

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School



Bereavement Policy

Agreed by Governors; October 2016

Review; **October 2019**

Signed _____ *J. Mowley*

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, Kirkby
BEREAVEMENT POLICY

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SAINTS PETER AND PAUL BEREAVEMENT POLICY

A INTRODUCTION/CONTEXT

Saints Peter and Paul school believes in a holistic approach in support and care of its pupils. Death is normal and an inevitable part of human existence. When bereavement occurs, it can affect a variety of people not just the family concerned. It is inevitable that Saints Peter and Paul school will have to deal with the death of a member of its community.

To this end, we recognise that work needs to be carried out to ensure that families, children and young people are given

- the opportunities to develop skills to cope with loss and grief and
- have access to appropriate information and support when needed

There is no single recipe for provision and services will always need to be organized in the light of needs, priorities and resources.

We recognise that, in order to fulfil our responsibilities in delivering the five outcomes outlined in the Children Act 2004, as a school we need to be proactive in preparing children for loss and grief and be reactive in supporting them through loss and grief.

The management of a bereavement situation will be a central role for the members of the Senior Leadership Group

B POLICY REVIEW

Consultation concerning the development of this policy was vital in ensuring all parties understand their role and responsibilities. The process itself also reflects the positive and caring ethos of the school.

The following people were consulted in the preparation of the policy:

- Staff
- Pupils
- Parents
- Governors
- The Local Authority

This policy was agreed with the relevant partners and will be reviewed every three years

C THE AIMS

The bereavement policy is intended to reflect our positive ethos and contribute to the caring community we wish to nurture. It is hoped it will contribute considerably to the emotional health and well-being of our school community.

The main aim of the policy is to ensure that all pupils and all members of staff faced with a bereavement, loss or change will be given the support needed

As well as for everyone to have a clear understanding of what bereavement means and to be aware of the different stages of bereavement.

- To help children and adults cope with bereavement as well as possible.
- To appreciate that everyone will react differently to bereavement.
- To understand that the breakup of a family through separation or divorce is a traumatic bereavement for a child.
- To have in place a course of action agreed upon by staff and the governing body, which is understood by everyone who comes into contact with the children.

This support includes the opportunity for them

- to express their feelings in a safe environment,
- to be given space and time to come to terms with their loss
- and access to specialist advice if necessary.

It is recognised that the situation for the child, young person and/or family will be monitored over time. It is our hope that anyone faced with bereavement will regard our community as a place where children and young people can grow and face the challenges that lie ahead. This, in turn, will contribute to our learning community.

Reactions to grief:

- Open distress
- Tears
- Panic
- Withdrawal

- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Refusal to co-operate
- Any other signs of stress / change of mood, which may be expressed in unexpected ways
e.g. nervous giggling, stoical bravery, untypical aggression, becoming the class clown, or even total denial.

Use of words:

- When talking to a bereaved child about death, the words we use are very important. If death has been referred to as “falling asleep” it is logical for children to become fearful of sleeping or of going to bed. “Loss” implies that something is lost and could be found again.

Please note, research has found that children as young as seven can grasp the concept of never returning.

Do not say to a bereaved child –

- “I know how you feel” – you don’t.
- “You’ll get over it” – they won’t, they will learn that life goes on but that it will be different.

Do say

- I care. I’m here, anytime, anywhere. I will talk about your mum, dad, Nan etc, and we will laugh about your happy memories.
I won’t mind how long you grieve for – grieving is so natural and acceptable.
- I don’t know how you feel but with sharing perhaps I will learn a little of what you are going through. Perhaps you will feel comfortable talking to me – do you want to give it a try?

Definition of Death:

This may be of use with some children.

Death is a natural part of life. All living things – plants, animals and people, are special parts of the natural world. Nature usually gives us long, healthy lives, but not always. Like all other living things though, people grow old and reach the end of their life. This is called death or dying.

D PROCEDURES

Once the situation occurs concerning a bereavement, loss or change the following steps will be taken:-

- Contact will be made with the family to ascertain the facts and offer support
- Use will be made of the Knowsley ‘Positive Responses to Supporting Bereaved Children’ Pack and RAINBOWS programme
- Staff will be informed and decisions taken concerning the best way to inform pupils and for internal mechanisms for support to be organised and employed
- Pupils will be informed in the agreed manner

- The Local Authority and other agencies will be informed and involved as appropriate
- If appropriate, a press statement will be prepared and a strategy for dealing with the media agreed with the family
- Discussions will take place concerning attendance at the funeral and any memorial service agreed with the family
- The basic information will be recorded
- The mechanism for reviewing the situation should be agreed with the appropriate staff.

E RESPONSIBILITIES

The management of bereavement is a whole school issue but there need to be clear lines of accountability to ensure our aims are fulfilled.

The following summarise the main areas of responsibility:

The Governors

To ensure the policy is implemented

Head teacher/Senior Leadership Group

To monitor progress and deal with external agencies

To coordinate the medias inquiries

To be the first point of contact for the individual concerned and their family

To identify appropriate support within the school community for the individual concerned

To offer support as appropriate to pupils in the wider school community

The Parish Priest

To advise the senior management and to offer support as required

F TRAINING

The training and development of staff is a fundamental aspect of our human resource management and as such staff will have the opportunity to undertake relevant training in the management of bereavement. This will involve general awareness-raising for all staff and more specialised training for those with specific responsibility.

-Some teachers and support staff have had training in RAINBOWS a programme for bereavement, loss and change.

-All teachers and support staff have had bereavement training looking at the child's perspective of loss and change.

G MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Senior Leadership Group and reported to the Governors on an annual basis.

This will include the following methods:

- Feedback from pupils and parents affected by bereavement
- Focus groups of staff and pupils

- Feedback form from support staff and class teachers
- Discussion with relevant Local Authority personnel
- Discussions with external agencies involved.