



SAFE START SCHOOL

WILLPOWER-INITIATIVE-SUCCESS-EMPATHY

Bereavement Policy

Implemented October 2023

1. Introduction

The main aim of this policy is to provide a framework for all staff, both teaching and nonteaching, to give guidance on how to deal sensitively and compassionately in difficult and upsetting circumstances.

This policy has been created with due regard to the following guidance:

Winston's Wish (2019) 'A Guide to Supporting Grieving Children and Young People in Education' Winston's Wish (2019) 'A Strategy for Schools:

Positive Responses to Death' Salford and Tameside Educational Psychology Service (2020) 'Guidance for Educational Settings on Supporting Those Bereaved during Covid-19' 2.

2. Aims At Safestart School:

We aim to meet the needs of all children and staff. When home circumstances are changed because of a death in the family and all around is 'different', our school aims to be a place on which both child and family can rely and gain some much needed support. If the death is of a child or member of staff, the whole school community will work together; with outside agencies as appropriate, to support each other.

3. Roles and responsibilities:

The role of the Head teacher: To have overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy To liaise with external agencies as appropriate. To respond to media enquiries as appropriate. Where necessary, guidance from LEA will be sought. To be the first point of contact for family/child concerned or nominate a familiar key adult if more appropriate for the family.

To inform all staff and arrange for the children to be informed, as appropriate, in line with the family's wishes.

To keep the governing body up to date and fully informed as appropriate.

The role of nominated lead: To oversee bereavement work To share key messages about support following a bereavement with all staff in setting.

To support key adults who are liaising with families.
To undertake the head teacher's responsibilities if directed.
To provide or direct staff to Bereavement training.

The role of Staff To support the Head teacher and nominated lead in carrying out the procedures outlined in this policy: To support staff, children and parents following a death, as directed by the Head teacher.

To support other staff members with communicating the news of a death. Where necessary, to make referrals for children, staff and other members of the school community to receive support and counselling. Where requested, undertake bereavement support training and share this knowledge with all other staff members.

The role of Governors

- To ensure the policy is implemented.
- To offer support to families if appropriate.

The role of the Local Authority

- To advise and support staff.
- To provide pastoral staff e.g. counsellors

4. Procedures Within school we work in partnership with parents.

When children join the school, we find out as much as possible about every child to tailor the academic, social and emotional teaching in school to match their needs. Parents are encouraged to make teachers aware of any previous changes that might have profoundly affected their child (divorce, bereavement, moving, new babies etc.). If there has been bereavement, information on what the child was told should be sought, in order that the school does not say anything that could confuse or upset the child or family. Through our PSHE curriculum, children are taught how to prepare and cope with loss. Family Bereavement When school is informed of bereavement or loss the following action should be considered: The family should be contacted by the Headteacher, the Nominated Lead or a familiar key adult who knows the family well. The family can be offered appropriate support.

Relevant telephone help lines.

The key adults should contact the family to acknowledge the death and pass on their condolences, initially by telephone.

Information should be sought so as to support the family as appropriate and to consider and respect their wishes as to who the news should be shared with.

Help guide the conversation.

It should be explained to the family how the school can be involved to support the child and family.

Gather important information.

Involve outside agencies as appropriate e.g. health workers, Educational Psychological Service, Healthy Young Minds). If agreed with the family, a letter will be sent to the child.

If circumstances differ, this may be sent via email. Work with the family on the best way to support a child or staff member on their return to school/work. Consider cultural differences. For a member of staff experiencing close family bereavement, absence will be arranged for attendance at a funeral and appropriate time off discussed. Additional time may be given through sick leave as appropriate. Death of a child or member of staff when the school is informed of the death of a child or member of staff, the following action should be considered:

Discussion should take place with the family and their wishes taken into account before decisions are taken on how and what to tell the children in school.

The headteacher or nominated Lead will consider how best to share with the school community. This may be through a whole school assembly or as a class depending on the wishes of the family. The information should be factual, clear and consistent. Pupils and staff should be offered support after the news if needed. Counselling should be available if necessary e.g. in cases of sudden or violent death (outside agencies should be involved with this e.g. Salford and Tameside Psychological Service). The school may be closed, or as many people

as possible released to attend a funeral or memorial services should it be appropriate and they wish to do so.

Staff and children should be supported throughout the grieving period; anyone displaying signs of stress should be offered appropriate support.

Pupils and staff may express a wish to attend, or take part in the service, but they should only do so with the prior agreement of the deceased's family, relatives or next of kin, as well as the agreement of their own parents/carers.

The class most affected might like to write down their thoughts and feelings; these could then be given to the bereaved family to assist in the planning of the service. After the service, staff and pupils should be encouraged to meet and express their thoughts and feelings as such services are important in the grieving process.

Terminally ill Pupils/Staff: In the event of a child or member of staff becoming terminally ill, their wishes and those of their parents/guardians/next-of-kin should always be respected. Should the child wish to attend school, the class teacher may need to inform the class of the child's condition. Occasionally, the child may wish to talk to their fellow classmates about their predicament themselves.

Honesty about death and dying may be the best line of approach. Return to School For the bereaved child or member of staff, returning to school may be traumatic. Where there has been a close family bereavement, in most cases everyone (teaching, support staff, volunteers if appropriate and pupils) should be made aware of the situation before the pupil returns (providing the parents/guardians of the bereaved pupil agree).

Staff should show appropriate compassion and allow expression to those suffering grief. Teachers should try to foster an environment that is compassionate, yet disciplined. Family life at this traumatic time can be particularly distressing, routines upset, relationships strained, and the future uncertain.

For this reason, school routines should be kept as normal as possible in order to provide a respite. Staff should be aware of anniversaries as this can spark a revival of feelings of bereavement. Staff might keep an eye on those particularly affected by the death of a close associate.

Staff will consider using a range of resources to support the pupil (memory box, memory book).

Refer to 'A Guide to Supporting Grieving Children and Young People in Education' – Winston's Wish.

Pupils can be offered stories that support bereavement.

Talking to the Bereaved Pupil

Try to be available to listen and support if possible, arrange a one-to-one session with the Nominated Lead or Key Adult as soon as possible after the pupil returns to school

Be calm and show them that you are listening and understanding by occasionally repeating what they have said and by acknowledging their emotions.

Do let the child know that you genuinely care

Make time to be available and listen

Accept all that the child is saying

Allow them to express their feelings their way

Let them know their feelings are normal

Let them know that it is OK to cry

Talk honestly and share your feelings

Be honest

Have eye contact

Have appropriate physical contact

Let them know that it is not their fault

Be aware of the home situation

Don't

Stop the child talking

Tell them how they should or should not feel

Avoid contact

Change the subject

Deny your pain and feelings

Point out things for which they should be grateful

Be frightened of sharing your own feelings

School should take into account the developmental stages relating to children's understanding of death.

Factors that Affect Response Child

- Relationship with deceased person
 - Past experience of loss
 - Resilience
 - Developmental level and SEN Environment
 - Home and family/community
 - Support from family/community
 - Faith and cultural perspectives Circumstances
 - Opportunities to express grief
 - How the news was given
 - Covid-19 Extra stresses
 - Routines suddenly changed
 - Adults so upset they are not available to support children
 - New situations to deal with (e.g. funerals, moving house/schools)
 - They are asked to be different (e.g. be quiet, be helpful, be good) Covid-19
- Related deaths For guidance on supporting those bereaved during Covid -19.

Appendix 1 Bereavement resources for parents Helpline telephone numbers:

Winston's Wish (08088 020 021)

Child Bereavement UK (0800 02 888 40)

Websites with information and guidance for schools and families to support bereaved children: Winston's Wish

<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-supporting-bereaved-children-and-youngpeople/> Coronavirus: information and guidance for supporting bereaved children and young people.

<https://www.winstonswish.org/telling-a-child-someone-died-from-coronavirus/> Information and scripts to use if someone the child knows has died from Covid-19.

<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-funerals-alternative-goodbyes/>
Saying goodbye when children cannot attend the funeral. Child Bereavement UK

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=bc9f3d7d-7b43-421a8ed4-4335f9c23b35> Downloadable information sheet with tips for supporting bereaved children through difficult times.

Get in touch via our Helpline on 0800 02 888 40 |

helpline@childbereavementuk.org or Live Chat via this website and we can help you find the support that suits your needs.

Child Bereavement UK also has a drop-in facility for families and professionals in the Salford Royal Hospital on the fourth Thursday of each month.

Contact email sarah.smith@childbereavementuk.org or salforscancerinfo@srft.nhs.uk .

CRUSE <https://www.cruse.org.uk> Support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies.

Gaddum Gaddum provides a needs-led therapeutic service for Manchester and Salford children and families. The Gaddum Centre offers Children's Bereavement Counselling and works with individuals following a bereavement. Initially it has to be a young person who is referred to. Once that referral has been accepted, they can also provide support to the adults who are caring for the child or young person. <https://www.gaddumcentre.co.uk/> - limited services at present. Contact via website or 0161834 6069 to access support and services.