



## Thameside Primary School: Compassionate Leave Policy

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Overseen by Governors: July 2025

Review date: July 2027



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| <b>Policy reviewed by:</b> | Sophie Greenaway  |
| <b>Key Changes:</b>        | <p>This is a model 2020 RBC policy<br/>         Awaiting updated RBC policy to include: As of July 2025, the UK is undergoing significant reforms in employment law, particularly around <b>compassionate leave</b> and <b>parental leave</b>, driven by the <b>Employment Rights Bill 2025</b>.</p> <p>Sections amended:</p> <p>4. Bereavement leave will be broadened to include pregnancy loss before 24 weeks including miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, and IVF loss. Para 4.1 has been updated to reflect this change from April 2026.</p> <p>5. Neonatal section added came into force in April 2025.</p> |



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|  | <p>7. Expanded the use of flexible approach for emergency scenarios, where employees can make up time.</p> <p>9. Updated EAP details.</p> |
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Appendix: Updated with forms used at Thameside.

## 1. Objectives and scope

1.1 The purpose of compassionate leave is to help employees come to terms with a bereavement, to care for sick dependants, accompany dependants to certain appointments or provide emergency care for a dependant where regular arrangements have broken down. It may also be used to come to terms with severe personal problems or the injury or critical illness of an immediate family member.

1.2 The Council recognises that, while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that an employee can ever face. This policy sets out the Council's commitment to supporting bereaved parents through their grief by ensuring they can take parental bereavement leave (see Section 4).

1.3 The provisions apply to all employees, irrespective of length of service.

1.4 The Headteacher has delegated authority to grant compassionate leave and may delegate this within their service. They will be responsible for ensuring consistency within their service. The school should contact HR for support and advice on the application of this policy if needed.

1.5 The amount of time off stated within this policy is the normal expectation. It may be appropriate to take other leave (annual leave, flexi time, time off in lieu or unpaid leave as appropriate) or a combination depending on the circumstances.

1.6 The Headteacher may grant additional paid or unpaid leave in exceptional circumstances. The reason for the decision must be recorded.

1.7 It is recognised that it may not always be possible to complete the standard 'Compassionate' Leave Request Form prior to needing to take the leave. In these circumstances it should be completed on return to work. The 'flexible' compassionate leave form should be used in cases when time should be made up to cover the lost hours as agreed by the Headteacher.

1.8 Line managers should take account of the individual circumstances and practicalities which includes those arising from faith and cultural observances and practices.



## 2 Definitions

2.1 Immediate family member: the employee's spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, child, sibling or grandparent.

2.2 Dependant: the employee's spouse, civil partner, child, parent and any person who lives at the same house (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or employee) or someone who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance or arrangements for care in the event of illness or injury.

2.3 Child: son, daughter or ward, including step, adoptive and foster children.

2.4 Close relative or friend, who is not a dependant: includes aunt, uncle, cousin, parent-in-law or a close friend.

2.5 The time granted will be pro-rata of the employee's weekly contractual hours (i.e. 37 hours for full-time employees or the pro rata equivalent for part-time employees).

2.6 A year for the purpose of this policy is 1 April to 31 March.

2.7 Unpaid leave does not constitute a break in service.

2.8 Care for Dependants includes:

- To accompany a sick dependant or a dependant with a disability to medical or professional appointments such as GP, hospital, clinic or dentist.
- To care for a sick dependant. This covers a dependant falling ill, giving birth (see also Maternity Support Leave Policy), being injured or assaulted or where arrangements need to be made to provide the care.
- To care for a dependant as an emergency when regular care is unexpectedly disrupted.
- To deal with an emergency relating to the employee's child that occurs unexpectedly at the child's school.

2.9 Compassionate leave may also be requested to come to terms with severe personal problems. This could include for example significant concerns such as serious financial issues, a house fire or serious flood at the employee's home (see Section 6).



### **3 Compassionate Leave - Bereavement**

3.1 In the event of the death of an immediate family member, dependant or close relative or close friend, an employee can request up to five days paid leave.

3.2 The manager will take account of the individual circumstances, relationship with the deceased, domestic responsibilities and travel requirements when deciding how many days to grant. Additional paid leave may be granted at the discretion of the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director, for example if the employee is responsible for making funeral arrangements. The reason for the decision must be recorded.

3.3 If the employee is unfortunate to have a further bereavement, a further request for up to five days paid or unpaid leave can be made for each bereavement.

3.4 Further time required beyond 5 days, may also be self-certificated under the Sickness Absence procedure and then covered by a Doctor's certificate thereafter from the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive day of absence (includes weekends).

### **4 Compassionate Leave - Parental Bereavement**

4.1 Unpaid parental leave is a day-one right, aligning with maternity and adoption leave.

4.2 Employees are entitled to two weeks of statutory parental bereavement leave if they lose a child under 18 or experience a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. From April 2026, this extends to Pregnancy loss before 24 weeks, including miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, and IVF loss.

4.3 The Council recognises the need to provide bereaved parents with as much support as possible and will continue to pay normal pay during the two weeks' leave (this is not in addition to normal bereavement leave - see section 3 above).

4.4 It will be available to the birth parents or those with parental responsibility for the child and can be taken within 56 weeks of the child's death, in a block of two weeks, or two blocks of one week. The leave cannot be taken as individual days.

4.5 If employees wish to take parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days after a bereavement, they can take the leave straight away and do not have to provide any notice. Employees should let their line manager know as soon as they can. If the leave is to be taken in two separate blocks, employees should give at least one weeks' notice of their intention to take the second week's leave. Additional paid leave may be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. The reason for the decision must be recorded.



## **5 Neonatal Care Leave (effective April 2025):**

5.1 Employees are entitled to up to 12 weeks of additional leave if a baby requires neonatal care.

5.2 Leave is a day-one right, but pay eligibility requires 26 weeks of service.

5.3 Pay is set at £187.18/week or 90% of earnings, whichever is lower (as at April 2025).

## **6 Compassionate Leave – Care for Dependants**

6.1 A maximum of five days paid leave in a year can be requested to care for dependants. This is based on a rolling year from the date of the first day of compassionate leave taken.

6.2 For leave to accompany a dependant to an appointment, the employee will be required to provide their manager with an appointment letter, card or screenshot. They should give as much notice as possible, unless it is an emergency. If evidence cannot be provided, then annual leave or unpaid leave should be taken. Where appointments can be arranged outside the employees normal working hours, compassionate leave will not be granted.

6.3 For leave to care for a sick dependant, the employee will be required to provide a doctor's certificate confirming the need for assistance. The Council will reimburse the cost of this when it is accompanied with a receipt.

6.4 In circumstances of disrupted care or emergency related to school, the employee should make every reasonable effort to make alternative arrangements. If that is not possible and leave is requested, the employee will be required to provide evidence.

6.5 A request for leave should be made using the school's 'Compassionate Leave request form' available in the office. Where possible, this should be completed in advance and the Headteacher will accept or reject the request for leave based on reasons provided. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant permission to take leave as either paid or unpaid dependant on the circumstances.

## **7 Compassionate Leave – Severe Personal Problems or emergency situations**

7.1 This leave can be requested up to a maximum of five days paid leave days in a year. Severe personal problems could include for example significant concerns such as serious financial issues, a house fire or serious flood (emergency situations). These situations are usually where it is not possible to continue at work and the matter must be attended to immediately.

7.2 A request for leave should be made using the school's 'Compassionate Leave request form' available in the office either before or retrospectively. Where possible, this should be completed in advance and the Headteacher will accept or reject the request for leave based on reasons provided. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant permission to take leave as either paid or



unpaid dependant on the circumstances. There may be instances, where a flexible approach should be taken, which means working hours lost, should be made up at an alternative time so not to disadvantage the school. Employees should complete the 'flexible compassionate leave request form' and propose how lost time can be made up at another time, for example, staying later afterschool to help sort the library.

## 8 Appeals

8.1 In the first instance, an appeal should be made to the Headteacher. If an individual is still unhappy, or if the leave was in excess of what was provided for in the policy, then they may appeal to the Governing Body. This process should ensure that a decision is arrived at as soon as possible.

8.2 Employees who wish to raise a concern about the application of this policy are advised to seek the support of their trade union representative if they are a member. If this situation occurs, an employee can raise their concern using the council's Grievance Policy.

8.3 Employees are also encouraged to contact HR for advice regarding compassionate and parental bereavement leave. Email: [hrodhub@reading.gov.uk](mailto:hrodhub@reading.gov.uk)

## 9 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

9.1 The EAP offers free and confidential information and advice for all staff 24/7, 365 days a year. The EAP service can be accessed via the website <https://wisdom.healthassured.org/login>, the Wisdom mobile app, or by calling them on 0800 028 0199. To use the Wisdom app, or the Wisdom portal on a desktop, please enter Reading Borough Council's organisation code MHA179566. You will then be prompted to create an account, and once you have done so, you can access all the online services and well-being tools provided by Health Assured.

The EAP is available to all staff in RBC-maintained schools.



### COMPASSIONATE LEAVE REQUEST FORM (EXEPTIONAL/UNAVOIDABLE LEAVE)

This form is to record any request for Compassionate Leave and the outcome of that request. The Headteacher will decide whether to grant your request. This cover all occasions which are an emergency or unavoidable.

Name of Staff member: .....

Reason for Leave (Tick as Appropriate) (up to maximum of 5 paid days in 12 months rolling period)

Bereavement Leave or Funeral of a close family member or relation

Domestic Problem (Leak/Urgent repair) .....

Unavoidable Hospital Appointment (not routine) .....

Sickness of close relative/partner:.....

Other (Please Specify).....

Dates Leave Requested: From Date: ..... To Date.....No of total days:.....

Time if less than 1 day: AM / PM Exact Times: .....

What would you be teaching/missing in school during this time (to assist with planning cover):.....  
.....

Your request maybe agreed but may be unpaid. This is discretionary and decided by the Headteacher. See Employee handbook for more details on when time off will be granted as paid.

Please inform your phase leader of your request, prior to completing this form.

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**Headteacher completes this section:**

Leave Granted? Yes  No  (Tick as Appropriate)

Leave is: Paid  Unpaid  (Tick as Appropriate)

Indicate if there is a combination of paid and unpaid leave.....

Headteacher's brief comments on reason for decision:  
.....

**SBM: Number of days paid days agreed in last 12 months / 5**



### FLEXIBLE LEAVE REQUEST FORM (PLANNED FLEXI TIME OFF)

This form is to record any request for time off which is planned in advance and is a non-emergency. This should be avoided as much as possible, but we respect that staff do have occasional exceptional personal reasons that require them to take time out. The Headteacher will decide whether to grant your request. You will be expected to either take this time as unpaid or make up the time 'flexi time'. You should discuss with your phase leader how you intend to make up the time or use time already accrued against the time you are out of school.

Name of Staff member: .....

Reason for Leave (Tick as Appropriate) (up to maximum of 5 paid days in 12 months rolling period)

| I would like to take the following as:                               | Flexi                    | Unpaid                   |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Meeting with child's school.....                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Child's School Play/Graduation .....                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Routine GP/Dentist appointment (that can't be scheduled around work) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please Specify) .....   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Date flexi requested: From Date: ..... Time:..... To Date:.....Time:.....

If time is taken has flexi, rather than unpaid, total time to make up:.....

What would you be teaching/missing in school during this time (to assist with planning cover):.....  
.....

Your request maybe agreed but may be unpaid. This is discretionary and decided by the Headteacher. See Employee handbook for more details on when time off will be granted as paid. It would not be expected that more than half a day would be required for planned time off. It should be avoided where possible.

Please inform your phase leader of your request, prior to completing this form and agree how this time will be made up/ worked at an alternative time.

**Headteacher to complete:**

Leave Granted? Yes  No  (Tick as Appropriate)

Leave is: Flexi/paid  Unpaid  (Tick as Appropriate)

Headteacher's brief comments on reason for decision: