


**COMPASION AND BEREAVEMENT POLICY
JOHN TAOLO GAETSEWE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

Council Resolution: F19. 29/08/2022	Approved Date:
Effective Date: August 2022	Review Date: Annually


MUNICIPAL MANAGER


SPEAKER

**MR. I.E AISENG
JOHN TAOLO GAETSEWE
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
SPEAKER**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Death is a difficult phenomenon which we experience personally or through our families, relatives, friends, and colleagues. During this period, one requires emotional and other types of support that one can only find from people closest to you. In some instances, one may also experience emergencies within the home that one may need support and compassion to overcome. It is important that the John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality (hereunder referred to as JTGDM), as represented by Council, acts in these situations in a manner that properly acknowledges the loss, and acts sensitively and compassionately towards the affected staff member and supports him or her through such difficult period.

2. PURPOSE

The aim of the Compassion and Bereavement Policy is to provide staff members with information on the treatment that they can expect from Council in situations of domestic emergencies and death in the family as well as to provide managers with a framework within which to make decisions in times of bereavement and domestic emergencies, in order to minimize rather than to aggravate grief for staff members who have experience death in their families, in order to facilitate the resolution of such grief.

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To ensure that our beloved who have passed on are treated with the dignity they deserve and afforded a funeral that befits their humanity;
2. To provide our colleagues who have death in the family with the support that they need to carry them through this difficult period;
3. To ensure that people are treated equally and to diminish any animosity that may be brought about by uneven treatment of staff members during their bereavement;
4. To provide a framework within which decisions can be made within such a difficult period;
5. To ensure that staff members who experience domestic emergencies receive the necessary compassion and support; and

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6. To contribute to a culture of caring for one another as colleagues.

3. PRINCIPLES

The Compassion and Bereavement Policy is guided by the following principles:

Caring society

The policy promotes the values of a welfare and developmental society, fostering a caring attitude among staff members.

Humaneness

The policy recognizes the difference of circumstances, the nature of relationships and the observation of different religions and culture among staff members.

Accountability

Although the Council would want to provide the necessary compassion and support to staff members in their times of difficulties, this is provided in an economical manner within the framework of the relevant national legislation and with the Council remaining accountable for the use of resources to the community that it represents

Flexibility

The policy is intended to create a flexible and contemporary set of guidelines that recognize a variety of situations that the same staff members may have, as well as recognizing the changing definition of the family.

4. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The Compassion and Bereavement Policy is applicable to the employees of JTGDM and Councillors, herein all referred to as staff members. This policy covers a range of exceptional circumstances which may affect staff members and extend in the appropriate circumstance the legislative rights of staff members as set out in the national employment legislations.

The Compassion and Bereavement Policy becomes applicable in the following circumstances:-

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1. Domestic emergencies;
2. In the event of a sick dependant;
3. An event of a sick adult whom the staff member cares for and where no alternative arrangements can be made for someone else to take care of such a person;
4. A serious incident involving a child (at school); and
5. Death in the family, death of a staff member or death of a relative.

5. LEGAL MANDATES

This policy is informed by the following legal mandates or national legislations and internal policies:

OVERREACHING	LABOUR LEGISLATION	BARGAINING AGREEMENT	INTERNAL POLICIES
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996	Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997	Main Collective Agreement (NC)	Leave Policy Travel & Subsistence policy

6. DEFINITIONS

Some concepts that appear frequently in this policy require conceptualization. For the purpose of this policy, the following concepts will have the stated meaning unless stated otherwise,

Benefits: means benefits provided in terms of the Travel and Subsistence Policy such as claims, accommodation, and transport for work purposes.

Bereavement: Bereavement is a personal space required by the staff member to deal with the passing on of a beloved one and to make arrangements/attend his or her funeral. This period may extend beyond the funeral to a period where the affected staff member can resume his or her normal life again.

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Compassion: means the support that is afforded to staff members in the event of emergencies and during the time of bereavement. This period may exceed the time of the burial.

Council: means the highest decision making body in the JTGDGM including councillors as defined in the Structure Act as well as the Municipal Manager. Council can be represented by the Executive Mayor and/or the Municipal Manager

Councillors: means all members of the Municipal Council serving in the JTGDGM including those seconded by local Municipalities and party representatives.

Family members: means the immediate members of the staff member who is affected by the death of a love one or a domestic emergency, including and **limited to** spouse, and children.

Domestic emergency: means any stressful circumstance that a staff member maybe faced with, including, and not limited to, a road accident involving the staff member or his or her dependents, the theft of a car of the staff member or his or her dependants, a burglary at the home of the staff member, fire or flood at the home of the staff member. The circumstance may also be classified as domestic emergency at the discretion of the Municipal Manager, based on his or her understanding of the situation.

Staff members: means officials who are in the employ of the municipality on a permanent or contract basis, councillors who are elected to serve in the JTGDGM excluding those appointed in anchor projects.

Support: means any assistance provided to the affected staff members in the form of emotional support, assistance with logistical arrangements for the funeral, and financial assistance. This support can be provided individually at a time or totally, as the need may arise.

7. SUPPORT FROM COUNCIL



Staff members will inform their line managers about their domestic emergency, death in the family, or death of a family member; the important aspect being that information

should reach relevant people in order to provide the necessary support. The line manager will inform the Head of Department who in turn will inform the Municipal Manger and also initiate the actions to implement the policy. Council will provide support in the event of the death of a staff member and family member. Support from Council is classified as follows:

1. Emotional support

Grief is very personal and we generally do not know what the effects of the death of a loved one can be on another person or the death of a colleague on the staff. Emotional support during bereavement relates to the Council understanding the position of the affected staff member and affording him or her, the necessary personal space to deal with his or her loss. Once the Council is informed of the circumstances, the staff member is entitled to the family responsibility Leave as per the Leave Policy. Where the staff member is unable to return to work after exhausting the family responsibility leave, he or she should discuss with the line manager to take any further period of absence as annual leave where his or her condition may prevent the staff member from returning to work.

Information about the death of the colleague may come from a variety of sources. Once the information is confirmed, it is important that staff members are given an opportunity to talk about the death of the colleague so that they can begin to express the appropriate sense of grief or loss. Funeral arrangements should be communicated to all staff members through meetings and other internal communication methods. The Head of Department will take responsibility for the safe management of the deceased's office area and any personal effects. The Head of Department will send condolences do the affected family on behalf of Council. A wreath and a sympathy card will be made for the affected family, signed by all staff members.

2. Financial support

In the event of death of a staff member, the spouse or children, the Head of Department will announce the process to be followed to support the family.



Employees will at the beginning of the year sign a consent form for deductions. The Human Resource Unit will provide a deduction instruction for payroll processing for that particular month. All staff members are required to make a donation of **R100.00** (minimum).

7.1 Support for staff members

This includes all support provided by Council to the family of staff members who have passed on.

In the case where a staff member may pass on while on duty and out of the JTGDM, the Council becomes responsible to ensure that the employee's family is informed about passing-on of the loved one.

An advert will be placed in the local newspaper announcing the passing of the staff member notifying the community of the passing of the member and passing condolences to the family. A memorial service will be held for the member, led by the JTGDM. A choir will be prepared from staff members to render items at the memorial service. The Council will be represented by the Executive Mayor or her or his delegated representative in the programme of the funeral.

7.2 Support for family members

This is the support provided by Council to staff members whose dependent has passed on. This is to ensure the dignified burial of employees and their families.

8. SUPPORT FROM COLLEAGUES

In the spirit of caring for one another, members of staff will be provided enough space to demonstrate compassion and support to one another in their times of domestic emergencies and bereavement. This support may include emotionally supporting the affected staff member, assisting with the general preparations for the funeral, and making donations to assist in the cost of the burial.

8.1 Emotional support

The assistance provided by colleagues as part of the preparation for the funeral is seen as emotional support. Memorial services as well as prayer sessions aimed at

comforting the family will be also be viewed as emotional support. Where the funeral takes place during the week, staff members will be allowed time-off for a few hours to attend the funeral. Arrangements will be made internally to ensure that work continues while staff members attend the funeral. If staff members have to travel to attend the funeral, a day's off (special leave) may be given for staff members to attend the funeral.

8.2 Assistance with preparations

Assistance with preparations for the funeral includes assistance provided with logistical arrangement required to ensure a dignified burial provided by the JTGDM and colleagues. This assistance may include, and not be limited to:

9. BENEFITS

9.1 Staff members representing Council

The Council may nominate staff members to represent the Council at a funeral, either through the Office of the Executive Mayor or through the Office of the Municipal Manager. In such an event, the staff member will be considered to be performing his or her normal duties and will be entitled to his or her benefits such as transport.

10. COMPLIANCE

Although not all parts of this policy can be fully enforced, it is hopeful that all staff members will contribute to its e effective implementation to ensure that its objectives are achieved for the realization of a caring and harmonized working environment. Staff members who feel that they have been unreasonably denied the benefits of the Compassion and Bereavement Policy may raise that matter first with their line managers, then the Human Resource Unit, or consult their labour unions to raise the matter through the grievance procedure. Where such cases are found to be reasonable, the Municipal Manager will find a way of compensating the affected staff members.

12. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.

