



# UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

## Compassionate Leave Policy

### **SUMMARY**

This document outlines:

- Definitions of 'close family members'
- Allowances for paid compassionate leave
- Guidance for unpaid leave for dependents
- Support services and additional guidance

## 1. Policy Statement

Compassionate Leave is provided to help employees during times of serious/terminal illness or death of a close family member. For other illness of a less critical nature, such as stomach bugs, colds and flu, of a family member or dependant either annual leave, flexi time or time off for dependants would be more appropriate. This policy applies to all permanent and temporary employees of the University of Plymouth and applies irrespective of job role, job grade or length of service.

This could be a difficult and challenging time and managers should support their employee and talk to them about their options for leave and the support services available at the University.

## 2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a 'close family member' is defined as:

- A close family member would normally extend to a partner (including same-sex partner), brother, sister, mother, father and child of either you or your partner.
- A close family member would also normally extend to a dependent relative or those who are not related but fill a similar family role such as an Aunt or Uncle.
- For some families, a close family member would also extend to grandparents and grandchildren.

Every individual and every family is different; there cannot be one set rule to define who is considered a close family member. The University of Plymouth respects and supports all employees in taking the time they need to cope during a time of great difficulty regardless of their religion, race/ethnicity or sexual orientation.

For the purpose of this policy, a 'dependent' is defined as:

- Partner (including same-sex partner), child or parent of the employee
- A close family member may extend to a dependent relative or those who are not related but fill a similar family role
- For some families, a dependent may also extend to grandparents and grandchildren
- Someone who lives in the same household as you (this does not include tenants and boarders, or anyone who lives in the household as an employee)
- In cases of illness or injury or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on you for assistance

## 3. Paid Compassionate Leave Allowances

- *For a serious/terminal illness* a minimum of two weeks leave with pay. Your manager should talk to you and support you throughout this time. They should discuss other options if you need an extended period of leave e.g. unpaid, annual leave entitlement or temporary reduction in hours. Leave does not necessarily have to be taken immediately, All leave must be agreed with your manager.
- *For a bereavement* a minimum of two weeks leave with pay. Your manager should talk to you and support you throughout this time. They should discuss other options if you need an extended period of leave e.g. unpaid, annual leave entitlement or temporary reduction in hours. Leave does not necessarily have to be taken immediately after a death, e.g. if a parent living in another part of the country dies it might be more helpful to start the leave a few days after the death. All leave must be agreed with your manager.

## 4. Unpaid leave for dependents guidance

Unpaid leave may be required for incident such as:

- A dependant falling ill, or being injured or assaulted. Injury may be physical or mental.
- When a dependant is having a baby (this does not include time off after the birth to care for the child. Parental or paternity leave may apply here).
- To make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- To deal with the death of a dependant (Compassionate leave may apply here).
- To deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependent (see section 2 – definitions).
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving the employee's child during school hours.

### Allowance

Employees have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid leave in the circumstances outlined above this will vary according to the situation.

This right is intended to cover genuine emergencies and, for most cases, 1 day (occasionally 2 in exceptional circumstances) should be sufficient to deal with the problem. Because of this, no limit has been set on the number of times you can be absent from work under this policy, subject to a test of reasonableness.

If you need to take a longer period of time, or where the need for time off is known in advance, or could be expected to be known then annual, parental or compassionate leave should be applied for instead.

## 5. Notification of leave

You must tell your manager immediately (or in exceptional circumstances as soon as is practicable), the reason for your absence and how long you expect to be away from work, subject to the terms within this policy.

Managers should report the absence by following the standard absence-reporting process.

## 6. Support and guidance

In the first instance, you should contact [HR@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:HR@plymouth.ac.uk) or contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team for further advice and information:

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Website: [www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality)

Email: [equality@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:equality@plymouth.ac.uk)

Twitter: [@PlymUniEquality](https://twitter.com/PlymUniEquality)

Employees and managers dealing with death, family emergencies and serious illnesses may often require additional support during this difficult time. The University of Plymouth aims to create a supportive and caring work environment and has multiple services which employees and their managers may find useful.

### Occupational Health

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If you are concerned about you or your employee's health during this time then you can contact Occupational Health:

Email: [occupationalhealth@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:occupationalhealth@plymouth.ac.uk)

Telephone: 01752 587412

## **Pastoral and Spiritual Support**

Both staff and students can access the Pastoral and Spiritual Support Centre for advice, support and information on all issues related to faith and spirituality.

Email: [spiritualsupport@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:spiritualsupport@plymouth.ac.uk)

Telephone: 01752 587760

## **Employee Assistance Programme**

All staff can access our employee assistance programme which is available 24/7 for access to counselling, advice and traumatic incident response.

Website: [www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk](http://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk)

Telephone: 0808 168 2143

## **Staff Networks**

The University has a number of staff networks to support employees and it may be helpful for employees to contact their networks during a difficult time.

All current staff networks are listed at [www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality)