



Saltash Town Council

Policy/Procedure:

Time Off for Dependants

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This is a Policy or Procedure document of Saltash Town Council to be followed by both Councillors and employees.

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Time Off for Dependants

Introduction

Situations arise where an employee needs to take time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on them. Provided the reasons for such a request are genuine and you inform your line manager as soon as possible that you need this time off, this should be allowed with reasonable unpaid time off work to deal with such emergencies. Alternatively, with the agreement from your line manager you can request this time off as annual leave.

There is no qualifying length of service requirement to have this right.

Dependants

A dependant is the employee's husband, wife or civil partner, child or parent, or someone living with them as part of their family who can be considered as depending on the employee. Others who rely on the employee for help in an emergency may also qualify.

Emergency

The right to time off is essentially intended to cover emergencies involving dependants. The right does not extend to, for example, time off to deal with a burst pipe or wait for the gas engineer. If you know in advance that you are going to need time off, you may be able to arrange this with your line manager by taking another form of leave, such as annual leave. However, the mere fact that you know in advance, for example, that you are going to have a problem with child care arrangements on a particular day, does not prevent you from having the right to time off if you are unable to make alternative arrangements in the meantime.

For these purposes, an emergency is where:

- a dependant needs assistance because they have fallen ill, given birth or been injured or assaulted
- you to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured
- a dependant has died
- you need to deal with an incident involving your child which occurs unexpectedly at a time when school is responsible for the child's care
- you need to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements, for example for a parent or child.

Length of time off

Employees can only take off as much time as it takes to deal with the immediate emergency. For example, if a dependant is ill you can take enough time off to deal with their initial needs, such as taking them to the doctor and arranging for their care.

Employees cannot take time off work to provide continuing care themselves and will need to make alternative arrangements for such care. If you want to stay off work longer to provide care you will normally need to take this as part of your annual leave entitlement.

As a general benchmark, no more than a day or so should be necessary. You are under no duty to provide evidence to substantiate the request, albeit that STC will not request such evidence. No request for time off will be unreasonably be refused by STC and STC cannot refuse on the grounds of business reasons. The only reason STC will refuse such leave is on the grounds that the employee is taking an unreasonable amount of time off. If there is evidence of this abuse of the right, then the matter will be dealt with by way of the disciplinary process.

Notice

You must notify your line manager as soon as possible the reason why you are away from work and how long you expect to be off. In extreme cases of emergency where you cannot inform your line manager of your absence before you return to work, on your return you should still inform your line manager why you were absent.