





Lumen Learning Trust

Learning together for a brighter future

Bereavement for the School Community Policy

DATE APPROVED BY LUMEN LEARNING TRUST	13 th January 2025		
REVIEW DATE [Biennial]	13 th January 2027		
SIGNED EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL	Mary Ellen McCarthy 	DATE	13 th January 2025
SIGNED CHAIR OF DIRECTORS	Jo Roberts 	DATE	13 th January 2025

Our Vision

Lumen Learning Trust puts the children's needs at the heart of its provision. Our whole school community is committed to enabling the children to become successful lifelong learners and happy, fulfilled adults who can make positive choices about their future.

Introduction

Experiencing a bereavement can make children more vulnerable. Knowing what grief is and understanding what the common responses to a death are, can be the first steps in helping a child or young person make sense of what they're going through. Bereavement, whether it is an expected death because of illness or a sudden and unexpected death or suicide, is something that can impact on members of our school community at any time.

Most grieving children do not need a 'bereavement expert', they need people who care. Schools, just by carrying on with their usual day-to-day activities while being aware of the bereavement, can do a huge amount to support a grieving pupil

This policy is for all staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school. It provides guidelines and procedures as to how our school can best prepare for, and respond to, bereavement in the school community.

Purpose of the policy

This bereavement policy supports us to provide effective support to pupils and staff before and after bereavement. It covers both expected and unexpected deaths.

Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some children and staff require. However, we also need to be prepared to call on more specialist support where there is a sudden and unexpected death, or where the impact of a bereavement is complex.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

We follow our school's safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that the welfare of the child remains paramount throughout, and that all children are protected from harm. It is important to maintain confidentiality throughout the handling of any incident or disclosure. However, pupils will need to be made aware that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

If a child is suffering from trauma, we will share this as appropriate with staff, but not necessarily the details of their experience. We will discuss with the bereaved child and their family which adults in the school community they would like made aware of the experiences impacting on the child.

The role of all staff in our school is to:

- know how to report a concern if the bereavement or sudden and unexpected death has placed a child at significant risk of harm;
- know how to support a child when they are distressed;
- have a basic understanding of a child's needs when facing loss and change;
- provide individual support as and when needed and in consultation with the child's family, Headteacher and Pastoral team;
- inform the Headteacher at the earliest possibility if they hear about a death of someone in the school community.

Procedures

In some situations, it is known in advance that a death is going to occur. This is usually because of a long illness. When the expected death is of a child or a member of a child's family we will:

- contact the family to confirm factual information and explore what support could be provided to them;
- ensure that all relevant adults are clear about what information has and needs to be shared with the pupil;
- explore the possibility of signposting to external support organisations e.g. Winston's Wish;
- if appropriate, consider and reflect on how to communicate with the wider school community for example the pupil's peers, which will be actioned in consultation with the child's family.

Following a bereavement

We will consider each individual situation carefully to ensure that the response from the school is sensitive, accurately reflects the gravity of the situation, and involves those affected as appropriate.

Following a sudden and unexpected death - suicide and homicide

Suicide is a very difficult event for affected members of the school community to deal with and also presents the unique risk of potentially being the trigger for another suicide. Children may experience profound and lasting shock with homicide, enormous anger at what has happened, rage at the person who caused their relative to die or deep fear at the perceived insecurity of the world around them. We will work with the affected family to support their child/ren and contact the Education Psychologist Service for whole school support.

Curriculum

Children and young people explore the concept of loss, bereavement and grief as part of the statutory elements of our PSHE curriculum. It is also addressed through cross-curricular opportunities such as body changes or life cycles, as well as through art, literacy, and religious education.

We also use assemblies to address aspects of death – such as Remembrance Day, Holocaust Memorial Day or commemorative occasions. We also observe national minutes of silence and explain the purpose of this.

When appropriate, we respond to a tragedy or serious incident by discussing this in class after having discussed as a staff team the language we will use to refer to the incident.

Teachers are provided with training on how to deliver this sensitive area of the curriculum within a safe, learning environment. We also point parents and carers towards appropriate advice on how to talk to their children about these events when necessary.

We will answer any questions relating to loss or death in a sensitive, age-appropriate, honest and factual way. Children and young people will not be expected to disclose any personal experiences but will be signposted to support if they want it.

We give children opportunities to learn about and discuss cultural and religious issues around death and encourage them to express their own responses and feelings.

Bereavement resources

As part of PSHE and our safeguarding work we will also signpost to appropriate sources of support for pupils and adults in the school community as required.

Winston's Wish: www.winstonswish.org Support information and guidance for bereaved children, young people and for those caring for bereaved families.

Cruse Bereavement Care: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk Support for anyone who has been bereaved.

Childhood Bereavement Network: <http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk> Find childhood bereavement support in your local area.

Hope Again: <http://hopeagain.org.uk/> A website for young people who have been bereaved.

Papyrus: <https://papyrus-uk.org/> Support and advice for young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person.

Samaritans: <http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/supporting-schools> A range of guidance and support for schools.