



TRINITY SCHOOL, BELVEDERE

BEREAVEMENT POLICY

This policy supports the Trinitas Principles as outlined below.

We will build a family of schools where strong Christian values are at the centre of everything we do.

We will share responsibility for all of the children in all of the schools.

We will recruit high quality staff because the quality of Trinitas Academy Trust is determined by the quality of those who work within it.

We will value our staff by respecting their professional competence, through robust monitoring, challenge, and support and by rewarding them for their contribution to Trinitas Academy Trust.

We will ensure outstanding achievement for children and staff by being strategic, aspirational and not afraid to innovate.

We will teach our children through a curriculum that engages and motivates them, celebrates success, meets their individual needs and prepares them for the future.

We will provide the best possible learning environment, which is inspiring for both pupils and staff.

We will ensure that the systems within the Trust and the organisation of the Trust are coherent, robust and offer best value for money.

We will be wholly committed to promoting the Anglican Ethos of the Trust by being distinctive yet inclusive.

We will hold true to our values and aspirations, without compromise.

Aim and Purpose:

The Trust's overriding aim is to respond with compassion and kindness in all matters. We recognise that death and bereavement are complex and sensitive areas. This policy aims to give guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately within a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all, before (where applicable), during and after bereavement.

This policy aims to provide a framework for school staff members to address death and the consequences of death. Finally, this policy aims to enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between the bereaved family/carers members of staff, pupils/students, and the community.

Policy Owner: Trust Safeguarding Lead

Audience: All stakeholders

Copies are available: *Website and school office*

Date agreed by Principal: April 2020

Date circulated to Trustees / Governors: April 2020

Review Date: April 2021 or in the event of a death within the school community.

Safeguarding Statement

Trinity School is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all pupils and a 'culture of vigilance' to safeguard and protect all in its care, and in all aspects of its 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy'.

Introduction

Trinity School aims to meet the needs of all its children and staff. A whole school approach to bereavement is vital since everyone experiences bereavement in different ways. It is important to recognise that this policy aims only to put in place a useful framework to assist staff when responding compassionately and effectively to the bereaved within the school community.

When home circumstances are changed because of a death in the family, it is a deeply traumatic experience. Our school aims to be a place on which both the child/young person and their family can rely, and where they can, if they wish, obtain the necessary support and comfort through prayer.

We acknowledge that should our school community be informed of a death, our response should be a planned and considered one. An unplanned response could make the situation worse for all concerned; we need to ensure we are able to react sensitively and professionally. If the death is of a child/young person or a member of staff, the whole school community will work together, with outside agencies, as appropriate, to support each other. Although not all children will need the support of specialist practitioners, they may need support from familiar people who know them best. We will use staff who are specifically trained in bereavement, or who have therapeutic training.

Procedures

We will ensure all Trustees, Governors and staff are aware of this policy and procedures.

We acknowledge our responsibility to all those who grieve as a result of a bereavement. We will provide opportunities for pupils to share their feelings in the school environment, supported by teachers, teaching assistants, specifically trained staff, the School Chaplain and, when appropriate, through the curriculum by using age related resources. We may also require an external specialist practitioner. Appropriate support will also be offered to staff.

Trinity School strives to work in partnership with parents and carers. Before children join the school, we will attempt to find out as much as possible about every child in order to tailor the academic, social and emotional teaching to match their needs.

Parents will be asked sensitively about any previous changes that might have profoundly affected their child (bereavement, divorce/separation, moving, new babies etc).

If there has been a bereavement, information on what the child/young person was told (in terms of religious beliefs etc.) should be sought, in order that the school does not say anything that could confuse or upset the child/young person or family.

We will share the above information, where considered relevant, for pupils transitioning through different key stages, and particularly year 6 to secondary school. We will also do this for any pupil moving ‘in-year’ to another school or joining us.

Roles and responsibilities

Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Heads of Year and the School Chaplain are best placed to provide primary support for their pupils who have suffered a bereavement. They will be supported by the Designated Safeguarding Leads and other members of the school’s Child Protection Team.

The DSLs and CPOs at Trinity School are:

Mr Darren Heimsath, Assistant Principal

Mrs Kathryn Frawley, Assistant Principal

Mrs Lynda McMahon, KS3 Coordinator

Miss Polly Lorraine, KS4 Support

Miss Gemma Cavanagh, KS3 Support

Miss Samantha Pollitt, HoY 10

Terminal or serious illness

Children and young people can be deeply affected by the terminal or serious illness of a parent/carer or another relative. There are ways of talking about what is happening, sharing feelings and preparing for the journey ahead. The aim is for the children and young people to feel resilient and strong, and confident enough to share the [natural feelings](#) of loss when someone they care about is terminally or seriously ill.

When school is informed that a pupil, relative or a member of staff has a terminal illness, the following should be considered/acknowledged:

- Open communication is vital – ask the family how much and what the child/ young person already knows, how they have been involved, whilst accepting that sometimes families cannot talk openly about the impending death.
- Potential impact on the child/ young person’s functioning (e.g. changes in the family’s lifestyle, ill parent’s absence or withdrawal from family functions, household economic changes).
- The worries, fears and stress of living with many uncertainties and the conflicting needs within the family.
- The impact on the well parent: physical and mental exhaustion; all-consuming of time and energy; confusion; knowing the death will happen but denying it; controlling overwhelming feelings of sadness, fear and anger; wanting to avoid their partner feeling a burden; seeing no future but wanting an end to the present.

- Anticipatory mourning – there is loss going on already.
- The different reactions of children/ young people depending on their developmental age: consider and implement things that help. (See Appendix 2)
- Information should be provided to the family– support from outside agencies, including the clergy.
- Opportunities to help should be grasped.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a death

Schools should be contacted via the school office in relation to information concerning someone being terminally ill, seriously ill or if a death has occurred. The office staff are prepared to receive this type of news and will respond in an appropriate manner. In ALL cases the person receiving this information must share the news as soon as possible with the Principal/ or Vice Principal

The Principal or Vice Principal will:

- communicate with the family straight away and offer support.
- receive the information regarding the death and confirm that the information is correct (as far as possible)
- inform the CEO and Chair of Governors that there has been a death of a pupil or a member of school staff.
- consider the actions required, follow the agreed procedures, and be aware of the impact of shock on the School and wider community.

Dissemination of information

- We will ensure that all facts are accurate (as far as possible) before speaking to staff, pupils and parents.
- We will inform staff first to reduce rumours and to give them time to react to the news of a death before talking to their pupils.
- We will inform those closest to the pupil or member of staff who died of the circumstances, either individually or in a small group.
- We will keep parents/carers informed and consider advice from them on how to break the sad news of the death of a child/ young person or a serving member of staff to their children before the following is considered:
 - Counselling should be available if necessary e.g. in cases of sudden or violent death
 - Outside agencies may be contacted and a referral made if deemed appropriate.
 - Where possible further discussion should take place with the family and their wishes taken into account.

The death of a parent or close relative

We acknowledge that in the case of the death of a pupil's parent or close relative, the surviving parent/carer may ask for support from an appropriate member of staff when breaking the news to their child. The pupil may wish their teachers to be informed in confidence.

The death of a pupil or member of staff

The news of the death will be given to all relevant staff as soon as possible either individually or in a staff meeting.

If a relevant member of staff is not in the school premises, a member of SLT will contact them by phone.

Clear and accurate information will be particularly important should a pupil or member of staff die suddenly and unexpectedly (particularly if they are taken ill, or suffer an accident, at school).

Sudden death

Bereavement can be devastating in any situation, but a sudden death brings additional layers of shock, horror or disbelief. The reality of what has happened may be very difficult to accept and there can be a time of desperately searching for meaning and understanding. We will support parents/carers, pupils and any members of staff bereaved by a sudden death.

Sudden deaths are caused by:

- Accident- Most children will, at some point during their childhood, experience or hear about a frightening event, such as an accident, fire, terror attack or natural disaster.
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=7e8348b8-b31f-447f-afcd-b2cc03f05fb9>
- Suicide - A death by suicide delivers a double blow to families – not only do they have to cope with a sudden and often unexpected death, but they also have to deal with the way their relative has died and perhaps the stigma attached.
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=d5102cad-ded8-4624-a73f-dda9e8a5acf0>
- Death by violence - At the same time as experiencing this grief, families are having to deal with representatives of the police and media. Supporting children and young people bereaved by murder or manslaughter:
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=d644ab2e-e8fc-4685-84b0-53ba733c80ba>

When a child or young person has suffered a bereavement

The period when a child or young person returns to school after a death may be the most worrying time for all involved. However, many bereaved children and young people find returning to school as soon as possible a welcome refuge of normality away from the raw emotions of home and their return should be as fuss free as possible. Therefore, we will keep a routine, providing a sense of normality, although some flexibility may be required. Consideration should be given to the following:

- The pupil may need time to grieve and manage overwhelming feelings: we will give breaks to be able to leave a classroom and take time out in a safe space and if appropriate a time out card will be issued.
- The pupil may be too upset to attend lessons: we will offer the support described above.
- The pupil may need support when managing school workloads. Teachers will be advised by SLT on ways to reduce workload in weeks immediately following the bereavement.

Trinity School recognises that positive attitudes, sharing of information, procedures and awareness of a pupil's needs are important. Without these, ultimately both parties could fail the child. For example:

- The process of working with pupil/student facing loss and bereavement will take time and compassion.
- A bereavement plan should be completed, where appropriate, in conjunction with the pupil and their family and a copy placed in the pupil's file.
- Before the pupil comes back to school the Principal, member of SLT or class teacher should explain what has happened to their classmates. The possible fears, insecurities and emotions of other children which may arise from the situation should be recognised and addressed sympathetically.

- All staff should be made aware of the current situation and any sensitive sharing of information should be done on a need to know basis.
- When the pupil re-enters class we should reassure them that we know what has happened and that ‘we are there’ if they need anything or want to talk.
- We will provide an individual named person to support the pupil(s) when necessary.
- Religious, cultural and social backgrounds, as well as parental wishes, should be taken into account when considering the appropriate responses. This includes:
 - A prayerful response of the whole school community i.e in collective worship or reflection in tutor time.
 - Give time – let them know that we have time to hold their hand and when they want to talk we have time to listen; time to grieve. (This will rely on the school being flexible with staffing and timetabling). We will show we care and encourage them; let them know that tears are ok.
 - Offer support (in consultation with the family); working with a child helps them to identify what is secure, tell their story, face the reality of what is lost, identify and express emotions and make sense of their experience.
- Regular correspondence with home, providing assurance about behaviours and general wellbeing, will help the child/young person manage their grief. Give information – using simple straightforward words like ‘dead’ and ‘dying’, and be clear with the child that this means that the body of the person who has died is no longer working and does not feel pain; be prepared to explain repeatedly and answer questions again and again; ask the child what is their biggest worry; ask them what they think is happening.
- Give reassurance – about their own health and that of others in the family; about guilt/responsibility – what has happened is not their fault; about what will remain consistent in their lives, who will look after them, take them to school etc.; about their futures – family finances, where they will live etc.
- Provide a special place for time alone, in case they need it, without feeling guilty, as well as time with friends, time to play in a safe space outside the home environment if they wish to do this.
- Pupils and carers should be offered information about available support both in and outside school.

Support for Parents

Children and young people who have been bereaved are likely to be more resilient following a death if their parent or carer is coping well. Research has shown overwhelmingly that the coping ability of the parent is a major factor influencing future outcomes for young people. Therefore, working in partnership with parents and the importance of communication between school and home is essential for the best interests of the child or young person.

NOTE: The bereaved person may not be able to take in information initially, so please give any information in written form as well as verbally so that they can look at it later.

Parental Bereavement Leave (Jack’s Law)

From April 2020, employed parents are entitled to two weeks’ bereavement leave with full pay following the death of a child. Reference: Appendix 5

Media

- Depending on the cause of death, the press (national or local) and TV channels may contact the parents. This will be very hard for them to deal with.
- The media may also either contact the school or arrive at the school.
- The principal will contact the Trust CEO before speaking to any media representative
- If the Principal does speak to the media, sympathy will be expressed for the parents and family as part of the formal statement. Principals will only quote facts. e.g. circumstances, date and time.
- We will instruct all staff who are approached by the press to refer them to the Principal.
- If there is a post-mortem, this may happen very quickly, possibly within 24 hours of the death. We will endeavour to be told the results of any post-mortem as soon as possible. The best way to stop speculation is to give facts.

Social Media

News of a death via social media may mean that some members of the school community hear the news before others. We will consider the impact of hearing the news via text message/email or social media and how to support pupils and staff in this situation.

Remembrance

We will consult with the family of the person who died about any plans for an Act of Worship or other tribute, including a book of condolence, and will offer the family the opportunity to view or participate in this, if they wish to. The family of the deceased will be consulted concerning any permanent memorial, which would only be made with their permission.

Possible ideas might include:

- A memorial Act of Worship
- Visiting a place that was special to the deceased
- Creating a memory box or book
- Raising money for a particular charity
- Buying something to retain on the school premises e.g. a memorial bench or memorial tree

If memorial work has been completed, for example a condolence or remembrance book, this should be offered to the parents at an appropriate time and the pupils informed where it has gone.

We will give the parents/carers and/or family the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who died from the school.

Funeral

Funerals are very personal ceremonies and we will take the lead from the family in regard to this. We will ascertain as much detail and information as possible including:

- whether the family would welcome involvement of members of the school community or if they wish to keep it a private occasion.
- whether the family want the school to send flowers and/or make a collection.

- identifying which members of staff and/or pupils may want to attend and the practicalities such as staff cover and transport. It may be necessary to close the school for half a day/whole day.
- If appropriate, talk to the child regarding expectations of the funeral.
- Cultural and religious implications need to be taken into consideration. Information will be made available to SLT and teachers about relevant cultural requirements, e.g. funeral and mourning rituals. **NOTE** - some cultures and religions require the deceased to be buried within a short period of time after death.

Support for other pupils

Primary support will go to the pupils who have been bereaved, but staff will look out for signs that other pupils are also upset. In response to this we will provide:

- a suitable place in school for pupils who need some space if too upset to stay in the classroom and source staff to whom they can go for support.
- Monitoring of pupils in our weekly inclusion meetings in order to track the support they have received.
- support to other vulnerable pupils who we know could be affected by the news of a death.
- therapeutic sessions with a Learning Mentor and books readily available to assist with counselling.

Additional safeguarding concerns

- **Bullying** – Recently bereaved pupils are more likely to be bullied or to bully. Staff need to be vigilant, especially over the longer term.
- **Guidance on difficult behaviours** – some bereaved pupils are so angry they behave in uncharacteristic ways. Staff need to be made aware of the possibility of such behaviour and take the bereavement into consideration when using the rewards/consequences system
- **Neglect** – Staff to be aware that bereaved pupils are more likely to suffer neglect or abuse

Long Term Impact

Some staff, pupils and students who appeared unaffected at the time of a death may experience problems later on. This is especially the case if individuals witness a death or if the death itself was sudden, violent or was by suicide. It is important that we recognise this and we will offer appropriate help and support either internally or by signposting to relevant organisations.

Curriculum

Teaching the topic of death, grief and bereavement will help pupils to understand feelings of grief and prepare them for the future. We will inform parents/carers in advance and will help to gather information about previous bereavements so that vulnerable pupils can be prepared for the lesson. Access to appropriate resources via bereavement counselling, Healthy Schools or other support agencies will be signposted.

Evaluating the policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and relevant staff. The policy and/or procedures will, where necessary, be revised in light of these evaluations. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Appendix 1

Coronavirus COVID-19

Our schools are currently closed to all children, except vulnerable children and children of critical workers, due to the outbreak of coronavirus - COVID -19. For the purpose of this guidance we will refer to the coronavirus as COVID -19.

COVID-19 is new strain of coronavirus and can be life threatening for some people, resulting in death.

Children and young people will be hugely affected by what is going on around them at this difficult time. Their lives are changing and they will have picked up worries and fears about the virus and the possibility that they or someone they love and depend on may get ill. They may be particularly worried that grandparents, older relatives and family members with health conditions or disabilities might die. They will also pick up on other worries parents and carers may have about the situation. For children who have already been bereaved, anxiety may be worse. Feelings of isolation may intensify as visiting extended family members and spending time with close friends are restricted.

We acknowledge and empathise with the worries around the current situation and how our families and staff are feeling and coping.

Supporting children through the pandemic

Parents/carers

Children can sense tension. Frightening events that are widely reported in the media such as the COVID -19 pandemic can cause children/young people to worry about themselves and others. Be open with them, so they learn that it is OK to share important news, and to have different feelings. Questions that parent/carers may ask:

- what can I do to help my child who is grieving?
- how to understand the concept of loss in children and young people of different ages?
- how to recognise potential complicated grief?

Read more.

Becoming seriously ill with COVID -19

Not being able to visit someone either in your own home, away or in hospital due to COVID-19 will add greatly to a child's/young person's and your own anxiety about the relative or friend at a time of considerable stress and uncertainty. The link attached provides helpful information.

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=45dc8050-2152-49e8-a8d7-50629fc0a08c>

When discussing COVID -19 with children/young people, be honest and clear, in an age appropriate way. We have included some responses that may help you when discussing a person who is admitted to hospital with the virus.

Things to say:

- “You know is ill. He is now being looked after in hospital and the nurses and doctors are trying to help him to get better from the COVID-19 virus. So we can’t visit him.”
- For young children, use simple words and positive ideas. You might say: “Nanny is poorly. We can’t visit her today but let’s send her a video. Shall we show her your picture?”
- Answer questions honestly. It is OK to say if you don’t know the answer.
- Check their understanding. You might say: “That’s a great question. What do you think?”
- Show your feelings. You might say: “I’m really sad about Grandad being ill.... but it’s OK to be sad sometimes. I’m OK”.

Things to do:

- Give your child an item that connects them to the person whom they can’t visit.
- Children/young people can write the person a letter or card, write poetry or draw a picture, that you could post, or send a photo of it electronically.
- With children, create a simple ‘I wonder...?’ box or jar. You can all write or draw feelings, ideas or worries and put them in the box. You can then have a regular ‘share time’ using the box. This may help to stop worries building up, and for you to know what your children are thinking. Try to avoid bedtime as a ‘share time’.

Death from COVID-19 and saying goodbye

If someone dies of COVID-19 or complications resulting from the virus, a number of things may be particularly hard for families and friends to deal with.

Infection controls may mean that family members do not have an opportunity to spend time with someone who is dying, or to say goodbye in person.

Depending on the person, the illness may have progressed and become serious very quickly, which can lead to feelings of shock. If members of the family were not able to be present for the death and cannot view the body, it may be difficult to accept the reality of a bereavement.

Funerals

As of 24 March 2020 in the UK, funerals can only go ahead at a crematorium or graveside. Only ‘immediate family’ are able to attend (many funeral directors are limiting numbers to 10) and they must abide by social distancing rules. That means unless you are attending with the family you are isolating with, you need to stay two metres apart and sadly will not be able to give physical comfort to each other if you are from different households. Anyone with Covid-19 symptoms, who is self-isolating after being exposed, or who is in a high risk group, will not be able to attend.

In the sad event that someone dies during this period of social and physical distancing it is possible for a family to involve their children, perhaps by contributing to a funeral with drawings, letters, music or poetry.

Maybe they could help to plan a memorial event for the future, or send pictures, messages or film clips to share with their extended family or close friends. Taking part in an event at home such as lighting a candle or sharing memories of the person who died may help them feel connected to others who are grieving, as well as to the person who died.

School staff

It is important that parent/carers remind their child that they have people who care as well as their immediate family/carers. School plays an important role in children and young people’s lives.

We want to offer support and guidance during this time and contact with our children/ young people and their families is vital in order that we can monitor their wellbeing and provide a little stability and normality. This will be possible through telephone conversations.

We will stay in contact with bereaved parent/carers and the children that attend Trinity School. The parent/carer or child/young person can talk about how they are feeling and about the person who has died, if they wish to – talking can be one of the most helpful things after someone dies.

If a parent/carer says that their child is experiencing very severe symptoms or trauma or flashbacks, we will recommend they contact Child Bereavement UK or their GP for further advice and support. However, it is likely that GP services will be under additional pressures at this time.

We will continue to adhere to government guidelines and endorse the recommendations. In addition to this, we will encourage family to continue as much as possible to instil a routine that includes, where possible, exercising, eating well, regular bedtimes, time to connect with people remotely, as well as fun time and quiet time with their children.

Members of the SLT, DSLs and CPOs will:

- be available every day, either at the school or remotely. Our school office will be open during normal school hours, every week day. Parents/carers can ask to speak to member of SLT, DSLs or CPOs, if they require their assistance.
- make contact on a weekly basis to any of our parent/carers who are critical workers or whose children are considered vulnerable and who have not attended school.
- contact parent/carers whose children are named on a CP plan or LAC children if they do not attend school. We will contact the social worker allocated to a family via email in this event.
- continue to attend CP and CIN meetings through video conference and between these times will ask for regular updates from the social worker.

Teachers will:

- make contact with all other parent/carers. They will talk to the child/young person to see how they are. (Teachers will ask this generally when discussing their work).
- inform SLT who are also DSLs if a member of the household is admitted to hospital with COVID-19. SLT will then make the contact calls.

Looking ahead

When schools re-open there will be much to do in order that we continue to support our pupils, parent/carers and staff. This will include continued voice calls, therapeutic support for children/young people, and additional external practitioners' input when specialised counselling is required.

For further support around bereavement or when someone is not expected to live, please contact:
A member of SLT or a DSL

Appendix 2

Broad Developmental Guidance

Responses to terminal illness	What helps	Responses after a death
<p>Developmental age 3-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most distressing at this age is the change in the caregiver; their preoccupation with the ill parent and frequent separations • The child may have no memory of the person being well • Distressed by the strong emotions in adult • Won't ask – doesn't know what to ask • Not likely to read the signs that death is imminent • Focuses primarily on the outward signs of illness • Upset by the changes in ill parent's interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining the illness in terms of what the child sees and hears • Finding times that the child can talk to the caregiver about what is happening • Explaining adults' intense emotions particularly that these are not caused by the child • Accepting that the child will only have brief moments of experiencing intense emotions • Short regular activity based visits to ill parent in hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mourning apparent only after realisation that parent will never return • Behaviours: sleeping with surviving parent, thumb sucking, bed wetting, clinginess, whining, stomach aches, night terrors • Asking questions and talking about dead parent or not

Responses to terminal illness	What helps	Responses after a death
<p>Developmental age 6-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes blame • Aware that death may be imminent • Overhears the diagnosis if not told directly • Upset/angry about patient's reduced mobility • Unexplained strong emotions worry them • Concern that the well parent will die • School work affected • Feel rejected if not allowed to visit hospital • Able to ask outsiders questions about the prognosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If told the diagnosis, the child feels as though they have permission to ask questions • Modelling expression of moderate emotion • Informing school • Providing consistent alternative care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May sometimes feel a dead person's presence and can talk about them • Loves to talk about the dead parent, surround themselves with objects, photos etc • Moments of anger, sadness and grief • Tends to retain an image of dead parent as loving caregiver • Loss of self-esteem, may self-blame and experience disturbing guilt

Responses to terminal illness	What helps	Responses after a death
<p>Developmental age 9 -11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to anticipate death and feel sad about it • May want to know what dying will be like • Can put on a brave face • Worry if illness catching or caused by them • Immature and regressive behaviour at home • Competent and mature behaviour outside • More able and willing to be involved in ill parent's care • More distressed by changes in appearance and abilities • Less distressed by chaos in the family caused by demands of terminal illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs clear, fairly detailed explanations • Likes direct conversations with the health professionals involved • Support anticipatory grief • Inform other significant adults • Expect children to ask other significant adults questions • Encourage hospital visits and appropriate care giving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not want to talk about the dead person • May have times of intense anger • May escape into school or other group activity • Feeling of unfairness of having a parent die • Worry about surviving parent's health; protective towards them • May experience a dead person's presence

Responses to terminal illness	What helps	Responses after a death
<p>Developmental age 12-18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having difficulty concentrating at school • being unsettled in class, a change in class performance, not wanting to go to school • being overwhelmed by intense reactions, such as anger, guilt, fear • having difficulty expressing intensity of emotions, or conflict of emotions • anxiety – increased fears about others' safety, and their own • physical complaints, such as tummy aches, headaches, aching • being irritable, defiant, more antisocial or displaying aggressive behaviour • risk-taking behaviour to escape, to comfort, or to prove they're alive and strong; for example, drinking, drugs, more sexual contact or reckless driving • changes in eating, sleeping habits • increased jokes or humour, masking feelings • saying, or acting like, they don't care • wanting to take on more adult responsibilities, trying very hard to please 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being honest and let them know what's happening • be willing to listen, and available to talk about whatever they need to talk about • acknowledge the emotions they may be feeling—fear, sadness, anger • it can be helpful for parents, or other adults, to share their own feelings regarding the loss • frequently reassure them they are safe, who is caring for them, and which adults they can trust to ask for further support • keep routines and normal activities going as much as possible • talk to them about grief – what it is, that it's normal, that everyone is different • avoid expectations of adult behaviour – allow them to be the age and stage they are, encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings - give them ideas of things they could try, such as doing physical activities, writing, singing, listening to music, talking with friends, reading etc • allow questions and provide honest answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents' responses to a death may fluctuate the most • blaming themselves for the death; having questions or concerns about death; dying; mortality dreams about, or sensing the presence of, the person who has died • feeling embarrassment; feeling different from peers; may conceal their loss

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strained relationships with others – fear or awkwardness about being close to others • a sense of loneliness – isolation • a change in self-image, lower self-esteem • possibly suicidal thoughts • possibly moving from sadness into depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comfort them with hugs, cuddles, holding their hand, and by encouraging them • speak calmly and gently to them – and be calm around them • talk about death together; answer any questions they may have • let them help in planning the funeral or something to remember the loss • Adolescents will often want to spend more time with friends than family as they seek support. 	
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Note: Children or young people who may have a learning difficulty or a special need, whether or not they have a formal diagnosis of a condition, may not cope with either their own grief or others within the developmental age guidance above. They may be unable to judge or recognise what others around them are feeling and may respond with a reaction or comment that could be considered, uncaring or hurtful. However, it is important to recognise that for many this will not be with any harmful intent. Key staff with specific knowledge of learning difficulties or additional special needs will also support these children/young people concerning a bereavement.

Appendix 3

Letter Templates

Template of a letter informing parents of the death of a pupil

Before sending a letter home to other parents about the death of a pupil, permission must be gained from the child's parents.

The contents of the letter and the distribution list must be agreed by the bereaved parents and school.

Dear Parents

Your child's class teacher had the sad task of informing the children of the death of <Name>, a pupil in <Year>.

<Name> died from cancer. As you may be aware, many children who have cancer get better but sadly <Name> had been ill for a long time and died peacefully at home yesterday.

He/She was a very popular member of the class and will be missed by everyone who knew him/her.

When someone dies, it is normal for their friends and family to experience lots of different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion. The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try to answer their questions at school, but if there is anything more that you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to ring the school office and we would be more than happy to help you.

We will be arranging a memorial service in the school in the next few months as a means of celebrating <Name..'s> life.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 4

Template of a letter informing parents of the death of a staff member

Dear Parents

I am sorry to have to tell you that a much-loved member of our staff [name] has died. The children were told today and many will have been quite distressed at the news. Nobody wants to see children sad, but we are very aware that factual information and emotional support are the best means of helping children deal with bereavement. I am sure there will be many parents who are also saddened by the news. Children respond in different ways so may dip in and out of sadness, and questions, whilst alternately playing or participating in their usual activities. This is normal and healthy.

You may find your child has questions to ask which we will answer in an age-appropriate way in school, but if you feel you would like more support and advice yourself, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. You may also find some very useful advice and resources online at www.childbereavement.org.uk

We will share details of the funeral as soon as they are known. Children who wish to attend will be welcome to do so, though it will not be compulsory. It is likely that school will be closed on the morning or afternoon of the funeral as staff will, of course, wish to pay their respects to a very popular colleague.

I am sorry to be the bearer of sad news, but I appreciate an occurrence like this impacts the whole school community. I am so grateful for the thriving partnership we have with parents and trust that we, together, will be able to guide and support the children through what may be, for many, a very new experience in their lives.

Yours.....

Appendix 5

Parental Bereavement Leave (Jack's Law)

From April 2020, employed parents are entitled to two weeks' bereavement leave following the death of a child.

Who is it for?

Employed parents who have lost a child under 18 on or after 6 April 2020. Unfortunately, it does not apply to [those who are self-employed](#).

It is a day 1 right, available to all employed parents and their partner, no matter how long they have been working for their employers.

This is also applicable to parents (and their partner) who suffer a stillbirth after the 24th week of pregnancy.

Others like grandparents may also be eligible if they can prove that they have been looking after the child in place of the child's parents and will have provided day to day care for the child in their own home for a continuous period of at least four weeks ending with the child's death (but not if they were paid for it – except in the case of foster parents who are eligible).

Parental bereavement leave is also available to adoptive parents, as long as the adoption placement has not been disrupted.

What is it?

Each parent will have the right to take up to 2 weeks off during the year following the death of their child. The weeks can be taken in 2 blocks of 1 week taken at different times or in a single block of 2 weeks. The employer will not be able to refuse, postpone or amend the dates chosen by the employee but the leave must be taken within 56 weeks starting with the day of the death of the child. The leave can start on any day of the week.

If the employee loses more than one child, they are entitled to a period of bereavement leave for each child.

You should check your employment contract or your employer's policy on bereavement leave to see if it is more generous than the statutory scheme.

Will it be paid?

All parent employees will be entitled to the leave, but to be eligible to the pay, the parents must:

- have been employed (not by the same employer) for at least 6 months (26 weeks) at the date of the death of the child; and
- earn more than [the lower earnings limit](#) on average for the period of 8 weeks ending on the date of the death of the child.

It will be paid at the [same statutory rate as maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption pay](#) per week. As with the amount of leave, your employment contract may be more generous than this, so you should check it to make sure you choose the best option.

What notice should you give?

During the first seven weeks, you need only inform your employer before you start work on your first day of absence, or if this isn't possible as soon as you can. From weeks 8 to 56, you will need to give at least a week's notice. The leave can be cancelled or rearranged with the same degree of notice.

To also claim parental bereavement pay, you will need to notify your employer that you meet the qualifying conditions for Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay within 28 days of the leave starting or, if this isn't possible, as soon as you can.

Your notice to claim parental leave and pay will need to include the following:

- the name of the person claiming;
- the date of the child's death (or date of birth for a stillborn child); and
- the date(s) that you want the period or periods of parental leave (and pay if applicable) to start and finish.

If you have lost a child and need help or support that is not employment-rights related, please contact [SANDS](#) or [Samaritans](#) for help.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-set-to-introduce-jacks-law-new-legal-right-to-paid-parental-bereavement-leave>

Websites:

- **Acorns Children's Hospice Trust**, an interactive website providing information about the work of Acorns Children's Hospices www.acorns.org.uk
- **The Child Bereavement Charity**, resources and information for bereaved families, children, professionals and volunteers. Information about a small number of professional development courses for teachers www.childbereavement.org.uk
- **Winston's Wish**, offers a grief support programme for children who have experienced the death of a parent or sibling. www.winstonswish.org.uk
- **St Christopher's** provides bereavement counselling to patients' families. Their Candle Project extends this support to all children, young people and their families in the south east London area. They also offer specialist training, advice and consultancy services to schools and other agencies working with children facing bereavement. www.stchristophers.org.uk/candle
- **Cruse Bereavement counselling** <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>
- **RD4U** is a website for 12-18 year olds to help you find your own road to dealing with loss. It provides a message board with its own e-mail reply service manned by trained volunteers.
- **Winston's Wish** is a charity for bereaved children that has a great interactive website with lots of information. [Winston's Wish](#)
- **Child Bereavement UK** supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. [Child Bereavement UK](#)
- Childhood bereavement network is a hub for supporting bereaved children www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Books on Bereavement

GRANPA -John Burningham (Puffin, 1998, ISBN 0099-43408-3)

Designed to stimulate discussion rather than to tell a story, the book has a series of scenes of a little girl and her grandad, with comments from each or both of them. At the end, she is shown staring at his empty chair, without comments. The book allows the adult to direct discussion about not only the good things that the child remembers, but also the not so happy memories.

GRANDAD, I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU De Bode and Broere (Evans / Helping Hands, 1997, ISBN 0237-51755-8)

A picture book about loss and memories, and potentially a good stimulus to talk about a bereavement.

WHEN DINOSAURS DIE L & M Brown (Little, Brown, 1996, hb, ISBN 0-316-10197-7)

Charming busy a pictures of dinosaurs illustrate topics and questions and a range of answers about death: Saying Goodbye; Customs and beliefs about death; Why do people die? What does "dead" mean? Acknowledging that disbelief, anger, fear, and sadness are common feelings when someone dies. Expensive, but attractive and appealing to children.

REMEMBERING GRANDAD

Sheila and Kate Isherwood (Oxford, ISBN 0-19-272368-5)

A girl's grandfather has died and looking back over the happy times they enjoyed together helps her to cope with the loss. Very specific episodes and illustrations give it a life-like feel. It could help children to think about how to remember someone.

FRED

Posy Simmons (Jonathan Cape, 1987, ISBN 0-2240-2448-5)

When Fred the cat dies his owners, Nick and Sophie, attend his funeral and learn about his secret life as a famous singer. The story raises the idea of celebrating a life in a good-humoured and touching way, with entertaining pictures and not much text.

BADGER'S PARTING GIFTS

Susan Varley (Collins Picture Lions, pb, 1992)

An old favourite, a charming illustrated book in which a very old and much loved badger dies. The forest animals gather and reminisce about the important part Badger played in their lives, and as time passes memories of Badger make them smile. These memories were different for each of them, including very recognisable things like a favourite recipe or showing someone how to knot a tie - Badger's "parting gifts".

GRANDMA'S BILL

Martin Waddell (Macdonald Young Books, pb, ISBN 0-7500-0307-3)

Bill's grandma is a widow, and he learns about her "other Bill" by looking through her photo album with her. A bit too stereotypically suburban and middle class for general appeal perhaps. Some like its ordinariness, gentleness and factual accuracy, and couldn't fault what it had to say about death and living on in memories and in the family.

I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

H Wilhelm (Hodder & Stoughton, 1985)

A touching story of the love between a little boy and his dog, who have grown up together. When the dog dies, the boy says that, although he is very sad, it helps that he used to tell the dog "I'll always love you" every night. An opportunity to discuss the importance of telling how you feel. Aimed at 4 to 7 year olds and delightfully illustrated.

I FEEL SAD

(Wayland, ISBN 0-7052-1406-6)

Not specifically about death, but about different ways of expressing sadness. Could be a useful opening for a conversation about a bereavement, or about coping with feelings.