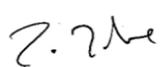




Bereavement and Loss Policy

Person responsible for the Policy:	Darren Pepper – AHT Pam Shatwell – DSL
Date Approved:	June 2020
Signed:	
Date for Review:	July 2021

Introduction

Death is a subject that nobody ever wants to address. It is almost inevitable though, that at some point the school community will be affected by a death in some way or another. Every 22 minutes in the UK a parent of dependent children dies, leaving approximately 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.

Through providing a curriculum that acknowledges and addresses loss, death, bereavement and grief Tytherington School aims to improve the skills of children and young people to deal with and emerge positively from such instances. Tytherington school is well-placed to help children and young people explore and develop an awareness and understanding of death, as well as supporting those personally affected by it. An important part of this is the ability to support pupils, families and staff at times of loss and bereavement, as well as helping children and young people to support their peers.

Within our school community there will almost always be some children or staff 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 and Loss Policy in place in order that we might be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these challenging situations. Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and this policy has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances. Tytherington School is committed to the emotional health and well-being of its staff and pupils. This policy is for all staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school.

Aims of the Policy

- At Tytherington School our aim is to support all those affected by loss and death in a supportive and caring environment in which everyone can respond appropriately to individual circumstances. Tytherington School aims to offer understanding of the impact of loss and grief on children and young people's physical and emotional health.
- To identify key staff within school and relevant outside agencies to offer and clarify the pathway of support.
- To ensure effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.
- To gain further insight into children and staff's reactions to loss and grief and ensure the response from Tytherington School effectively meets the needs of grieving pupils, parents and staff.
- To give effective pastoral support to pupils, parents and staff.
- To provide effective support for all members of the school community and access to all relevant support materials.

This policy outlines practical measures to be taken when people are in shock, or upset, especially with sudden or multiple deaths or traumatic circumstances.

A Sequence of Response to a Critical Incident

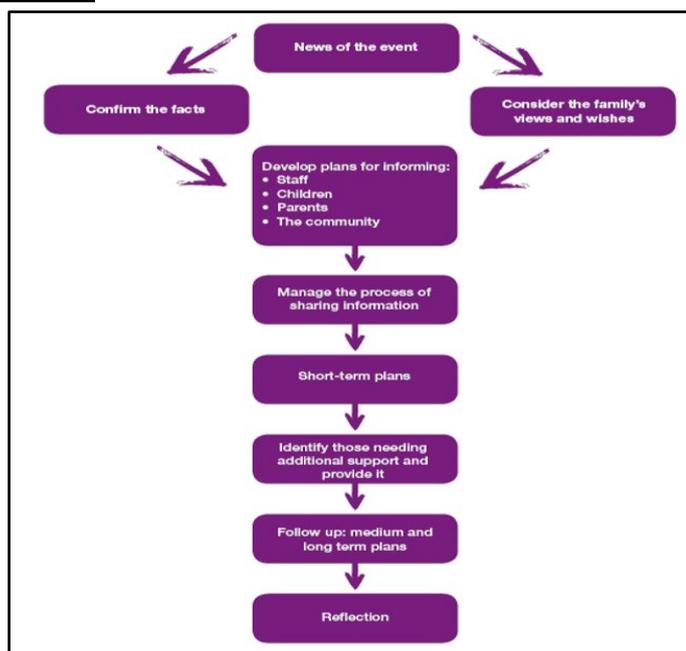
Figure 1: “Coronavirus and Bereavement: Support for Schools, Colleges and Settings” (Cheshire East Council, 2020) provides guidance on the sequence of events following the death of a child, adult or member of the wider school community.

On receiving notification of a death, the Headteacher will be responsible for informing Cheshire East of a “critical incident” as soon as possible.

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sciesteameast@cheshireeast.gov.uk



Death of a Close Relative of a Student

Depending on the closeness of the relationship between the student and the deceased the degree of support required may vary. In general, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Head of Year (HOY) or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to discuss a proposed approach by school with appropriate family member.
- HOY or DSL to inform Deputy Headteacher (DHT) or Assistant Headteacher (AHT) and discuss action to be taken.
- HOY to advise appropriate staff of the situation and give an indication of the length of absence (if appropriate) of the student.
- Advice may be given to staff, by HOY, on how to support student on their return to school.
- It may also be appropriate to speak to classmates and/or school friends about how best they might help in supporting the student on their return to school.
- HOY, DSL, DHT and AHT should carefully consider whether appropriate members of staff should visit or contact the family during their period of mourning.
- They should also consider whether the school should be represented at the funeral.
- HOY to meet with the student on their return to school and offer appropriate support where required.
- HOY to regularly monitor student over the next few months.

Death of a Student

On hearing of the death of a student the Headteacher should meet immediately with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to consider the school's response.

- Decisions as to which group(s) of pupils should be informed will need to be made. e.g. classmates, close friends, year group, friends of brothers and sisters of the deceased.

- With great sensitivity, one of the above staff should be assigned to ascertain the circumstances of the death. Where possible they should discuss with a close family member how the school will be dealing with the bereavement.
- As soon as possible the Headteacher should inform the Local Authority and all staff about the student's death. Staff should also be given details as to which groups of students will be informed, and when and how this is to occur. They should be advised of the details that the students will be told. It should be strongly emphasised that normal school routine will be maintained as much as possible. Obviously, if the death occurs near the end of term then consideration should be given as to whether certain extra-curricular activities should be suspended.
- The Headteacher should write to all parents, informing them of the death. It is important that this is communicated with the family of the deceased.
- Staff should also be asked to be vigilant and provide immediate information to the Pastoral Team about students who may be showing signs of distress and who may need support. Pastoral Team staff should be made available to offer support. Other specialists such as the school nurse, school counsellor or DSL may also be asked to assist.
- The Headteacher, in discussion with the Pastoral Team, should decide as to whether appropriate members of staff should visit the family of the deceased.
- The Headteacher will also need to consider (if appropriate) which members of staff and which pupils should attend the funeral. In this matter the wishes of the family must be taken fully into account. The school should give due consideration to accompanying a small number of close friends and classmates to the funeral. Staff accompanying these students must be prepared to offer comfort and support as required.
- Should the death be of interest to the media then the Headteacher must formulate any response in conjunction with the Local Authority. It may be necessary to advise staff and students not to speak to the media and to avoid making innocent comments that might be misconstrued.

Death of a Member of Staff

On hearing of the death of a member of staff the Head teacher should meet with members of the SLT to plan the school's response.

- At this meeting the method of informing other staff will be decided. Decisions as to how and when pupils and parents will be informed will also need to be made.
- Adequate support for staff and pupils must be available. The expertise of The Pastoral Team, school counsellor, school nurse and DSL should be made available to provide support for pupils.
- Attendance of staff and pupils at the funeral should, where possible, be discussed with the deceased's family. The Headteacher should ensure that as many staff as possible are able to attend the funeral. This may involve the school having to put special timetabling arrangements in place.
- Staff will be monitored closely during this initial period by their line managers, supported by the HR team. If any members of staff require bereavement/compassionate leave, this will be managed in line with the School's attendance policy/process.

Death of a Close Relative of a Member of Staff

The death of a partner, child or parent of a member of staff needs to be dealt with sensitively. It is essential that the member of staff is supported throughout the immediate period of mourning and on their return to school.

- On hearing of the death, the Headteacher must meet with other members of the SLT to decide whether/how other members of staff are to be informed.
- The Headteacher should contact the staff member as soon as possible and convey their condolences and offer whatever support is appropriate.
- It is unlikely that many of the pupils will have to be informed but if so, the Headteacher, in conjunction with the SLT, will decide on the appropriate method(s) to be used.
- On their return to work the SLT and other close colleagues must ensure that the member of staff is given appropriate support. The nature and degree of this support will vary depending on the circumstances but may include counselling.

Memorials and Funeral Services

Should we need to consider our involvement with any funeral or memorial services we will ascertain the family's wishes in respect of attendance or involvement of the school. The family wishes will always come first and be respected.

Local Press and Social Media

Should the death be of interest to the media then the Headteacher must formulate any response in conjunction with the Local Authority. It may be necessary to advise staff and students not to speak to the media and to avoid making innocent comments on Social Media that might be misconstrued.

Return to School

Tytherington School acknowledge our responsibility to support pupils who have been bereaved, especially on their return to school and at times of transition or adverse stress. We further acknowledge our responsibility to prepare staff and pupils appropriately before a bereaved member of our school community returns. Members of the HR Team (in the event of a staff death) or the students HOY will advise an appropriate response, depending on individual circumstances.

Managing Anticipated Death and the Terminally Ill

Tytherington School acknowledges that the anticipated death of a member of our community, whilst very difficult to manage, enables us to establish appropriate communication with the family to support those likely to be most affected before and after the death.

In addition, we acknowledge our responsibility to support adults, children and young people within our community who are facing the painful reality that a parent or someone close to them is terminally ill. When supporting children and young people who are experiencing anticipatory grief, we will:

- Confirm the facts concerning the pupil's or staff members sick relative or friend.

- Communicate the information as appropriate (in line with school procedures and the family's wishes).
- Discover what the pupil has been told of the illness.
- Allow the pupil to talk freely about the sick person in an appropriate setting.
- Not inform the pupil or staff member about any progression concerning the illness unless the family have given permission and requested us to do so.

Support for Staff Who Support Bereaved Pupils and Colleagues

Tytherington School will ensure that all staff are familiar with this policy and these procedures for responding to bereavement and will offer additional training were necessary. Whenever necessary we will request additional support from outside agencies.

Further supporting documentation provided by the Local Authority:

Coronavirus and Bereavement: Support for Schools, Colleges and Settings – April 2020

<file:///C:/Users/dpepper/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/30E6YQNB/Coronavirus%20and%20Bereavement%20planning%20document.pdf>

Coronavirus and Bereavement: Activities, Resources and Sources of Support – April 2020

<file:///C:/Users/dpepper/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/30E6YQNB/Coronavirus%20and%20Bereavement-%20Activities%20resources%20and%20sources%20of%20support.pdf>

Coronavirus and Bereavement: Support for Parents and Carers – April 2020

<file:///C:/Users/dpepper/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/30E6YQNB/Coronavirus%20and%20Bereavement%20information%20for%20parents.pdf>