PORINGLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Poringland Community Centre, Overtons Way, Poringland, Norfolk, NR14 7WB
Tel: 01508 492182 Email: clerk@poringland-pc.gov.uk
Website: www.poringlandparishcouncil.gov.uk

Bereavement Policy

Policy Reference	PPC 16
Version Number	1
Associated Documents	PPC3 Code of Conduct – Councillors PPC8 Code of Conduct – Staff PPC11 Equality and Diversity PPC2 Grievance PPC12 Workers Protection PPC15 Dignity at Work Policy inc Bullying and Harassment
Last Review Date	March 2025
Frequency of Review	Two Years
Approved by	Full Council
Date for Next Review	March 2027

This is a non-contractual policy that does not require approval from employees before changes are made. Staff will remain bound by amended non-contractual policies.

Bereavement Policy

Poringland Parish Council acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways.

Paid Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave is paid leave that allows an employee time off to deal with their personal grief and related practical arrangements, primarily, but not limited to, when a family member dies.

Poringland 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.

Poringland 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. Additional time off can include for example annual leave or TOIL. Employees should check with their line manager regarding this.

If a Dependant Dies

20 working days paid leave will be granted in the event of the death of a dependant.

A dependant could be a:

- spouse, partner or civil partner (including same sex partners)*
- child**
- parent
- step-parent
- sibling
- person who lives in the employee's household (not tenants, lodgers or employees)
- person who would rely on the employee for help in the event of an accident, illness or injury, such as an elderly neighbour
- person who relies on the employee to make care arrangements

*Partner includes someone the employee is cohabiting with but is not the employee's spouse or civil partner.

**Child includes children the employee is the adoptive parent, legal guardian or carer for. If the child dies under the age of 18 or is stillborn the employee may be entitled to additional leave.

If a Non-Dependant Dies

In these circumstances, 1 to 2 days paid leave may be granted on the death of someone who is not a child or dependant. 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. (All at the discretion of the clerk.)

Giving Notice for Bereavement Leave

An employee should notify their line manager of their need to take leave as soon as possible or, at the latest, on the first day of absence. An employee's next of kin or family member can notify the employee's line manager on their behalf.

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.

Additional Time Off

Annual leave

In the event of a bereavement, an employee will be able to take annual leave at short notice to supplement their bereavement leave. Requests should be directed to the employee's line manager.

An employee who experiences a family bereavement 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 2 weeks may be granted after bereavement. An employee must consult with their line manager before starting unpaid leave.

Parental Bereavement Leave

Employees are entitled to 2 weeks Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave if their child:

- dies under the age of 18
- is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy

Employees can claim this leave if they are the:

- birth parent
- natural parent (the person who gave birth to the child who has since been adopted, but has a court order to allow them to continue having access to the child)
- adoptive parent, if the child was living with them
- person who lived with the child and had responsibility for them, for at least 4 weeks before they died
- 'intended parent' – due to become the legal parent through surrogacy
- partner of the child's parent, if they live with the child and the child's parent in an enduring family relationship

Parental Bereavement Leave can be used within 56 weeks of the date of the death or stillbirth. It can be taken as either:

- 2 consecutive week
- 2 separate weeks
- 1 week only

In order to take Parental Bereavement Leave, an employee should tell their line manager:

- when they want their Parental Bereavement Leave to start
- whether they want to take 1 or 2 weeks' leave
- the date of their child's death

To take or cancel Parental Bereavement Leave, an employee should also give their line manager the correct notice:

- if within 8 weeks of the death or stillbirth – notice must be given before the employee would usually start work on the first day of leave
- if more than 8 weeks after the death or stillbirth – notice must be given at least 1 week before the start of the planned leave

Parental Bereavement Pay

If an employee has been with Poringland Parish Council for at least 26 weeks, they will be entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay if all of the following apply:

- their child dies under the age of 18 or is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
- they were employed when their child died
- they earn on average at least the average weekly minimum amount set by the government

To enable Poringland Parish Council to pay the employee for this time off, the employee must ask in writing (give 'notice') for Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay within 28 days of taking Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave, starting from the first day of the week they're claiming the payment for.

The notice should state the employee is entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and include:

- their name
- the start and end dates of the leave they want to claim the pay for
- the date of their child's death
- their relationship with the child

On top of the 2 weeks Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay for parents, Poringland Parish Council will grant eligible employees additional time off and pay.

Poringland Parish Council will grant eligible employees a total of [2] further weeks' paid leave. This is paid at the employee's usual rate of pay.

Miscarriage Leave

If an employee or their partner has a miscarriage in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, Poringland Parish Council recognises many people will consider this a bereavement.

In these circumstances, Poringland Parish Council provides 3 days leave. This time off will be paid. This will be paid at their usual rate of pay.

Up to 2 weeks sickness absence related to a miscarriage will be recorded as 'pregnancy related sickness'. This absence will be kept separate to other types of sickness and Poringland Parish Council will not count these absences towards any review or trigger points set out in the organisation's absence policy.

Miscarriage that happens at work

Poringland Parish Council understands it can be a very distressing time if an employee's miscarriage happens at work.

Any employee who needs assistance, for example help contacting a partner or family member, or needs immediate medical help such as a first aider, can contact one of the following: Charlotte Hummel; Anneliese Merrikin, Sally Harris, Karen Watkins

If an employee needs to leave the premises they should report a sickness absence to their line manager. An employee does not have to report the exact reasons for their sickness absence if they do not feel comfortable to.

Return to work

In certain circumstances a full return to work may not be possible for an employee following a bereavement. For example, 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 Poringland 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. It would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days and would be managed in line with Poringland Parish Council's flexible working or part-time working policy.

Employee support

Poringland 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 HR appointed Councillors. This is to ensure that:

- any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and put in place
- the employee is supported in their return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement
- the employee's duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with the prior agreement of line manager

Poringland Parish Council recognises that people may not require counselling to cope effectively with their grief. However, for employees wishing to seek professional help in coming to terms with a death, the organisation will cover the cost of up to 2 counselling sessions with an independent counselling practice. This is a confidential service and can be accessed directly through HR or the employee assistance programme.

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. For example, if 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.

Poringland Parish Council reserves the right to request an employee to meet the organisation's doctor before resuming full duties.

Culture and diversity

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

Line managers will check whether the employee's religion, belief or culture requires them to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements which would require 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.

Adopted: March 2025