



Bereavement Policy

2022-2023

Policy

This policy outlines our commitment to supporting students and their families who have been bereaved.

Aim

This policy aims to support the emotional and physical wellbeing of bereaved pupils and their families, for the early days of a bereavement onwards.

It can be shared with bereaved families, to help explain what our academy is trying to do to help, and how we will do that.

Objectives

We will have robust procedures that enables us to communicate with, and support, bereaved pupils, and their families, both before, and after a student return to our academy.

Our procedures will help bereaved students:

- Be safe – with their welfare supported
- Ne involved – be given information and choices
- Feel connected – with support from people they trust and can help
- Understand, and be understood – particularly regarding their reactions, feelings, and thoughts.
- Be respected – have their identity and similar context acknowledged
- Thrive – within our supportive education setting.

All bereavements, in families , matter to our academy equally.

- Every bereavement is unique and results in different challenges.
- Every family is unique, and their needs deserve to be understood and met.

Procedures

If a student is bereaved, we will commit to supporting both them and their family in the following ways:

1. Establish a core group of staff responsible for communication and co-ordination of support offered. This should include a main point of contact.
2. In the days after death, but before a bereaved student returns to the academy, a nominated person with experience and skills in listening and empathetic support, will contact the family to:
 - A) Acknowledge the bereavement, offer the academy's condolences, and listen to their story of bereavement, if they want to tell it, in confidence.
 - B) Establish the family's initial wishes regarding what the student, wider academy community and media (if applicable) should be told about the death.
 - C) Offer time for the family to reflect on the information they wish to keep private, and a future time to talk about it further, if necessary.
 - D) Offer point of contact and explain ongoing support the academy can offer; and listen to the family's views on the students' emotional needs.
 - E) Offer future availability, as required, to discuss anything the family may wish to, relating to the student's welfare, and explain days and times available.
 - F) Offer bereavement resources that are age-appropriate and signpost to online advice and relevant agencies.
3. In the days after the death, we will inform staff members and students. This will be done in an age-appropriate and sensitive way, considering confidentiality, potential stigma surrounding the cause of death and family's wishes (as established with them).
4. When the pupil returns to school we will:
 - A) Determine the date that they will be returning, reflecting on the needs of the student.
 - B) Acknowledge their bereavement directly with them.
 - C) Discuss collaboratively with the pupil, family, and our staff what we can do to best support them; and
 - D) Work to enable the pupil re-integration into 'normal' academy routines and create a safe and secure environment for them.
5. For a bereaved student remaining time with our academy, we will:
 - A) Ensure significant dates (such as death anniversary's, birthdays, and culturally significant dates such as and annual festival) are recorded and considered.
 - B) Allow opportunities for reflecting on the death, through encouraging an ongoing and open dialogue with the student and family.
 - C) Consider the student's bereavement when planning school activities, that might trigger thoughts or feelings.
6. When helping a bereaved pupil we will:
 - a) Ensure they know who they can reach out to for support and how to access this help in ways that are easy and discreet.
 - b) Offer them opportunities to express their reactions, feelings, and emotions about their bereavement, in ways they want to, safely and confidentially.

- c) Use age-appropriate bereavement resources.
 - d) Be aware of the student's family circumstances, including their cultural background, and its relevance to their bereavement.
 - e) Be on the look out for changed in behaviour that may be a sign of mental health condition, or other illness or risk to health and safety ; and
 - f) Signpost to support for the wider family, as well as the pupil, through the local authority, in order that the family work together where necessary.
7. To enable and support our staff, we will:
- A) Ensure staff involved in planning academy activities and lessons are helped to:
 - i) Identify content that may be triggering for the student who has been bereaved.
 - ii) Consider whether to avoid this content or manage its delivery with care and sensitivity.
 - B) Provide bereavement training and refresher bereavement training , specific to supporting young people, and specific to sudden bereavement care and mental health support; and
 - C) Give supporting management and peer support to staff who lease with bereaved families.
8. If a bereaved young person is showing signs of suffering from mental health condition, or other illness, or any indicators of risk of harm, we will ensure that information is shared with the family, appropriate agencies and managed appropriately.