



Loss and Bereavement Policy

Hylands School

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Principles

Hylands School was built to serve the community in which it is placed. Accordingly, we are a comprehensive, community school with a clearly defined catchment area and cater for pupils of all abilities.

Hylands School believes that every member of the school community has a right to an education free from intimidation and fear. Failure to act gives a silent but powerful message that bullying is appropriate and acceptable.

Contents

1. Aims
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved
4. Immediate actions following a death
5. Follow-up actions and support following a death
6. Support for pupils returning to school after bereavement
7. Support for staff returning to school after bereavement
8. Links with other policies

Appendix: useful contacts

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 headteacher and key identified staff member/s

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

The headteacher / key staff member/s 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 and Child Welfare Officer 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 us from a previous school

2.3 Governing Body

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

The governing body will:

- Undertake regular monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them, for example through meetings and conversations with key members of staff
- Monitor the emotional wellbeing of staff who support bereaved pupils/staff members through regular meetings between these staff and their link governor, reporting back to the chair of governors



- Assist the headteacher, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death

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.

- They will have access to supervision from the Trust and / or external providers and to confidential support lines
- The monitoring of the wellbeing of staff performing this role will be undertaken by the DSL and regular meetings will take place as well as informal sessions of support offered
- Bereavement training will be provided to all staff members and additional training to those key staff members directly involved in supporting bereaved pupils/staff members

4. Immediate actions following a death

Upon notification of the death of a pupil:

We would ask that parents/carers let the school know directly as soon as they are able (we appreciate that contact may be made from an advocate of the parent/carer). Whomever receives the information will seek out the most senior member of staff on site (preferably the head teacher or the DSL) or ensure that this message is conveyed to a member of SLT who will respond to the parent/carer's message as soon as possible and assume responsibility for the dissemination of the information to the head teacher and DSL.

4.1 Clarifying information and the wishes of the family

It is important to agree, if possible, with the parent/carer the role that the school will take in informing concerned parties.

There can be no exact list of people to contact. It will be different for each child. The school should ensure that all people who are close to the child are told in a sensitive and supportive manner rather than risk them hearing it 'on the grapevine'. Bereavement is very difficult and the school needs to ensure it does not add to the sorrow by leaving people feeling marginalised.

- The head teacher, DSL or member of the SLT 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, news of a death will be attempted to be confirmed through channels such as the school nurse, the school Police liaison team, Social Care etc
- If news of a death is spreading via social media before confirmation can be made, the school community will be reminded of the inappropriateness of posting speculation



4.2 Sharing the news with staff

- The head teacher, DSL or a member of SLT will be responsible for sharing the news with staff and explaining what support will be available to those who need it
- To ensure that staff will be informed promptly, a staff meeting may be called, dissemination to staff via the ELT, activation of the staff emergency notification phone tree system, or staff requested to attend a virtual meeting if the school is partially or fully closed

4.3 Sharing the news with pupils

- Members of the Pastoral Team, SLT and Heads of Year will be responsible for sharing the news with pupils and explaining what support will be available to those who need it
- Pupils will be informed in a timely and appropriate way (e.g. calling a whole-school assembly, having Heads of Year or Pastoral Managers calling year groups together to share the news, or using school notification systems to alert parents of where to find important news online if the school is closed)

4.4 Informing parents/carers

- Parents/carers will be notified of a death via email and/or a letter sent home with pupils explaining the steps that the school has taken during the day to inform pupils of the death, what additional support has been made available to them 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 seek guidance from the Samaritans who provide a step-by-step programme to support schools if this happens
- If the death is due to homicide or family violence, we will seek help from Child Bereavement UK who have a guide to 'Supporting children and young people bereaved by murder or manslaughter'
- If the death is due to contagious disease, we will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team, the Local Children Safeguarding Board, the NHS or Government

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 headteacher is responsible for responding to requests from the media or delegating this responsibility. Other staff members should not respond to media requests, and should instead refer enquiries to the head teacher or this responsible person
- The headteacher, in consultation with the parents/carers, TKAT HR and the ESCB will determine if appropriate, what steps will be taken to respond to those requests and what information may be shared



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.

- Different types of support will be made available in school, e.g. pastoral team support, mentor support, peer-to-peer support etc. The needs of the individuals needing support will be assessed and discussed with relevant persons including the pupil/s, parents/carers and relevant staff
- Pupils and staff will be signposted to external support, such as on-line mental health resources and bereavement charities

5.2 Tributes and condolences

- It may be that part of the support offered is the ability of the school community to come together to memorialise the deceased
- Several forms of physical memorial will be considered such as a book of condolences or a temporary tribute which will be made accessible to all in the school community who wish to contribute
- 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 by completing a Leave of Absence form
- There will have to be considerations made before granting permission, e.g. availability of cover

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

- Parents/carers need to contact the school to request leave to attend

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

A Pastoral Manager or the Child Welfare Officer 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 where we know about these dates, we will ensure additional support is available. We would ask parents/carers to contact the school in advance of the date to inform us
- We know that grief may impact a pupil's progress and affect their behaviour. To manage this, we will monitor the welfare of the pupil and use information regarding behaviour and achievement to offer additional pastoral or academic support as required
- 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 head teacher, line manager, DSL or Deputy DSL will meet with the bereaved staff member to discuss how best to manage a return to school. The bereaved staff member may stipulate with whom they would like to meet from this list.

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:

- Supervision sessions with trained school staff or an external provider.
- Access to dedicated staff support helplines
- Adjustments made, such as provisions for flexible working or reduced timetables

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Critical incident policy
- Behaviour policy
- Staff Welfare policy
- E-Safety and Online 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/useful-contacts/