



THURSTON EMERGENCY / DEPENDANTS LEAVE POLICY

Purpose and scope

All employees with dependants can take reasonable unpaid time off to deal with unforeseen emergencies.

This policy covers all instances where an employee may need to take unplanned absence to address urgent or serious situations affecting their dependants and where no alternative provision is available.

Emergency leave is designed to provide carers with the opportunity to make alternative arrangements for the care of dependants. The Emergency Leave Policy is not intended to be used to allow carers to look after dependants on an ongoing basis (although time off may be available under other policies).

Taking emergency leave

Dependents include parents, husband, wife, partner, civil partner, children or individuals living as part of the family for whom the employee is the main carer or an individual who depends on the employee for care, e.g. an elderly neighbour.

Emergency leave is only intended to cover unplanned absence to deal with urgent or serious situations affecting an employee's immediate family or dependants. It is impossible to provide a complete list of circumstances that are covered under the policy; however, the most common circumstances are as follows: -

- to provide assistance on an occasion when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured, as a result of the death of a dependant,
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant, or
- to deal with an incident which involves a child of the employee, and which occurs unexpectedly when the child is at school.

As soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, the employee should contact the Clerk (or in the case of the Clerk, the Chair of the Council) by telephone to explain the circumstances, and if possible, give an indication of the length of time-off they are likely to need in order to make alternative arrangements. If the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) is unavailable the employee must contact another councillor instead.

If the employee needs to stay and care for a dependant on an ongoing basis they can agree with the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) to take annual leave; or where they have insufficient annual leave to take a period of unpaid leave. Alternatively, an employee may be able to take Parental Leave where the care is for their child.

There are no limits on how many times an employee can take time off for dependants. The Council may however need to review the situation if it thinks time off is affecting an employee's work.

Dependent upon the circumstances, the Council will allow a reasonable amount of time off to deal with the emergency.

At the discretion of the Policy and Resources Committee, all employees will be entitled to be paid Emergency / Dependent leave of up to two days in respect of those persons named above, depending upon the circumstances of each case.

Should there be a need to take a longer period of time off, the employee may be asked to take annual leave or parental leave, if they want to look after the dependent for longer.

An employee cannot have time off if they knew about a situation beforehand. For example they would not be covered if they wanted to take their dependent to hospital for an appointment. In the case of a child, an employee might get parental leave instead.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.