

Norman Court Montessori CIC
Compassionate Leave and Bereavement Policy

Statutory Guidance

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/compassionate-and-bereavement-leave>

Statutory Framework for EYFS (2017):

http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf

In the event of a death in a child's family:

Nursery children and their families may experience grief and loss of close family members or friends whilst with us in the nursery. We understand that this is not only a difficult time for families but it may also be a confusing time for young children, especially if they have little or no understanding of why their parents are upset and why this person is no longer around.

We aim to support both the child and their family and will adapt the following procedure to suit their individual needs and wants:

We ask that if there is a loss of a family member or close friend that the parents inform the nursery as soon as they feel able to. This will enable us to support both the child and the family wherever we can and helps us to understand a potential change in behaviour of a child who may be grieving themselves.

The key-person and/or the manager will talk with the family to ascertain what support is needed or wanted from the nursery. This may be an informal discussion or a meeting away from the child to help calm a potentially upsetting situation.

The child may need extra support or one-to-one care during this difficult time, the nursery will adapt their staffing arrangements so they are fully supported by the most appropriate member of staff on duty, preferably the child's key person. The nursery will be flexible wherever possible to adapt the sessions the child and family may need during this time.

The death of family pets is also an area that children and their families may need support with. We follow the above procedure wherever it is appropriate to support the child to understand their loss and support through this time.

In the event of a death of a child or member of staff:

Discussions with the family will determine the actions taken by Norman Court Montessori CIC.

Arrangements should be made for counselling to be available for those affected.

The setting may be closed, or as many people released as possible to attend a funeral or memorial service.

Compassionate Leave

Arrangements for compassionate leave should be made with the setting manager. All employees (including casual employees) are entitled to compassionate leave (also known as bereavement leave).

Compassionate leave can be taken when a member of an employee's immediate family or household dies or contracts or develops a life-threatening illness or injury. Immediate family is an employee's:

- spouse or former spouse
- partner or former partner
- child
- parent
- grandparent
- grandchild
- sibling
- child

This definition includes step-relations (eg. step-parents and step-children) as well as adoptive relations.

Full-time and part-time employees receive paid compassionate leave and casual employees receive unpaid compassionate leave. Full-time and part-time employees are paid at their base pay rate for the ordinary hours they would have worked during the leave. This doesn't include separate entitlements such as incentive-based payments and bonuses, loadings, monetary allowances, overtime or penalty rates.

All employees are entitled to 2 days compassionate leave each time an immediate family or household member dies or suffers a life threatening illness or injury.

The compassionate leave can be taken as:

- a single continuous 2 day period, or
- 2 separate periods of 1 day each, or
- any separate periods the employee and the employer agree.

An employee does not accumulate compassionate leave and it doesn't come out of their sick and carer's leave (or annual leave) balance. If an employee is already on another type of leave (eg. annual leave) and needs to take compassionate leave, the employee can use compassionate leave instead of the other leave.

Notice and evidence

An employee taking compassionate leave must give their employer notice as soon as they can (this may be after the leave has started). The employee must tell the employer of the period, or expected period, of the leave.

An employer can request evidence about the reason for compassionate leave (eg. a death or funeral notice or statutory declaration). This request for evidence has to be reasonable. If the employee doesn't provide the requested notice or evidence they may not get compassionate leave.