



Bereavement Policy

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| Status | Non - Statutory | Date created | November 2011 |
| Any other statutory names for this policy (where applicable) | Bereavement Policy | Date first approved | 21 November 2011 |
| Responsibility for this policy (job title) | Deputy Headteacher | Date last reviewed | January 2019 |
| Governors' Committee with responsibility for its review | Teaching and Learning | Frequency of review | Three Years |
| Tick here if Bucks Policy attached in its entirety | | To be put on the school website? (Yes/No) | Yes |
| Approval necessary | Sub Committee | | |

The following has been drawn up with close reference to strategy guidance from the charity Winston's Wish.

When any member of the school community dies, or any person closely related to a member of the school community, accurate information will be gathered by a member of the Leadership Team, if possible from the member of staff or student's family or a representative.

The following guidelines will provide assistance in how to manage the situation but circumstances and the age of the students involved will dictate precise details and actions. The Headteacher will determine the member of staff taking the lead in each event and they will then determine exactly the procedure to be followed.

1. If a member of the school community dies

i) Informing Staff

As soon as possible:

- A member of the Leadership Team will coordinate the actions to be taken and refer to this policy in making decisions.
- Where appropriate and where known, contact will be made with other schools who may be affected by the death to ensure that similar arrangements are being followed.
- Permission will be gained from the family and agreement about what details should be shared and with whom.

- If the death occurs during the holidays, staff will be telephoned/sent messages by members of the Leadership Team as appropriate and a meeting will be held at the start of the term.
- The Head or another member of the Leadership Team will pass on details as appropriate of what happened up to the death and give a factual explanation of how the death occurred.
- Questions will be taken and arrangements will be made to cover lessons of staff who are unable to return to supervising classes.
- Consideration will be given to contacting members of staff who are on maternity leave or who have left;-arrangements will be made to inform them over the telephone if a personal visit is impractical. The relationship between the absent colleague and the deceased will be considered when deciding how this is done.

After staff have been informed:

- Details will be provided of someone who can be available to talk things through with a member of staff if they are finding the situation particularly hard (the Student Welfare Coordinator, if available, or the Deputy Headteacher) – a room will be assigned for this purpose by the Cover Officer.
- A nominated member of staff, usually the Headteacher, will prepare a letter to parents and carers (to be given after school).
- Consideration will be given to all staff who might be particularly vulnerable and arrangements made for colleagues to contact them by phone, if, for example, they are likely to be alone that evening.
- A collaborative message of condolence will be discussed and agreed. The Headteacher will send a letter of condolence, asking the family whether they would appreciate attendance at the funeral by any members of staff.
- If staff do go to the funeral, they should be encouraged to go with another colleague, rather than alone.

For a death that may attract media coverage

- Identify a nominated spokesperson (e.g. Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Chair of Governors) to provide a ‘news statement’ at an agreed time, as a way of dealing with media intrusion.
- The individual’s family will be contacted by the nominated person before any statement is made and police or legal advice will be sought as appropriate.
- A ‘protected’ telephone line will be identified to ensure free flow of accurate information to and from the school/hospital if this is appropriate.
- With death in traumatic circumstances such as suicide or murder, bereavement support services may be requested as well as the School Counsellor (e.g. Winston’s Wish, Cruse, Compassionate Friends and the Educational Psychology Service).
- Alert Reception Staff and, if necessary, the whole school community, to the possibility of media attention and who the nominated spokesperson is.

ii) Informing Students

As soon as possible:

- A member of the Leadership Team will coordinate the actions to be taken.

- Those students who had a long-term and/or close relationship with the deceased will be identified and told together as a separate group.
- If the death occurs during the holidays, parents of such students will be telephoned by members of the Leadership Team as appropriate and, if possible, support in school will be arranged and offered to them.
- If the death was from an illness suffered by some students at the school, the School Nurse Team and/or Matron will be contacted in order to speak to these students and reassure them (e.g. asthma, diabetes etc).
- Where possible, students will be told in small groups – ideally in tutor groups.
- All students will be informed.
- Staff informing students will be given guidelines/support on how to do this.
- Time will be allowed for them to ask questions and, if they wish, to share their own experiences of death.
- The students' questions will be answered factually and euphemisms like 'passed away' or 'lost' will be avoided.
- Discussion will be ended on a positive note - e.g. not all people who are ill or have accidents die - many get better.

After the students have been told:

- A member of staff who can be available to the students throughout the day will be identified and students informed about how to find them.
- A letter will be sent to parents via Parent Mail at the end of the day.
- Arrangements will be considered for those who might wish to attend the funeral – the letter home will suggest that parents go with their child.
- Students' Form Tutors and Heads of Year will be alert to signs in later days that any student is struggling and will liaise with the student and her parents about additional support.

2. If a student's parent or sibling dies

As soon as possible:

- The wishes of the student's family will be sought where possible and permission gained to share the news with other students and staff as appropriate – it may be appropriate to arrange a designated family friend as a contact point.
- If news leaks out before this permission is gained, other students may need to be told in order to prevent rumours circulating.
- Staff will be informed at a briefing if appropriate, or via gmail to those who teach the student and/or the class.
- The Data Manager will amend information on SIMs and ensure that Schoolcomms/ParentMail is updated as quickly as possible.
- The guidelines above will be followed for informing students but usually, only the student's immediate tutor group (and G group if applicable) will be informed.
- If a letter to all students' parents is not appropriate, consideration should be given as to whether to contact the parents of particularly upset students, either to arrange for them to go home, or so that they can be prepared for their child's return from school and make time to talk to them.

- The teacher responsible for informing the class should then find out whether there are other close friends in other classes who might need to be informed and should seek to gather these students together soon after the initial group of students has been told.

In preparation for the student's return to school:

- The Head of Year or a member of the Leadership Team will make contact with the family.
- This member of staff can visit the student at the family home if this is desired, to discuss how best to manage their return to school – if this is not appropriate, the student and a parent will be invited into school before the start of the school day to meet with the member of staff.
- The student will be asked to nominate one or two members of school staff they would feel comfortable to go to whilst at school if they feel the need.
- Consideration will be given to a 'time out card' to enable the student to go to a nominated member of the school staff if they feel the need during the day for the next few weeks.
- Discussion about how the student wishes to be treated by other students will take place and this advice will be relayed to the class – e.g. whether the student would welcome questions from close friends or whether she wants to continue without talking about the death in school at the moment.
- Consideration will be given to whether the student wishes to have some private time with close friends outside lessons before re-joining the rest of the class.
- If members of the school staff are to attend the funeral, they should be encouraged to do so with a colleague, rather than alone in order to provide support for each other, as well as for other students who may be attending.

After the student returns to school:

- The student's name will be added to the 'Compassion Register', with key information to be shared with current and future teachers to be drawn up in consultation with the student and their parents. This will be shared with staff and updated as required.

3. Bereavement in the Curriculum

A unit on Grief and Bereavement forms part of the Year 9 Learning for Life programme of study.

4. Further sources of help and advice

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

www.winstonswish.org.uk

www.childbereavement.org.uk