



Adapted Bereavement Policy for use during school closure

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 Amended March 2020 due to C-19
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.

There is a dedicated C-19 helpline number for educational settings - 0800 046 8687

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.

- Gain permission from the family and agreement about what details should be shared and with whom.
- If the death occurs during a time of school closure, staff will be telephoned/sent messages by members of the Leadership Team as appropriate and a meeting will be held at the first available opportunity.
- The Headteacher 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.
- Consideration will be given to contacting members of staff who are on maternity leave or who have left. 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 Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead if available, or the Deputy Headteacher).

- A nominated member of staff, usually the Headteacher, will prepare a letter to parents and carers and students. This will not be sent out until key students have been informed (see below).
- 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 to the family.

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.
- If the death occurs during a school closure, parents of such students will be telephoned by members of the Leadership Team as appropriate and, if requested, support will be arranged and offered to them.

- If the death is 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).
- If the death was from C-19, the school will liaise with Public Health England regarding students or staff that have been in recent contact with the student.
- Staff informing parents will be given guidelines/support on how to do this. Time will be offered to students, at a later date/time, 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.
- Parents will be given advice about how to access support from school and other agencies.

After the students have been told:

- A letter will be sent to parents via Parent Mail at the end of the day.
- 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 by telephone or email, as appropriate.
- The Data Manager or member of the Leadership Team 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 close students. Designated staff should then find out whether there are other close friends in other classes who might need to be informed. **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 will arrange a time to talk 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 or talk with or 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.
- 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. Further sources of help and advice

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

www.winstonswish.org.uk

www.childbereavement.org.uk

Thames Valley Local health protection team (HPT) 0344 225 3861

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>