



South Swindon Parish Council

Bereavement policy

South Swindon Parish Council acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways. The Council will strive to be sensitive to what a member of staff may need at the time and to consider each person's physical and emotional wellbeing, including when they have returned to work.

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.

South Swindon 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. South Swindon 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.

Employees have a right to 2 weeks parental bereavement leave if their child dies under the age of 18 or is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy. Child includes children in respect of whom the employee is the adoptive parent and legal guardians and carers.

In the event of the death of an immediate relative, 3 working days paid leave will be granted. An immediate relative includes -

- spouse, civil partner, or partner (including same sex partners)*
- parent or stepparent,
- sibling
- 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.

2 days leave will be allowed on the death of -

- mother or father-in-law
- grandparents
- grandchildren
- son or daughter-in-law.

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

In addition to the above allowances up to an additional 2 days of leave may be granted at the discretion of the CEO.

In exceptional circumstances, 1 to 5 days leave may be granted on the death of someone outside the immediate family. This will be at the discretion of the CEO and 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 their line manager 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. Line managers 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 a bereavement, an employee may be able to take unpaid leave or annual leave at short notice to supplement their bereavement leave. Requests should be directed to the employee's line manager.

An employee who suffers a family bereavement in accordance with this policy 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 up to a maximum of 5 working days may be granted after bereavement. An employee must consult with their line manager before starting unpaid leave.

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 South Swindon 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 line manager and would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days.

Employee support

South Swindon 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 their line manager or the CEO, 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 line manager.

South Swindon Parish Council recognises that the majority of people do not require counselling to cope effectively with their grief. However, for employees wishing to avail themselves of professional help in coming to terms with a significant loss, the organisation will consider whether to cover the cost of counselling sessions with an independent counselling practice. This is a confidential service and can be accessed directly through your line manager or the CEO.

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 heavy machinery?

Any employee who is concerned about their ability to conduct their duties safely in the weeks following a bereavement must discuss this with their line manager.

South Swindon Parish Council reserves the right to request an employee to attend a health check with an appointed Doctor before resuming full duties.

Culture and diversity

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

Line managers 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 their line manager is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to their line 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.

Policy Review

This Bereavement Policy will be reviewed annually by the Parish Council. Details of the review and/or amendment will be recorded below.

Date	Description	Page Number	Who
May 2024	Issue	All	CEO/JM
May 2025	Annual Review	All	CEO/JM
May 2026	Annual Review	All	GSL/MT