

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Policy Owner	Human Resources
Author	Human Resources Officer
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Equalities Impact Assessment Is it required? Yes/No	No
Proof Read	Yes in HR
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Approved by	SMT Committee
Next Review Due	November 2019

Audience – Training and Awareness Method	Managers to be made aware and HR guidance will be given as required.
Effective Date	TBC

Internal References	N/A
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External References	N/A
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Comments	Policy and procedure
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Compassionate Leave Policy and Procedures

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Blackwood recognises that there are circumstances where individuals need to be supported when they have to deal with sudden or unexpected events which have an impact on their family or dependants. In these circumstances Blackwood clearly understands that priorities will change and that work must come second in order that the employee can deal effectively with the circumstances.
- 1.2 The Compassionate Leave Policy is in place to allow employees paid time off to deal with these circumstances and is part of Blackwood's Terms and Conditions which recognise the value and importance of balancing individual's responsibilities between work and home life.
- 1.3 In principle, an employee is entitled to up to 5 days paid Compassionate Leave within any rolling 12 month period. See Section 3.8 for clarification on how this maybe administered.
- 1.4 Other Blackwood Policies which are linked to Compassionate Leave or statutory (legal right) time off work are:-
 - Parental Leave Policy
 - Time Off for Dependants Policy
 - Flexible Workinf Policy
- 1.5 For the purposes of this Policy Family members/dependants are defined as the husband, wife or partner, child or parent of the employee, including in-laws. It also may include someone who lives in the same household as a member of the family, for example, an aunt or grandparent who lives in the household. At the discretion of the Manager and in consultation with HR this definition can be reviewed to allow the policy to apply where there is a genuine reason to extend the definition to persons other than those mentioned above.
- 1.6 When the policy is used to cover bereavement, the definition of family members is expanded to include brothers, sisters (in-laws), uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews or any other close family relative of the employee or the partner of the employee.
- 1.7 Blackwood recognises that there are certain religious groups which may need to make arrangements in accordance with their faith and will view these requests sensitively in accordance with the Policy.

2. Key Principles

- 2.1 The Compassionate Leave Policy should be administered by Managers with support from Human Resources (HR).

- 2.2 A record of all Leave taken under the Policy should be recorded in the employees file using the Employee Leave Record Form which can be found in the HR Open Folder. For care employees these absences should also be recorded in the Care Management Systems. .
- 2.3 Compassionate Leave may be taken for the following circumstances: serious illness of a family member or dependant where the employee has caring responsibilities; to support a dependant or family member through a particularly difficult event, such as miscarriage or after diagnosis with a serious illness or condition; to assist in the rehabilitation or change in circumstances of a family member or dependant, for example a move into retirement accommodation or a move home after hospitalisation. This list is not exhaustive and other events may be considered under the policy in consultation with HR.
- 2.4 Compassionate Leave should be administered consistently; it need not be taken as a block and may be spread over a period of weeks, for example when caring for a sick family member or dependant or during a period of rehabilitation.
- 2.5 Consideration should also be given to the appropriateness of requests for leave under the Policy. For example, it may not be appropriate to grant 5 days leave for the bereavement of a cousin who lives locally and with whom the employee had limited contact and has no responsibility in the administration of their affairs. However a cousin who lived and died abroad where travel is a significant factor may warrant consideration for 5 days compassionate leave.
- 2.6 Unpaid Leave – there is a right to reasonable unpaid leave under Blackwood's Time Off for Dependants Policy. If appropriate this policy may be used to grant further leave to those who qualify in the circumstances.
- 2.7 Additional unpaid compassionate leave may be considered if appropriate under the circumstances. Allowing additional unpaid leave under this policy should first be discussed with HR.
- 2.8 Any abuse of the Policy will be considered under the appropriate Blackwood Policies and the rights for compassionate leave under the policy may be withdrawn from employees who are found to have abused the system or made false statements about their own circumstances. Blackwood also reserves the right to re-classify any leave believed to have been taken under false pretences as Annual Leave for accounting purposes.

3. Compassionate Leave Procedures – Employee Reference Guide

- 3.1 Requests for compassionate leave must be submitted to your Manager as soon as the need arises, this can be in person or in exceptional circumstances by telephone.
- 3.2 We recognise that these requests under this policy may often be without warning and in difficult circumstances.
- 3.3 You should try to explain the nature of the request, how much leave you feel you require and what arrangements you need covering in your work place while you are on leave.
- 3.4 The maximum amount of Compassionate Leave you may take in any rolling 12 month period is 5 days. The conditions are slightly different for bereavement, see Section 3.8 for details.

- 3.5 You may request up to the maximum although your manager may require you to reduce the number of days under the policy depending on individual circumstances. However managers will be sensitive to your request and try and accommodate you.
- 3.6 You may also request Annual Leave to run concurrently if required and requests for annual leave to enhance compassionate leave will be looked on as favourably as possible but will need to be considered alongside the needs of the business.
- 3.7 Compassionate Leave is paid at your daily rate of pay, without any enhancements or shift allowances unless you are a permanent night shift employee.
- 3.8 **Bereavement Leave** - Under this Compassionate Leave Policy you are entitled to up to 5 days paid leave to deal with the bereavement of a family member or dependant. The circumstances should be discussed with your Manager but the maximum allowance may be taken when you are closely involved in the arrangements for the funeral, dealing with legal matters or where there is a considerable distance involved and you need to travel as part of these arrangements. Compassionate Leave includes time off to attend the funeral. Where the bereavement has less of a direct effect on you, your Manager may restrict the amount of Compassionate Leave granted but will always discuss the matter fully with you at the time.
- 3.9 **Annual Leave and Bereavement** - It may be appropriate to supplement Compassionate Leave with a period of Annual Leave and requests for annual leave following bereavement will be dealt with in a sensitive manner on an individual basis.
- 3.10 **Bereavement Cases** - Where there are unfortunate circumstances such as more than one family or dependant bereavement during the 12 month rolling period, Blackwood will be as flexible as they can. The 5 day maximum allowance for Compassionate Leave will be waived where bereavement is the reason for taking leave.

4. Policy Review

- 4.1 This Policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis.