



1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to help employees balance the demands of domestic and work responsibilities at times of **unplanned** and **urgent** need. Special Leave enables employees to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem and make any appropriate arrangements. Parental Bereavement Leave provides support to employees who have suffered the loss of a child under the age of 18.

2. Special Leave

Circumstances where Special Leave can be granted:

- if a dependant (see 2.1) falls ill, gives birth or has been involved in an accident or assaulted, including where the victim is hurt or distressed rather than injured physically
- to deal with the death of a dependant, for example, to make funeral arrangements or to attend a funeral
- to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements for a dependant; for example, when the childminder or nurse fails to turn up, or when a school or nursery (attended by the children of employees) is unexpectedly closed
- to deal with an incident involving the employee's child during school hours: for example, if the child has been involved in an accident or is being suspended from school

2.1 Who is a dependant

A dependant can be the employee's spouse or civil partner, child or parent, or someone who lives in the same household, but who is not his/her employee, lodger or boarder. A dependant may also be any person who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance on an occasion when the person falls ill or is injured or assaulted, or plan for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury, or where care arrangements are unexpectedly disrupted or terminated.

2.2 For all employees

An employee who works for the University full or part-time, regardless of length of service or type of contract, will be entitled to apply to take a reasonable period of unpaid time off for the reasons detailed above.

2.3 For employees with a contract of employment with terms and conditions in excess of statutory

In addition, all employees with a contract of employment with terms and conditions more than the statutory will be entitled up to five days (36.25 hours full time), paid (pro rata for part-time employees) in a 12-month period. Heads of Schools/Departments (or designated person) may grant leave with pay (taken from the five-day (36.25 hours) entitlement stated above) for urgent domestic needs e.g. burglary of home to allow arrangements to be made.

2.4 Personal Health and Welfare appointments

Individuals should make every effort to arrange appointments to a doctor, dentist, optician, physiotherapy, or other standard medical appointment outside of working hours, irrespective of their working pattern. However, if this is not possible it is the normal expectation for time taken out of the working day to be made up. Arrangements for taking and making up time in this way, should be agreed with the employee's Line Manager. Such appointments are not required to be recorded in UniCore.

Hospital appointments, or other non-standard personal health and welfare appointments, should also be made outside of working hours if at all possible. However, the University recognises the scheduling of these appointments is sometimes outside the control of the individual employee. If this is the case, paid time off for those employees, should be given (antenatal care is the exception where time is paid irrespective of when the appointment is arranged). The supervisor/manager may ask to see confirmation of the appointment eg appointment card or letter. The supervisor/manager must ensure that any personal information, such as the nature of the illness, remains confidential in all cases.

2.5 Additional information

Where an employee needs to use the University telephone system, for example to make an appointment to a doctor, which due to opening hours cannot be arranged outside of work, the supervisor/manager should be consulted.

2.6 Application process

Employees requesting Special Leave for unplanned or urgent domestic, personal and family reason should discuss this with their Line Manager and apply through UniCore; which can be accessed here: nottingham.ac.uk/unicore as soon as is reasonably possible. If the employee does not have access to UniCore, the Line Manager or designated person can enter the leave on the employee's behalf. The employee must state the reason for the absence and how long they are expected to be away from work. The employee's Head of School/ Department or designated nominee should approve (or reject) the request, in UniCore, prior to the period of Special Leave being taken.

It is **unlikely** that employees would need to take the full entitlement in each period, as they will be required to make speedy arrangements so that they can resume work as soon as possible. However, each situation should be dealt with individually. Should the employee know that the school or nursery (attended by the children of employees) would be closed for a second consecutive day, they should request to take annual leave or unpaid leave as normal.

Method and frequency of contact between the employee and the Line Manager or Head of School/Department or designated nominee during the period of absence should be agreed during the first conversation; in most cases, the contact will be daily.

Special leave should only be granted at the start of the employee's working day, or as soon as is reasonably practicable, and should not normally be granted retrospectively. Any local arrangements for taking this leave should be followed.

Employees requesting time off to attend a hospital appointment or other non-standard personal health and welfare appointment should do so via UniCore (using the 'Special Leave' category and selecting personal health and welfare as the reason); which can be accessed here: nottingham.ac.uk/unicore as soon as the appointment date is known. If the employee does not have access to UniCore then their Line Manager or designated person can enter the leave on the employee's behalf.

Similarly, requests for unpaid special leave should be submitted by employees via [UniCore](#) (using the category of 'unpaid special leave'). If the employee does not have access to UniCore, then their Line Manager or designated person can enter the leave on the employee's behalf. Approved requests will automatically notify Payroll.

3. Parental Bereavement Leave

Parental bereavement leave intends to support employees in the immediate period following the loss of a child before they turn 18, or loss through stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. The University is committed to supporting employees through this difficult time.

If you have experienced or are experiencing the loss of a pregnancy prior to 24 weeks gestation, any absence that you may need to take will be classified as sickness absence (this will not count towards absence triggers).

Parents or adults with parental responsibility who suffer a stillbirth or the loss of a child under the age of 18 will be entitled to two weeks' Parental Bereavement Leave.

Adults with 'parental responsibility' includes adopters, foster parents and guardians. This also applies to 'kinship carers', who may be close relatives or family friends that have assumed responsibility for looking after a child in the absence of parents. For full details of eligibility based on relationship to the child, please see the Government web site at: <https://www.gov.uk/parental-bereavement-pay-leave/check-if-youre-eligible>.

3.1 For all employees

An employee who has a contract of employment, which is in alignment with statutory terms and provision (under 26 weeks of continuous employment), is entitled to up to two week's unpaid leave. Unless they have reached 26 weeks of continuous employment prior to when the child dies, and in which case they are entitled to up to two weeks of statutory paid leave. The leave can either be taken as a single block of two weeks or two separate blocks of one week and must be used within 56 weeks of the date of the child's death. This should be recorded by the HR Department, in UniCore, within the Parental Bereavement category.

3.2 For employees who have a contract of employment, which is more than statutory

An employee who has a contract of employment, which is more than statutory is entitled to two weeks' paid leave. As above, the leave can either be taken as a single block of two weeks or two separate blocks of one week and must be used within 56 weeks of the date of the child's death. This should be recorded by the HR Department, in [UniCore](#), within the Special Leave category.

3.3 Notifying the University of your Parental Bereavement Leave

Parental Bereavement Leave can be taken immediately following the death of a child. The employee, or a partner or family member on behalf of the employee, should inform their Head of School/Department or line manager before the normal start of the working day, or if that is not feasible, as soon as is reasonably practicable, that they wish to take Parental Bereavement Leave.

The employee should state whether they wish to use their Parental Bereavement Leave as a single block of two weeks or whether they wish to take two separate blocks of one week at different times (e.g. the employee might wish to use one week of leave around the first anniversary of their child's death).

Where employees are taking leave between 9 and 56 weeks of the child's death or stillbirth, employees must give at least one-weeks' notice before the start of the week/weeks that they would like to take off work.

The Head of School/ Department or line manager must notify the [HR Department](#) of their employees Parental Bereavement Leave within 28 days, starting from the first day of the week of leave, stating:

- The dates for the period of Parental Bereavement Leave
- The employees name
- The date of stillbirth or child's death

This information will be captured in [UniCore](#), by the HR Employment Services Team. Employees are not required to provide evidence of the child's death (i.e. death certificate). Under the Data Protection Act 2018, employees have the right to keep details of their child's death confidential.

4. For further information and support

Please contact the HR Employment Services Team:

- Tel: 0115 748 4800 or Email: HR-Employment-Services@nottingham.ac.uk
- For further support, the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) can provide free confidential support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 0808 168 2143.
- The University of Nottingham counselling service provides a free and confidential service for all staff. They can be contacted via email: counselling.service@nottingham.ac.uk (open Monday to Friday, 9.30 am - 4.30 pm).