



## **St Dennis Parish Council**

### **Compassionate/Bereavement Leave Policy**

St Dennis Parish Council recognises the personal nature of bereavement and grief; and is therefore committed to supporting its employees in reasonable and practical aspects.

#### **1. Leave Entitlements**

Bereavement leave is paid leave that allows a paid employee time off to deal with personal distress and practical arrangements when a close family member dies.

The Parish Council recognises that bereavement affects impacts on everyone differently.

St Dennis Parish Council acknowledges that not all employees will need to take the full allowance, and some staff may require additional time, depending on the relationship with the deceased person and circumstances.

At the discretion of the Clerk, 10 days paid leave may be granted for an immediate relative which includes a spouse, civil partner or partner (including same sex partners, child, parent, stepparent, sibling).

At the discretion of the Clerk, 1-3 days leave will be permitted on the death of someone outside the immediate family e.g. 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 must 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 must travel to attend the funeral.
- If the employee must organise the funeral arrangements.
- If the individual has responsibility for executing the will.
- The Clerk's 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.

#### **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/Special 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 Clerk for other compassionate reasons.

The Parish Council recognises requirement of reasonable amount of time from work to deal with emergencies involving dependents.

A dependant is defined as:

- husband, wife, civil partner or partner;
- parent;
- child;
- Someone who live in the household as part of the family, rather than being a lodger or tenant.

An employee may take time off for dependants to deal with an emergency. Examples of unplanned emergencies include:

- the illness or injury of a dependant;
- the failure of the usual carer to arrive for work;
- an incident with your child at school;
  - when a dependant gives birth;
  - arranging long-term care for an injured or ill dependant.

Some situations would not qualify for time off. The Parish Council may allow time off for other emergencies but there are some situations that the Council does not have to give time off for, including: dealing with emergencies involving home (such as fire, flooding, burglary) and:

- taking dependants to planned medical appointments;
- dealing with the illness or injury of a pet;
- personal crises (such as relationship problems).

Time off for dependants is usually to deal with emergencies so an employee is not expected to provide advance notice, but must tell employer about absence as soon as possible. An employee must tell employer how long they expect to be away.

If an employee needs to leave work to deal with an emergency, they must make reasonable effort to inform employer before leaving.

## **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 Dennis Parish Council will allow a phased return to work on a part-time or reduced hours' basis where practicable. Alternative duties or working from home may also be considered. Any such arrangement would need to be agreed in advance by the Clerk 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 Dennis 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 everyone.

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 decision making, sleep and concentration. 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 Dennis Parish Council reserves the right to request that an employee visit a doctor before resuming full duties.

### **5. Culture and Diversity.**

St Dennis 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 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 Clerk's 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.

If the Clerk is not available or 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.

Annex A:

Advice notes for dealing with absence:

### **Keeping in touch during absence**

It's important that both the employer and employee stay in regular contact during absence. They should agree:

- how often the contact should be
- if the contact is to be by email, phone, or face-to-face meetings
- who the employee is to be in contact with – this might be their line manager, another manager, or an HR manager

Keeping in contact is a good chance to:

- check on the well-being of the employee
- see if the employee needs any support
- talk about any relevant updates or changes happening at work

For further information visit the ACAS website: [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk) or [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Adopted by St Dennis Parish Council 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Minute Ref: S6/22

Review date: June 2023

Annex B: Return to work form Sample:

Strictly Confidential



## St Dennis Parish Council Return to Work Form Bereavement / Compassionate leave

### Part 1: (to be completed by employee)

Name:	Job Title:
1 <sup>st</sup> Day of Absence:	Date Returned to Work:
Number of working days absent:	Are you: full time / part time * <small>*Delete as appropriate</small>
Nature of absence:	
I reported my absence to: _____ on (date): _____	

Signed (employee): ..... Date: .....

### Part 2: Return To Work Discussion (to be completed by manager)

Manager's Name:	Date of RTW Discussion:
Summary of discussion:	
Any other comments or issues raised, and any further action agreed:	
Reasonable adjustments required:	
Further time of agreed: Yes/No	

Signed (employee): ..... Date: .....

Signed (manager): ..... Date: .....