



## Managing Bereavement - Policy & Procedures

### 1 Scope

Teignmouth Community School is fully committed to the emotional health and well-being of our children and young people and that of our staff. We are dedicated to the continual development of a healthy and thriving school community and strive to work towards this in all aspects of school life. We are passionate about providing an ethos, environment and curriculum that can provide support during difficult times, including a time of death or dying. Bereavement can affect students and their families in many ways and therefore support needs to be adapted to suit the needs of individuals

### 2 Requirements

Every 22 minutes in the UK a parent of dependent children dies, leaving about 41,000 bereaved children each year. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, sibling, friend or other significant person, and, sadly, around 12,000 children die in the UK each year. Within our school community there will almost always be some children who are struggling with bereavement – or sometimes the entire school community is impacted by the death of a member of staff or a pupil. We would hope to not encounter such circumstances, but the statistical inevitability of such an occurrence implies the necessity of having a Bereavement Policy in place in order that we might be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these challenging situations. Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some children – or staff – require, though referral to more specialist support should be a consideration where the impact of grief is more complex. Additional information and resources can be accessed at [www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)

### Objectives

The core intentions of the policy are:

- To support pupils and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after bereavement
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.
- To identify key staff within school and the Local Authority, and clarify the pathway of support.
- The Children Act 1989 aimed to ensure that the welfare of the child was paramount, working in partnership with parents to protect the child from harm ([http://www.careandthelaw.org.uk/eng/b\\_section2](http://www.careandthelaw.org.uk/eng/b_section2)). All intentions of this policy

endorse that aim as we endeavour to counter any adverse effects of bereavement and maintain pupils' emotional well-being.

### **The role of the Directors**

- To approve policy and ensure its implementation as an active document. To be reviewed every three years. This includes:
- Reflecting on its effectiveness in practice.
- Utilising the expertise within the school and sharing responsibilities as appropriate.

### **The role of the Principal**

The Principal of each site has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the Directors, parents/carers, the Local Authority and other relevant outside agencies as appropriate for any given incident.

### **Bereavement that affects the school community**

#### **The Principal will:**

- Monitor progress and liaise with external agencies.
- Respond to media enquiries.
- Keep the directors fully informed.
- Be first point of contact for family/child concerned.

#### **Procedures:**

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by Student Support/ 6<sup>th</sup> form support/main office in Mill Lane and the family's wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.

NB: We need to be mindful of the use of social media sites and their impact throughout this time as rumour and gossip spread quickly.

2. Pupils should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them. A decision should be made as to whether this information should be given as part of a whole school approach or if only certain groups of pupils need to be informed.

3. A letter to all school families affected should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed.

4. Staff/students affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate. Support for students is available through two routes:

- Children & Families in Grief offer support to the family as a whole <http://www.childrenandfamiliesingrief.co.uk/>
- Balloons offer 1-1 bereavement support for young people either in school or in the home <http://balloonscharity.co.uk.gridhosted.co.uk/>

5. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial school closure in some circumstances.

6. Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Principal.

## **Bereavement that affects an individual/small group**

### **Procedures:**

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by Student Support and the family's wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.

NB: We need to be mindful of the use of social media sites and their impact throughout this time as rumour and gossip spread quickly.

2. The school should be aware that the school timetable may need a degree of flexibility to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of children affected by the situation. However, minimal disruption to the timetable also offers a sense of security and familiarity.

3. Staff/students affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate. Support for students is available through two routes:

- Children & Families in Grief offer support to the family as a whole <http://www.childrenandfamiliesingrief.co.uk/>
- Balloons offer 1-1 bereavement support for young people either in school or in the home <http://balloonscharity.co.uk.gridhosted.co.uk/>

This will be co-ordinated by the person who leads for DAF on the Exeter Road site and by the SENCo/inclusion co-ordinator on the Mill Lane site.

4. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified.

5. School should be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a child throughout their school life so information should be recorded and shared with relevant people, particularly at transition points. The school should be aware of any ongoing bereavement issues for new students. To this end it is important to have effective communication with 'feeder' schools.

If a child has been bereaved it is important to involve them in decisions about how the school manages issues relating to their loss. The child will be spoken to about their preferred way of informing their peers about what has happened and about the support they need. This will normally be done by the DAF coordinator on the Exeter Road site and by the SENCo/inclusion co-ordinator on the Mill Lane site.

### 3 Key Terms and Definitions

ACRONYM	TERM	DEFINITION
SENCo		Special Education Needs
DAF		Devon Assessment Framework

### 4 Amendment Record

VERSION #	DATE	AMENDED BY	NATURE OF CHANGE
1.0	21.02.2017	Created by R Willmott	

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