



# Parental Bereavement Leave Policy

## HR&D

We recognise that while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the loss of a child is among the most devastating events that an individual can ever face.

This policy explains our commitment to supporting members of staff through their grief by ensuring that bereaved parents can take paid parental bereavement leave.

Our separate Bereavement Leave policy highlights other forms of leave during times of bereavement.

This policy applies to members of staff who have suffered the loss of a child (i.e. under the age of 18) on or after 6 April 2020. The policy also applies to parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

## Who can take parental bereavement leave?

Regardless of length of service, a member of staff can take parental bereavement leave if they are the:

- parent of a child who has passed away; or
- partner of the child's parent, who live in an enduring family relationship with the child who has passed away and their parent; or
- "parent in fact" of a child who has passed away, which means that for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the loss of the child, the member of staff had been living with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for the child (but was not paid to look after the child);
- "intended parent" of a child who has passed away i.e. a parent using a surrogate;
- "natural parent" of a child who has passed away who is named in a court order, i.e. where a court orders some contact for an adopted child's birth parent; or
- adopter of a child who has passed away.

In practice, this means that most members of staff with parental responsibility for a child who has passed away can take paid parental bereavement leave.

If a member of staff has suffered a bereavement but is unsure if they are entitled to parental bereavement leave, they are asked to contact their local HR Team for clarification.

If a bereavement is suffered before 24 completed weeks of pregnancy this is referred to as miscarriage and whilst parental bereavement or the maternity scheme does not apply, sick leave may apply and/or a period of compassionate leave may be granted.

# What leave a bereaved parent can take

For each child who has passed away, a bereaved parent can take one or two weeks' paid parental bereavement leave.

If you are a bereaved parent, you are able to take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks; or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times.

The leave can be taken at any time within 56 weeks of the date of bereavement. This period of time recognises that, as a bereaved parent, you may need some flexibility as to when you take the leave. For example, you may:

- wish to take leave around the first anniversary of your child's death or at another particular time that is special, such as your child's birthday; or
- already be on another type of leave, such as maternity leave or sickness absence.

If you are taking another type of leave (for example, maternity, paternity or adoption leave) and your child sadly passes away or you have a stillbirth, any parental bereavement leave should start after the other period of leave has ended but does not have to be taken immediately after. This applies even if the leave is for another child.

If the parental bereavement leave is interrupted by the start of another type of leave, the remaining parental bereavement leave may be taken after the other leave has ended, provided this is within 56 weeks of the date of bereavement or stillbirth.

## Taking parental bereavement leave

Informal notification to the Line Manager, such as a phone call, text or email, is sufficient to take parental bereavement leave.

Once the line manager has been informed of the period of parental bereavement leave, they (or nominated representative) will record the absence on the Agresso system.

## Pay during parental bereavement leave

Recognising the need to provide bereaved parents with support, we will continue to pay normal pay during parental bereavement leave.

## Rights during parental bereavement leave

During parental bereavement leave, all terms and conditions of employment will continue.

This means that all benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement will continue to accrue and pension contributions will continue to be paid.

## Supporting the return to work

We understand that individuals who suffer the loss of a child will deal with this in their own way and it is therefore vital that the support we provide members of staff is appropriate and meets individual needs. Line managers/HR will discuss the preferred approach with the member of staff around matters such as frequency of contact, method of contact and how to access the University's Employee Assistance Programme/Occupational Health Services etc.

The University recognises that returning to work after the loss of a child will be extremely difficult and aims to provide appropriate support and encourages members of staff to seek advice and support. Such advice and support can be provided by speaking with the line manager or having a confidential conversation with a member of HR and/or the Employee Assistance Programme/Occupational Health Services.

Below are links to some relevant charities which may also be able to provide support and guidance:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

<https://www.tcf.org.uk/content/ftb-grieving-parents/>

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/family-life/bereavement-support/bereavedparent-support>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/learning-from-deaths-information-for-families/>

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

## Data protection

When dealing with parental bereavement leave, line managers and the HR department will process any personal data collected in accordance with our data protection policy. In particular, line managers and HR will record only the personal information required to deal with a request for bereavement leave and keep this information only for as long as necessary to deal with the request and provide the necessary support.

### Document Control

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