# Bereavement policy

West Wycombe Preschool acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways.

## **Paid leave**

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

West Wycombe Preschool 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. West Wycombe Preschool 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.

In the event of the death of an immediate relative, 5 working days paid leave will be granted. An immediate relative includes a spouse, civil partner or partner (including same sex partners),\* child,\*\* parent, step- parent, sibling or a person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency.

\*Partner includes someone with whom the employee is co-habiting but is not the employee’s spouse or civil partner.

\*\*Child includes children in respect of whom the employee is the adoptive parent and legal guardians and carers.

In exceptional circumstances, 1 to 5 days leave may be granted on the death of someone outside the immediate family. 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.

An employee should notify their manager of their need to take leave as soon as possible or, at latest, on the first day of absence. In exceptional circumstances, applications for leave will be considered after the first day of absence. Managers have the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances as outlined above. Leave days do not have to be taken consecutively.

## Unpaid leave

Unpaid leave on compassionate grounds up to a maximum of one month may be granted after bereavement. An employee must consult with their manager before starting unpaid leave.

## 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 – 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 West Wycombe Preschool 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 manager, would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days and would be managed in line with West Wycombe Preschool flexible working/part-time working policy.

## Employee support

West Wycombe Preschool 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 manager or Committee, 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 the prior agreement of manager.

Support Charities

There are a number of charities that offer free support and counselling.

Mental Health Support

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

<https://uksobs.org>

Child Bereavement

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org>

Winston Wish

<https://www.winstonswish.org>

Cruse Bereavement Care

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

WAY Widowed and Young

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

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