



# **The Chalfonts Community College**

## **Bereavement Policy**

### **2023-2024**

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## Statement of intent

At The Chalfonts Community College we understand that bereavement is faced by members of our school community at different times, whether this is the death of a family member, a friend or a member of the school community. We understand the importance of providing support to students, staff, governors and the wider school community during and after bereavement.

This policy provides a framework whereby this support is provided and outlines how the school will respond to these sensitive situations.

**NB.** In this policy, all mentions of 'the family' refer to the family of the deceased individual. The wishes of the family will always be considered when carrying out any of the actions outlined in this policy. If the family objects to any of the procedures, the school will work to ensure reasonable adjustments are made.

## 1. Aims

- This bereavement policy aims to:
- Set out a guideline for how our school will respond to a death in our school community
- Set out a plan for communicating deaths in a timely manner that balances our school community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased
- Identify best practices for supporting pupils and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the governing board
- Provide a roadmap and framework for pupils or staff returning to school following bereavement

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The governing body will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy with the Principal or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in charge of this policy on an annual basis to ensure its effectiveness.

2.2 The Principal or the DSL will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Liaising with external agencies, as appropriate.
- Informing governors and staff when a death occurs and arranging for students to be informed, as appropriate and with approval from the family.
- Being the first point of contact for staff, students and parents directly involved in a death, or designating this role to another appropriate member of staff.
- Responding to any enquiries from the media or the wider school community or appointing a member of staff to undertake these duties.
- Ensuring staff have the necessary training to support bereaved students and to deliver sensitive news.

2.3 Pastoral staff will be responsible for:

- Undertaking bereavement support training and conducting in-school training to share their knowledge with other staff.
- Supporting the Principal / or the DSL in carrying out the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Supporting staff, students and parents following a death, as directed by the Principal / or the DSL.
- Supporting other staff members with communicating the news of a death.
- In liaison with the DSL make referrals so that students, staff and other members of the school community are able to receive support.

- 2.4 The media spokesperson in liaison with the Principal or the DSL will be responsible for:
- Liaising with the media as required.
  - Monitoring media and social media activity regarding the death.
  - Respecting the family's wishes in relation to what information can be provided to the media.

2.5 All staff members will be responsible for:

- Undertaking any bereavement support training arranged by the Principal or the DSL.
- Seeking support from pastoral staff as appropriate.
- Supporting their colleagues and students following a death, as appropriate.

### **3. The initial response**

- 3.1 If the family or member of staff contacts the school to inform them of a death, the member of staff that answers the phone will transfer the call to the Principal or to the DSL.
- 3.2 If the school is made aware of the death through a source other than the family, the Principal or the DSL will contact the family either by phone or through a home visit.
- 3.3 The Principal or the DSL will gather factual information about what has happened and establish the family's wishes with regards to what information will be communicated to the school community and how.
- 3.4 If a death affects the entire school, e.g. the death of a student or member of staff, the Principal or the DSL will inform the family that staff and students will be informed as soon as possible.
- 3.5 If the death affects an individual member of staff, e.g. the death of a relative, the Principal, or the DSL will ask the member of staff if they would like this to be communicated to any of their colleagues. If it is decided that the death will be communicated, the Principal, or the DSL will discuss with the staff member what information will be communicated and how they would like it to be delivered.
- 3.6 If a death affects an individual pupil, e.g. the death of a parent, the Principal, or the DSL will ask the family if they would like this to be communicated to the school community. If it is decided that the death will be communicated, the Principal or the DSL will discuss with the family, and the student if possible, what information will be communicated and how the family would like it to be delivered.
- 3.7 If the death of a student's family member occurs while the student is at school, a member of the student's family will be asked to come to the school to inform the student of what has happened and to take them home. If this is not possible, arrangements will be made for a member of the safeguarding team to take the student home.
- 3.8 The DSL or the DDSL will make contact with other agencies as required, e.g. the police and social care.
- 3.9 The Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT, will decide if any temporary variation needs to be made to the school timetable, e.g. rearranging or cancelling certain lessons.
- 3.10 In the event of the death of the Principal the Vice Principal, or the DSL will be responsible for the duties outlined above.

## **4. Informing staff and governors**

- 4.1 Staff and governors will be informed of the death before students.
- 4.2 All staff and governors will be invited to a meeting by the Principal, or the DSL as soon as practicable.
- 4.3 Absent staff and governors, including part-time and peripatetic staff, will be identified so they can be informed as soon as possible. If it is not possible for absent staff to be told in person, ideally a phone call will be arranged. A whole school email to all staff will be sent following the staff meeting.
- 4.4 Any information provided to staff and governors during the meeting will have prior approval from the family.
- 4.5 During the meeting, the Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT, with the support of pastoral staff, will:
  - Explain what happened leading up to the death.
  - Give a factual explanation of how the death occurred.
  - Allow time for staff and governors to discuss what has happened and how they feel.
  - Designate a member of staff as media spokesperson who will be responsible for liaising with the media as required.
  - Identify what internal and external support is available to staff and governors.
  - Discuss the arrangements for informing students, including whether all students will be told and who will be responsible for informing them.
- 4.6 Staff members (SLT and relevant Year team(s)) that will be responsible for informing students about the death will be provided with a script which sets out what students should be told and includes information on how to answer some difficult questions.
- 4.7 The Principal or the DSL and relevant pastoral staff will create the script, with input from the family.

## **5. Informing students**

- 5.1 The Principal or the DSL will have a discussion with the family about whether all students need to be informed about the death.
- 5.2 If the death affects the whole school, e.g. the death of a staff member or student, the Principal or the DSL will strongly recommend to the family that all students should be informed; however, if the death does not affect the whole school, it may be more appropriate to just inform certain groups of students.
- 5.3 The Principal or the DSL will make the final decision regarding which students will be informed.
- 5.4 Where possible, students will be informed about the death in small groups by a member of SLT or relevant year team(s) to them at the same time, e.g. during form time.
- 5.5 Students with specific needs that may influence their response to being informed about the death will be identified and told separately. These needs include the following:

- Students that had a long-term and/or close relationship with the individual who has died
  - Students with a history of loss
  - Students with SEND
  - Students who have difficulty managing their emotions or behaviour
- 5.6 Staff responsible for informing students will use the script provided to them.
- 5.7 To ensure all students are told about the death in an age-appropriate way a number of scripts may be created and distributed to staff with clear instructions of which script to use for which year group.
- 5.8 Where possible, a member of pastoral staff will be present when students are told about a death so they can help with answering any questions.
- 5.9 Students will be given time to ask questions about what has happened and to talk about how they are feeling.
- 5.10 Any questions that are asked by students will be answered factually.
- 5.11 Students will be told where they can go to in school for support and will also be directed to any external support.

### **Informing students in a large group**

- 5.11 If it is not possible to inform pupils about a death in small groups, the Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT, in communication with the family, will decide if it would be appropriate to inform students in a large group, e.g. during an assembly.
- 5.12 Where an individual student has been bereaved, they will be asked if they want to attend the assembly and, if they do not want to be involved, appropriate support will be arranged for the student during and after the assembly.
- 5.13 The Principal or the DSL will tell the family and, where relevant, the bereaved student exactly what they will say and to whom.
- 5.14 The Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT, with support from relevant pastoral staff, will deliver the information to students.
- 5.15 After students have been informed, they will be given time to express any thoughts or feelings about what they have been told.

## **6. Informing parents**

- 6.1 The Principal or the DSL will have a discussion with the family about whether any parents need to be informed about the death.
- 6.2 If the death affects the whole school, e.g. the death of a staff member or student, the Principal or the DSL will strongly recommend to the family that all parents should be informed; however, if the death does not affect the whole school, it may be more appropriate to just inform parents that are directly affected, if any.
- 6.3 A nominated member of staff will compose a letter to parents about the death. The letter will contain basic factual, information about the death, information about how the school is supporting student, how they can support their children, and who to direct questions or concerns to.

## **7. Funerals**

- 7.1 If appropriate, the Principal or the DSL will discuss with the family whether any staff, governors or students are able to attend the funeral.
- 7.2 With the family's approval, the Principal or the DSL will arrange for the school to be represented at the funeral and identify which staff and students may want to attend.
- 7.3 The Principal or the DSL and chair of governors will decide if it is necessary for the school to be fully or partially closed.
- 7.4 Transportation to and from the funeral will be arranged for staff and students, as appropriate.
- 7.5 Necessary cover arrangements will be made for staff attending the funeral.

## **8. The media and social media**

- 8.1 Any communication with the media or social media activity will be agreed with the family.
- 8.2 Only the appointed media spokesperson will deal with media enquiries and communications. Staff, governors and students will not respond to any media enquiries themselves or make any public statements about the death.
- 8.3 Staff, governors and students will not post any information about the death on social media. The media spokesperson will investigate any post made regarding the death and will refer any concerns to the Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT.
- 8.4 If information about the death is circulated on social media prior to the school making an official statement, the Principal or the DSL and media spokesperson will release a statement on the school's social media channels, with the agreement of the family, to prevent rumours from spreading.
- 8.5 Comments and other activity on school-posted social media statements will be monitored and moderated by the media spokesperson.
- 8.6 If staff, governors or students find any false, negative or malicious information being posted about the death on social media, they will report this to the Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT.
- 8.7 If a member of staff is found to have been posting content on social media or providing information to the media that is false, negative or malicious, action will be taken in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and Teachers Standards.
- 8.8 If a student is found to have been posting content on social media or providing information to the media that is false, negative or malicious, action will be taken in line with the Behaviour Policy.

## **9. Support for the family**

- 9.1 The Principal or the DSL will be the main point of contact between the school and the family.
- 9.2 The Principal or the DSL will invite the family into the school to discuss how the school can best support them.



- 9.3 The family's wishes and feelings will always be considered and respected when making decisions and conducting activities relating to the death.
- 9.4 Any support that is put in place will be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the family's needs and wishes. Support could include the following:
- Sending a letter of condolence
  - Giving the family the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who has died
  - Inviting the family to commemorative events held by the school

## **10. Support for staff**

- 10.1 Staff directly affected by the death, e.g. if they are a relative or close friend of the individual that has died, will be identified and the appropriate support will be put in place.
- 10.2 The level of support will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT, and may include the following:
- Ensuring the staff member is not left on their own
  - Arranging for lessons or other duties to be covered
  - Organising bereavement leave
- 10.3 Staff who lose a child under the age of 18, or suffer a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy, irrespective of how long they have worked at the school, will be given a minimum of two weeks' paid bereavement leave.
- 10.4 Staff may take bereavement leave as either a single block of two weeks, or as two separate blocks of one week, each taken at different times across the first year after their child's death.
- 10.5 Any member of staff who loses a child under the age of 18 or suffers a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy, and has been employed at the school for at least 26 weeks up to the end of the 'relevant week' (i.e. the week, ending with a Saturday, immediately before the week of the death or stillbirth), will be able to claim Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP). To be eligible, the staff member must also:
- Continue to be employed up to the day the child dies or is stillborn.
  - Earn on average £123 a week before tax over an 8-week period.
  - Give the school the correct notice and information for SPBP.
- 10.6 Staff members will be eligible for SPBP if they meet the government's eligibility criteria in its ['Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave'](#) guidance.
- 10.7 The Governments' [Tables](#) showing relevant weeks and start dates for SPBP will be used to check staff members' entitlement to SPBP, and when it should be paid.
- 10.8 Any member of staff who loses a child after 24 weeks of pregnancy, or during maternity leave, will not lose their entitlement to maternity leave and pay.
- 10.9 All staff members will be offered the opportunity to speak to a member of the pastoral team one-to-one.

- 10.10 Staff members will be given information about the in-school and external support they can access.
- 10.11 A designated room will be made available to staff where they can go during break and lunchtimes to meet with other staff and share their thoughts and feelings.
- 10.12 Staff will be vigilant to the signs that indicate their colleagues have been affected by bereavement and will offer them support or make a referral to a member of the SLT pastoral team.

## **11. Support for students**

### **Students that have experienced a significant bereavement, e.g. of a family member**

- 11.1 A member of staff that is familiar with the student will be appointed to act as their main point of contact – the student will be made aware of who the staff member is.
- 11.2 The Principal or the DSL will contact the student's family to discuss whether the student will be attending school.
- 11.3 Any support put in place for a student will be student-led, based on their needs and wishes.
- 11.4 When deciding what support will be put in place for a student, the impact the death will have on the student will always be considered in the context of pre-existing factors. The following contextual factors will be considered:
- The circumstances surrounding the death, e.g. was it under traumatic circumstances, was the death expected, or did multiple people die?
  - The relationship between the student and the person who has died.
  - The ability of the student's family to support them following the death, e.g. if a student's parent has died, how able is the surviving parent to support the student?
  - Family factors such as size, financial state, structure, style of coping, communication and stressors that affect the child.
  - The support the student has from their peers and other organisations and people.
  - Characteristics of the student, including their age and any SEND they have.
  - The vulnerability of the child(ren) ie. For example if they are already known to children's social care.
- 11.5 The student will be a part of discussions regarding who should be informed about the death and how, where appropriate.
- 11.6 If a student chooses to attend school immediately after a bereavement, they will be allowed a flexible timetable and staff members will be made aware that the student may not be able to work to their usual capacity. The designated staff member will keep in communication with the pupil's family to inform them about how the student is doing.
- 11.7 Members of The Chalfonts Community College (pastoral team) will be on hand to offer additional support to the child(ren) following a bereavement.
- 11.8 If the student is absent from school following the bereavement, they will be made aware of who has been informed about what has happened and what they were told.

- 11.9 The designated staff member will make regular contact with the student during their absence.
- 11.10 The Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT, designated staff member, student and the student's family will make arrangements for the student's return to school, e.g. a phased return.
- 11.11 If a death occurs soon before or during a time where the student will take an exam, the Principal or DSL will report the circumstances to the exams officer, who in turn will inform the relevant exam board(s) who will decide if special considerations apply.
- 11.12 If a student misses an exam due to the death of a close family member or friend, the Principal or the DSL will report this to the appropriate exam board who will then make a decision as to whether special considerations can be applied.
- 11.13 Any safeguarding concerns regarding a bereaved student will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Support for all students**

- 11.14 All students, even those not directly affected by the death, will need to be supported following a death, particularly if the death affects the whole school community, e.g. the death of a staff member.
- 11.15 Students will be given the opportunity to speak to a member of the pastoral team, and or the Safeguarding team.
- 11.16 Staff will talk to students about what has happened using age-appropriate and developmental stage appropriate language.
- 11.17 Following a death in the school community, students will be invited to take part in remembrance activities, e.g. remembrance assemblies.
- 11.18 Staff will identify any students that may need more direct support and make a referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will assess what support might be required in collaboration with pastoral staff.
- 11.19 Where appropriate, the DSL will refer the student(s) to counselling support either in school or to agencies outside of school.
- 11.20 The DSL will make contact with relevant agencies such as the Samaritans who would be able to assist on site and in person, with the emotional support required by students once the news of a bereavement has been disclosed.

## **12. Behaviour issues**

- 12.1 Staff will remain vigilant to the following behaviours that a student may display immediately after the death of someone close to them:
- Inability to concentrate
  - Lack of motivation
  - Tiredness and irritability
  - Heightened sensitivity to comments and remarks
  - Inability to take others' feelings into account

- Anger, frustration or aggression
  - A general change in behaviour, e.g. becoming unnaturally quiet or withdrawn
  - Anxiety
  - Being easily upset by events that would normally be trivial to them
  - Physical complaints, such as headaches, stomach aches and a general tendency to be prone to minor illness
- 12.2 The student's designated staff member will keep in contact with the pupil's family and share information about how the student is behaving at school and home.
- 12.3 Any challenging behaviour displayed by bereaved students will be addressed using the individual graduated response outlined in the Behaviour Policy.
- 12.4 A record will be made of anniversaries and days with regards to the death which may act as a trigger for challenging behaviour.
- 12.5 Any incidents of bullying, where a bereaved student is the victim or perpetrator, will be addressed in line with the Anti-bullying Policy, taking into account the student's needs and circumstances.
- 12.6 The DSL will ensure that all staff members are aware of the lasting impact that bereavement can have on a student's mental health, behaviour and education
- 12.7 All staff members will remain vigilant to signs that a bereaved student is facing difficulties in relation to their psychological, physical and social development and will refer the student to pastoral staff and the Safeguarding team who will put appropriate support in place.

### **13. Specific circumstances**

- 13.1 The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed for all deaths affecting the school community and individual students; however, specific measures will be implemented for certain circumstances.

#### **Pre-bereavement – when a family member is not expected to live**

- 13.2 If a student has an illness where they are not expected to live, their family will make the school aware of the situation and the school will ensure the appropriate support is in place.
- 13.3 A member of pastoral staff will meet with the student (as often as is deemed necessary) to provide the pupil with an opportunity to talk about what is happening and how they are feeling.
- 13.4 All staff will remain vigilant to signs that the student is facing challenges in relation to their psychological, physical and social development and will refer any concerns to pastoral staff who will ensure appropriate support is put in place.

#### **Pupils with a life-threatening illness**

- 13.5 Students with life-threatening illnesses will be encouraged to take part in school routines as much as possible, and the school will continue to expect the usual standards of behaviour as appropriate.

- 13.6 The Principal or the designated pastoral member of SLT, the pupil and their family, and other relevant staff members (e.g. a member of pastoral staff) will decide how to share the news that a student is terminally ill with the school community.
- 13.7 Other students will be informed about how they can best support the student in the most appropriate way.
- 13.8 If the student is receiving treatment from a local hospice or hospital, the key professional responsible for the student will be identified and the Principal or the DSL will contact this person for advice and support as necessary.

## **Suicide**

- 13.9 The school will respond to a suspected suicide within 48 hours.
- 13.10 The Principal, the Designated Safeguarding lead, or the relevant Year team will contact the police or the family as soon as possible to confirm the death and whether it is being treated as a suicide.
- 13.11 If the family does not wish the cause of death to be disclosed to the school community, the school will state that the nature and cause of death are still being determined and that additional information will be forthcoming.
- 13.12 If the death is subject to an ongoing investigation, the Principal or the designated safeguarding Lead will check with the police before speaking about the death with students who may need to be interviewed by the police.
- 13.13 Staff will be told about the death first, in line with section 4 of this policy.
- 13.14 The script that staff will use to inform students of the death will be factual while avoiding excessive detail about the suicidal act itself.
- 13.15 Immediate emotional support will be arranged for any students and staff who require it.
- 13.16 A designated room will be set up where students and staff can go to if they are struggling with the news.
- 13.17 Liaison with the media will be handled in line with section 8 of this policy.
- 13.18 Any information distributed to the school community and media regarding the death will:
- Be factually correct but not include detail of the cause of death or method used.
  - Not romanticise, glorify or vilify the death.
  - Not include details of any suicide note.
  - Not include speculation over the motivation for suicide.
- 13.19 Research indicates that students that have been directly affected by suicide are at an increased risk of taking their own life. Staff will report any concerns about students to the Designated Safeguarding lead or relevant Year team(s) and the appropriate support will be put in place or a referral to specialist services.
- 13.20 Any memorial activities conducted by the school will be held within two weeks of the death; following this, any memorial material will be given to the family.
- 13.21 Permanent memorials will not be held at the school; however, the school may set up a memorial on the website that will be moderated by a designated member of staff and removed after an agreed time.

- 13.22 Students and staff will be warned about the risks of un-moderated online memorials (e.g. those on social media), such as their comments becoming public without their permission and online memorials attracting negative comments.

### **Cultural and religious behaviours**

- 13.23 The school will keep in mind the cultural attitudes and behaviours relating to a death and will make sure these needs are taken into consideration when putting support in place for those affected, including the length of bereavement leave for members of staff.

### **Forces' families**

- 13.24 The needs and feelings of bereaved forces' students will always be considered prior to any school activities relating to the armed forces, e.g. commemorating Armed Forces Day, and additional support will be put in place for students as required.
- 13.25 Appropriate support will be implemented for bereaved forces' students, particularly during times of change.
- 13.26 Bereaved forces' students will be protected from any unwanted media attention and there will be a designated area in school that the pupil can go to if they are feeling overwhelmed.

### **A death involving murder or manslaughter.**

- 13.27 The Principal or the DSL will contact the police or the family to establish the facts about what has happened.
- 13.28 A designated staff member (DSL) will be available to talk to the student to help them to answer any questions they may get from their peers about what has happened.
- 13.29 Research indicates that students that have been bereaved due to murder or manslaughter can be at significant risk of developing PTSD. Any concerns relating to the pupil will be addressed in line with the SEMH Policy.
- 13.30 Media personnel will not be permitted onto the school site at any time.

## **14. Remembrance activities**

- 14.1 Following a death in the school community, the school may conduct some remembrance activities, e.g. a remembrance assembly.
- 14.2 The family will always be consulted prior to any remembrance activities being planned and will be invited to take part in the activities.
- 14.3 All members (as appropriate ie Year groups) of the school community, including staff, governors, students and parents, will be invited to take part in remembrance activities.
- 14.4 All remembrance activities will be planned so that they are respectful of the culture and religious beliefs of the family.

## **15. Managing transitions**

- 15.1 Information about students that have been bereaved will be recorded.
- 15.2 This information will be shared with relevant parties (DSL) at key transition points, including the following:
  - If the student moves school
  - When the student moves to secondary school
  - If the student moves class
  - When the student will be taught by a new teacher
- 15.3 Good communication will be established with feeder schools and schools so students that have experienced bereavement can be identified.

## **16. Teaching about bereavement and grief**

- 16.1 Different aspects of the curriculum will be used to discuss relationships, feelings and emotions, and to think about how to manage these in relation to family events and death.
- 16.2 Before delivering any lessons that cover topics of death and bereavement, the teacher will consider how the lesson may affect the bereaved students they are teaching.
- 16.3 Bereaved students and their families will be consulted over whether it is appropriate for them to attend lessons about death or bereavement, and alternative arrangements or additional support will be put in place as required.
- 16.4 Where appropriate, the teacher will discuss what the lesson is going to cover with the student and will work with the student to design activities that the student feels they are able to get involved with.
- 16.5 Any lessons covering topics of death or bereavement will take account of religious and cultural beliefs.

## **17. Staff training**

- 17.1 As a school we will look to ensure that all pastoral staff will receive training in bereavement support.
- 17.2 Counsellors, the Safeguarding team and Pastoral staff will organise training sessions (open to all staff) to share their knowledge with all staff members, including support staff.
- 17.3 If any members of staff are not confident in delivering some level of bereavement support to pupils or other staff members, or in implementing this policy, they will speak to the DSL who will arrange for the staff member to undergo the appropriate training.

## **18. Monitoring and review**

- 18.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the governing board and Principal or designated pastoral member of SLT.

18.2 The next scheduled review date for this policy July 2024.

18.3 Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff members.



## Appendix: Calculating Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay

### Definitions

- **Qualifying child:** Eligible employees can only claim Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP) in respect of a child under the age of 18 who dies on or after 6 April 2020. A child under the age of 18 includes babies who are stillborn after the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.
- **Relevant week:** This is the week, ending on a Saturday, immediately before the one in which the child died or was stillborn.

### Information needed

The following information is needed to calculate an employee's SPBP:

- The written declaration signed by the employee (form SPBP3) or the version received by the employer
- The date of the child's death or stillbirth
- The date the employee started or wishes to start their SPBP
- The employee's gross pay and the dates the employer paid them
- The date the employee started working for the school

The employer also needs confirmation that the employee's gross earnings:

- Are liable to the employer's Class 1 National Insurance contributions (NICs).
- Would be liable but for their age or level of earnings.

### How to calculate average weekly earnings

Average weekly earnings must include all earnings on which Class 1 National Insurance contributions liability is due or would be due if they were high enough. Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay entitlement depends on your employees' average weekly earnings in a 'relevant period'.

For the tax year 2023 to 2024 their average weekly earnings in the relevant period must be £123 or more. To work out the employees' average weekly earnings, divide all the earnings paid in that relevant period by the number of days, weeks, or months in that period.

### The relevant period

This is usually the 8-week period leading up to the relevant week. This will be the week immediately before the week in which the child died. The end of the relevant period is the last normal payday on, or before, the Saturday of the relevant week. The start of the relevant period is the day after the last normal payday falling at least 8 weeks before the end of the relevant period.

Example for an employee who's weekly paid where their child dies on 12 April 2023:

<b>Relevant week</b>	<b>Payday</b>	<b>Last payday at least 8 weeks before the end of the relevant period</b>	<b>Last payday on or before the Saturday of the Relevant Week</b>
2 April 2023 to 8 April 2023	Friday	10 February 2023	7 April 2023

The relevant period is 11 February 2023 to 7 April 2023.

Add up all the earnings paid between 11 February 2023 to 7 April 2023 and divide by 8 (the number of weeks in the relevant period). Do not round the figure up or down to whole pence.

Example for an employee who's monthly paid and their child dies on 12 April 2023:

<b>Relevant Week</b>	<b>Payday</b>	<b>Last payday at least 8 weeks before the end of the relevant period</b>	<b>Last payday on or before the Saturday of the Relevant Week</b>
2 April 2023 to 8 April 2023	Last working day of the month	31 January 2023	31 March 2023

The relevant period is 1 February 2023 to 31 March 2023. Add up all the earnings paid between 1 February 2023 and 31 March 2023:

- divide by 2 (the number of months in the relevant period)
- multiply by 12 (number of months in the year)
- divide by 52 (number of weeks in the year)

Do not round the figure up or down to whole pence.

## **What to do when:**

### **There is a weekly paid employee without a whole number of weeks in the relevant period**

This may happen if the employer brings forward an employee's normal payday because of bank holidays. In this case, divide the earnings by the number of weeks' wages actually paid, not the number of weeks in the relevant period.

### **An employee is paid multiples of a week**

This may happen if the employee is paid fortnightly or 4-weekly. In this case, divide the earnings by the number of whole weeks in the relevant period.

### **There is a monthly paid employee without a whole number of months in the relevant period**

Work out the number of rounded months as follows:

- Count the number of whole months
- Count the number of odd days

Round up or down as follows:

- February – 14 days or less round down, 15 days or more round up
- Any other month – 15 days or less round down, 16 days or more round up

Divide the earnings by this number of rounded months.

### **An employee is not paid in a regular pattern**

In this case, divide the earnings by the number of days in the relevant period and multiply by 7.

### **Payments are mistimed**

This only applies to regular payments of earnings paid other than on their normal date, e.g. due to a bank holiday. In this case, divide the total earnings in the relevant period by the number of weeks wages actually paid.

Mistimed payments should not be confused with a payroll error.

### **The employee has been overpaid or underpaid during the relevant period**

Always calculate average weekly earnings on all earnings actually paid within the relevant period. Where over or under payment of wages occur within the relevant period, include the overpaid or underpaid amount in the calculation to decide if SPBP is due.

### **The employee has entered into salary sacrifice with the employer**

In this case, calculate the employee's average weekly earnings using the amount of earnings actually paid to them after the sacrifice during the relevant period.

### **The employee has other contractual benefits**

When calculating average weekly earnings for SPBP, base the calculation on earnings which are subject to Class 1 NICs. Any benefits which are exempt from Class 1 NICs (such as some childcare vouchers) will not be included in the calculation.

### **Earnings in the relevant period are affected by a backdated pay rise**

If the employee receives a backdated pay rise which increases the amount of earnings already paid in the relevant period, their average earnings need to be recalculated. This should be done if the

employee was either:

- Not entitled to SPBP.
- Entitled to SPBP at less than the standard rate.

The employee's average weekly earnings must be recalculated to check whether they are:

- Now entitled, and pay any SPBP due.
- Entitled to an increase, and pay any extra SPBP due.

### **How to calculate SPBP**

SPBP is a weekly payment. It lasts for 1 or 2 complete weeks. Eligible employees can choose to take two consecutive weeks or two separate blocks of one week each. They are able to claim SPBP in respect of a week that they were absent from work. Eligible employees must take their SPBP within 56 weeks of their child's death or stillbirth.

The employee must be paid the lower weekly rate of:

- £172.48 from 13 April 2023
- 90% of their average weekly earnings

The SPBP period starts the day after the last day the employee worked before starting their Parental Bereavement Leave. SPBP weeks start with the first day of the pay period – so a period which starts on a Wednesday will have pay weeks within the pay period which run from Wednesday to the following Tuesday.

### **SPBP paid part-weekly**

SPBP can be paid as part weeks to help employers align the payments to their employee's normal pay period. The weekly rate can be split into 7. If this is done, the calculation is done on the basis of dividing the weekly rate by 7. For example, if the pay period covers the end of one month and the beginning of the next (2 days in April and 5 days in May) then pay 2/7ths in one month and 5/7ths the next month.

## History

Date	Issue	Status	Comments
	1	New	
January 2024		Update	Section 1 replaced Legal framework with Aims
			Updated figures in Appendix