

Bereavement Leave Policy

Policy · UK · Updated 2026-07-11 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A bereavement leave policy is the written statement of how your organisation supports an employee when someone close to them dies — how much compassionate leave they can take, whether it is paid, who it covers, and what support is available when they return.

Bereavement is where a business shows its character, and it is also where unwritten "manager discretion" does the most damage: two employees lose a parent in the same year and get different treatment, and everyone notices. A short written policy sets a floor of decency that does not depend on which manager picks up the phone.

This template gives you a ready-to-edit policy covering compassionate leave, the statutory right to parental bereavement leave, pay, manager guidance, and support on return.

Purpose and scope

This policy explains the leave and support [Your company] provides when an employee is bereaved. It applies to all employees from their first day. It sits alongside our time off for dependants policy (which covers the immediate emergency) and our absence management policy (which covers any related sickness absence).

Policy statement

[Your company] will treat every bereaved employee with compassion and flexibility. This policy sets the minimum an employee can expect; managers may extend it with the agreement of [name/role], but may never reduce it. No employee will be pressed for details of their loss beyond what is needed to arrange leave.

Compassionate leave entitlement

On the death of a member of your immediate family — [define: partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or someone in a comparable relationship, including step and in-law relationships] — you may take up to [number] days of paid compassionate leave per bereavement.

For other relationships — a close friend, an extended family member, anyone whose loss genuinely affects you — up to [number] days may be granted at the discretion of [name/role]. Discretion here means starting from yes and considering the reality of the relationship, not the family tree.

Parental bereavement leave

Employed parents have a statutory right to parental bereavement leave, and to statutory pay where eligible, following the death of a child — the eligibility rules, length of leave, how it can be taken, and pay rates are set out on GOV.UK. At [Your company] this statutory leave is in addition to the compassionate leave above, [and we top pay up to normal pay for the statutory period / paid at the statutory rate].

Pay and extending leave

- Compassionate leave under this policy is paid at normal pay.
- If more time is needed, options include annual leave, unpaid leave, a temporary change to hours or duties, or working from [home/another site] — agreed with [name/role] case by case.
- Grief that develops into ill health is treated as sickness absence under our absence management policy, never as a performance issue.
- Time needed later — an inquest, estate administration, a delayed funeral overseas — can be agreed in advance with [name/role] and does not have to be taken immediately after the death.

How to arrange leave

- Tell [your manager or name/role] by whatever means is easiest — phone, message, or via a colleague or family member.
- Agree an initial number of days and a check-in date; nobody is expected to predict on day one how long they need.
- Your manager records the leave in [system] under bereavement, agrees what colleagues are told (the default is only what you approve), and arranges cover.
- No documentary evidence is required for compassionate leave.

Support on return

Returning after a bereavement is rarely a clean restart. Managers hold a quiet welcome-back conversation on day one, agree any short-term adjustments — a phased return, changed duties, flexibility around anniversaries or dependent-care changes — and check in again after [number] weeks. [Include details of any employee assistance programme, counselling benefit, or mental health first aiders here.]

Records and review

Bereavement absences are recorded in [system] separately from sickness and are excluded from absence-management triggers. This policy is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually] by [name/role] and whenever statutory bereavement rights change. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Set the paid-days numbers deliberately — pick figures you can honour in your busiest week, because that is when they will be claimed.
2. Define "immediate family" broadly enough to reflect real households, including step-relationships and long-term partners.
3. Decide whether to top up statutory parental bereavement pay and state the answer rather than leaving it to payroll.
4. Brief managers on the tone: start from yes, ask for no evidence, and keep colleagues informed only to the level the employee approves.
- 5.

Add your actual support resources (EAP, counselling, mental health first aiders) — an empty support section reads worse than none.

Official guidance

- › [ACAS — Absence from work](#)
- › [GOV.UK — Time off for family and dependants](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/bereavement-leave-policy> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.