



# Bereavement Policy

Reviewed Autumn 2024  
Next Review Autumn 2026

Agreed by staff

(Curriculum)

## Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to deal with bereavement in a sensitive and compassionate manner.

We have used the advice and training given by The Laura Centre, Leicester to help formulate this document.

## Family Bereavement

In the event that a child in school suffers the bereavement of a close family member we will endeavour to support both the child and the family. We will try to work in partnership with parents/carers and take their wishes into account when considering how best to support their child. We will follow the Worden recommendations\* regarding the needs of a bereaved child:

### 1. Adequate information

Clear information, given in age-appropriate language. Sometimes this information will need to be given in stages, rather than all at once. We recognise that some families will have spiritual and religious beliefs about death which will be respected.

### 2. Fears and Anxieties addressed

Children will often feel frightened following a death, perhaps feeling that a surviving parent/carer may die or that they may die. We will try to reassure whilst remaining truthful.

### 3. Reassurance they are not to blame

It may be necessary to give younger children in particular clear, repeated messages that they are not to blame.

### 4. Careful Listening and Watching

We will try to watch carefully for any changes in behaviour or indication of feelings perhaps shown through their play

### 5. Validation of individuals' feelings

We will allow for the fact that there are individual differences both in feeling and the expression of feeling and let the child know that death is something that they can talk about.

### 6. Help with overwhelming feelings

Sometimes children will want to pretend that the death has not happened. It is important to respect this need at the same time as providing an environment that encourages sharing emotions.

Sometimes children will feel angry, destructive, anxious or withdrawn and at this time school will try to balance the child's need for consistency and clear boundaries with an acceptance that they may temporarily be unable to conform.

\* Children and Grief – Guildford Press, New York, 1996

### 7. Involvement and Inclusion

We acknowledge the need to involve children in commemorating a death. Whilst taking into account the wishes of the family we may suggest making a book of their loved one in school or drawing a picture.

### 8. Continued Routine Activities

In school we will try as far as possible to continue with established routines in order to give the child as much stability and continuity as we can.

### 9. Modelled Grief Behaviours

At school we will try to promote an environment where it is easy to talk about the deceased and to acknowledge good and bad memories. It is also important to acknowledge anger, guilt and fear.

## 10. Opportunities to Remember

We will try to bear in mind that significant events like birthdays and Christmas may trigger feelings and further opportunities may need to be given to explore feelings.

In the event of the death of a member of staff or child attending the school the following actions will be considered:

- i) 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.
- ii) Counselling should be available if necessary e.g. in cases of sudden or violent death
- iii) The school may be closed or as many people released as wish to attend the funeral or memorial service.
- iv) Staff and children should be supported through the grieving period (see above) and anyone showing signs of stress should be offered support.

### Anticipated Grief

We acknowledge that there may be instances in school where bereavement is preceded by a period of anticipated grief, for example in the case of a terminal illness. We will try throughout this time to offer support to both the family and child.

### Ongoing

Whilst ensuring that we are able to support children in the event of bereavement we also acknowledge the need to address it as part of our ongoing work in school in order to prepare children in some small way for inevitability of life. This is done through P.S.H.E, stories, assemblies and R.E.

### Resources

These titles are either in school or can be ordered from the Library Service

Badger's Parting Gift – Susan Varley

Goodbye Mog – Judith Kerr

Michael Rosen's Sad Book – Michael Rosen

A Place in my Heart: Understanding Bereavement – Annette Aubrey

The Princess and the Castle – Caroline Binch

When People Die (Thoughts and Feelings) – Sarah Levette

I Miss You: A First Look at Death – Pat Thomas

Death (Separation Series) – Janine Amos

King of Shadows – Susan Cooper

When People Die (How Can I Deal With ...?) – Sally Hewitt

(Talking About) Death and Dying – Bruce Sanders

### **Outside Agencies and Links**

The Laura Centre, 4-6 Tower Street, Leicester, [www.thelauracentre.org.uk](http://www.thelauracentre.org.uk)

[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk) – a useful website for dealing with bereavement in the schoolcommunity

CRUSE Bereavement Care (0870) 167 1677 [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

The Childhood Bereavement Trust – [www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)