



St Stephen in Brannel Parish Council

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Bereavement/Compassionate Leave Policy¹

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

1. Leave Entitlements.

Paid Leave.

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

St Stephen in Brannel 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.

St Stephen in Brannel 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 up to 10 working days paid leave may 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, legal guardian or carer.

¹ Adopted by Full Council on the meeting held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 under minute number FPC64/21. Due for review in 2024.

At the discretion of the Clerk, 1-3 days leave will be allowed on the death of someone outside the immediate family eg. a mother/father-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, son/daughter-in-law. These circumstances would include (but are not limited to) situations where the employee is responsible for funeral arrangements or has to travel to attend the funeral.

Unpaid Leave.

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

- The distance the employee has to travel to attend the funeral.
- If the employee has to organise the funeral arrangements.
- If the individual has responsibility for executing the will.
- The Clerks knowledge of the employee's personal circumstances gained from daily conversation with that employee.

An employee must consult with the Clerk before starting unpaid leave

An employee should notify 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 has the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstance as outlined above. Leave days do not have to be taken consecutively and, unless exceptional circumstances apply, be taken within 3 months of the event.

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.

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.

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 by the Staffing committee 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. E.g. 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 St Stephen in Brannel 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/Staffing committee and be subject to an agreed maximum number of days and would be managed in line with the Flexible Time Working Regulations (Employment Act 2002)

3. Employee Support.

St Stephen in Brannel 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 the 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 their duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with prior agreement with the Clerk.

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, e.g. 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.

St Stephen in Brannel Parish Council reserves the right to request that an employee visit a doctor before resuming full duties.

5. Culture and Diversity.

St Stephen in Brannel Parish Council recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways.

The Clerk 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 is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to the Clerks attention as soon as possible.

The Clerk, if unsure of how to respond to a bereaved employee from a different culture, will ask the bereaved employee or someone else from their cultural group about what is appropriate.

In the event that it is the Clerk requesting leave, consultation and notification should take place with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Staffing Committee. If this is not possible, the Clerk should liaise with the Chairman of Full Council.