Council and Personnel Committee's attention as soon as possible.