



This policy belongs to

Tibberton CE Primary School and St Lawrence CE Primary School Federation

Bereavement Policy

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1. Aims

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how the 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 Executive headteacher

The Executive headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for delegating any responsibilities under this policy to other members of staff.

The executive headteacher will:

- Liaise with the family of the deceased
- Where appropriate, communicate details of a death to pupils and staff as set out in this policy, or activate communication teams
- Respond to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Participate in any multi-agency reviews as requested
- Lead reintegration meetings for pupils or staff returning to school after a bereavement
- Arrange for monitoring and support of the pastoral support team or any individual staff members who are supporting bereaved pupils or staff

2.2 Pastoral support staff

The pastoral support team is composed of the Heads of school, the PSHE lead and the ELSA trained members of support staff. They have responsibility for monitoring and supporting bereaved pupils and staff members (including before their bereavement, where relevant – for example, in the case of terminal illness).

The pastoral support team will:

- Provide direct support to bereaved pupils and staff
- Signpost to external support available to bereaved pupils and staff
- Organise safe spaces for bereaved members of the school community to take a time out
- Organise memorials, e.g. temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages
- Arrange for the attendance and supervision of pupils at funerals (where permitted)
- Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved pupils or staff and ensure they're supported on those days
- Provide additional support during significant transitions e.g. when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school

2.3 Governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy, and supporting the headteacher. The governing board will:

- Undertake regular monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them, for example through a designated link governor who might have regular catch-ups with the executive headteacher or pastoral team
- Monitor the headteacher's emotional wellbeing, for example through [insert how you'll do this, such as regular meetings between the headteacher and chair, or bereavement link governor if relevant]
- Assist the headteacher, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Where necessary, arrange for another staff member to take the lead if the headteacher is not available to respond to a death immediately

2.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for liaising with other agencies who may be involved with the family and supporting school families who may be affected by the bereavement where it is a reminder of something they have gone through.

2.5 Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

The SENCo is responsible for also liaising with the family should they have a child on the SEND register.

2.6 Foundation Governor/ Reverend

The foundation governors or Reverend attached to the school community, or other member of the local church, will be responsible for offering support to the bereaved family, as well as the staff, pupils and wider school community.

3. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

Supporting pupils and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported.

Through 'Future in Mind', training will be provided for key members of staff to support them in supporting others. A listening ear and a buddy will be provided for those who have supported the bereaved family. The senior mental health lead (the executive head) will meet with the staff supporting others to ensure their own wellbeing is protected.

4. Immediate actions following a death

The actions carried out immediately following a death will depend on the deceased person and whether there are multiple fatalities. It will also vary dependent on whether the deceased is a child, or the child has lost a family member, or it is a member of staff. The first action will be to identify facts and console the individual conveying the news.

4.1 Clarifying information and the wishes of the family

The executive headteacher or head of school will be responsible for contacting the family to confirm news of a death and determine the wishes of the family in terms of what can be shared with the rest of the school community and how

If the family can't be immediately contacted, the executive head or head of school may deem it appropriate to contact a close family member

If news of a death is spreading via social media before confirmation can be made, the school community will be informed that there is speculation of a death, and that we should wait until the death is confirmed and the facts established before speculating.

4.2 Sharing the news with staff

The executive headteacher or the head of school will be responsible for sharing the news with staff and explaining what support will be available to those who need it

If the school is open, a staff meeting will be called. If the school is closed, a telephone tree will be put into place to share the news with staff members.

4.3 Sharing the news with pupils

The executive headteacher or head of school will be responsible for sharing the news with pupils and explaining what support will be available to those who need it

If the school is open, a whole-school assembly will be held. Parents will be informed using the emergency contact measures in place (ParentMail) to allow parents to be informed quickly.

4.4 Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers will be notified of a death through a letter sent home via ParentMail explaining the steps taken during the day to inform pupils of the death, what additional support has been made available and where to go for more help and information

4.5 Responding to specific causes of death

Some deaths need to be handled more sensitively due to their potential to cause fear, anger or imitation.

If the death is the result of suicide we will follow the Samaritans [step-by-step programme](#) to support schools

If the death is due to homicide or family violence, the Child Bereavement UK has a guide to 'Supporting children and young people bereaved by murder or manslaughter', which you can find at the bottom of [this page](#)

If the death is due to contagious disease, we will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team

4.6 Responding to the media

In the event that a death that affects the school raises media interest, we will respond in the following manner:

The executive headteacher is responsible for responding to media requests for information. Other staff members should not respond to media requests, and should instead refer enquiries to the executive head.

The executive head will liaise with the bereaved family, where possible, to ascertain what they are in agreement with sharing. Only facts will be shared, no speculation on cause or affect. Any statement made will be brief and support will be sought from the Local Authority legal department.

5. Follow-up actions and support following a death

5.1 Support for pupils and staff

Pupils and staff may require support to grieve in the initial days and weeks following a death.

Support will be made available in school, e.g. pastoral care team, bereavement team, peer-to-peer support

Pupils and staff will be signposted to external support, e.g. community mental health resources and bereavement charities

5.2 Timetables

We will decide whether to adjust the timetable for some or even all pupils based on the relationship between the deceased person and the pupils

5.3 Tributes and condolences

The school community will come together to memorialise the deceased through an act of collective worship

With the agreement of the family, a book of condolences may be created or a special memorial created

Any religious/cultural considerations will be taken into account as appropriate

5.4 Funerals

We will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

Whether members of staff and/or pupils are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service

How condolences should be made and how staff and pupils can contribute

If staff are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:

Staff should request leave to attend following the school policy for special leave

In granting permission for leave, consideration will need to be given to availability of cover, the number of staff members requesting leave, the impact on the pupils of the teacher being absent

If pupils are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:

Parents should request leave from school following the usual school policy

Support will be provided through the ELSA team for those pupils who attend the funeral

6. Support for pupils returning to school after bereavement

Whether a pupil has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

6.1 Reintegration meeting

The head of school or class teacher will meet with the bereaved pupil and their parents/carers to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

Determine whether the pupil is emotionally ready to return to the classroom either full-time or with adjustments to the timetable to allow for a phased return

Address any concerns the pupil and their parents/carers have about the return to school

Consult with the pupil about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant)

Open lines of communication between the pupil and relevant staff to ensure support should the pupil feel overwhelmed

Open lines of communication between the school and the pupil's parents/carers to coordinate support

Consider any additional support needed for a pupil who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability

6.2 Ongoing support

We will maintain regular contact with the pupil's parents/carers to monitor how the pupil is coping

We acknowledge significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult and will track these dates in the school calendar to preempt any difficulty

We know that grief may impact a pupil's progress and affect their behaviour. To manage this, we will provide tutoring, ELSA support, wellbeing peer-to-peer support, provide additional time, as appropriate

We will take care to manage changes for bereaved pupils by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions

7. Support for staff returning to school after bereavement

Whether a staff member has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

7.1 Reintegration meeting

The executive headteacher or head of school will meet with the bereaved staff member to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

Determine whether the staff member is ready to return to work and the best way to make that return (e.g. a phased return to work or a temporary change in duties)

Address any concerns the staff member may have about the return to school

Consult with the staff member about how or even if they want their pupils and colleagues to know of the death (where relevant)

Set guidelines for communication between the staff member and their line manager to monitor and support the staff member

7.2 Ongoing support

We acknowledge that grief can have an impact on a staff member's physical and mental health, which can then go on to impact their performance.

We also recognise that grieving is highly personal and that there can't be a one-size-fits-all solution for monitoring and supporting a bereaved person.

We will work with each individual to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person. This may include:

Internally, the senior mental health lead will offer support. External support, for example support agencies, will be signposted

Provisions for reduced hours or a flexible timetable will be discussed

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there are statutory or community changes by the executive head teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Child protection policy
- Critical incident policy

› Behaviour policy ›

Absence policy

Appendix: useful contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us
Winston's Wish	Helpline: 08088 020 021 https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/
Cruse Bereavement Care	Helpline: 0808 808 1677 https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us
Mind	Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393 Further contacts: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/usefulcontacts/