



# Parental Bereavement Leave & Support Policy

## People and Culture

We recognise that while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that an individual can ever face. This document explains our commitment to supporting members of staff through their grief by ensuring that bereaved parents can take paid parental bereavement leave and be provided with appropriate support. If a member of staff has suffered a bereavement but is unsure if they are entitled to parental bereavement leave, they are advised to contact their local Business Partner – People and Culture for advice and signposting to appropriate support.

This policy applies to members of staff who have suffered the loss of a child under the age of 18 and also applies to parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Our separate Leave in special circumstances policy highlights other forms of leave during times of bereavement.

### Who can take parental bereavement leave?

Whatever your length of service, you can take this type of leave if you are the parent of the child who has passed away, or the partner of the child's parent. In general, you can take this type of leave if you have parental responsibility for the child. This includes adoptive parents.

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. You may also wish to access our Employee Assistance Programme for support, the details of which are accessible via [our intranet here](#).

### What leave a bereaved parent can take

For each child who has passed away, a bereaved parent can take up to 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 the child's death. 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 your manager, such as a phone call, text or email, is sufficient to take parental bereavement leave.

Once the 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 and additional advice & support resources**

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 to members of staff is appropriate and meets their individual needs. The manager/a member of the People and Culture team 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. A referral to our Occupational Health provider may also be appropriate. They will also be able to signpost to other professional support and relevant advice available.

The University recognises that returning to work after the loss of a child will be extremely difficult and aims to provide appropriate support and advice. This can be accessed and provided by speaking with your manager or a member of the People and Culture department.

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

[Child Bereavement UK](#)

[Cruse - Bereavement Support & helpline](#)

[NHS: Grief after bereavement and loss](#)

[Care for the family – bereavement support](#)

Here is the link for the university's [Employee Assistance Programme](#). Counselling may also be accessed through this service.

## Data protection

All information received in relation to this policy will be stored and processed in line with applicable data protection legislation. To learn more about how we handle your data please review our **Privacy Notice**.

## Document Control

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