



Newport Infant School And Nursery Bereavement Policy

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Policy Lead	Emma Heeley - SENDCO
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Aim

Every death in the school community, expected or sudden, presents real challenges. This guidance is intended to help the school community to respond appropriately and sensitively at this challenging time.

This policy relates to a bereavement involving a pupil/member of staff or when an individual pupil may be affected by a bereavement that does not affect the whole school.

When the whole school may be affected by the death of a pupil or member of staff

Immediate Response

The following guidelines should be followed and applied as appropriate.

- Gather the facts, not hearsay, in order to plan an appropriate response.
- The Head Teacher should contact the family of the person who has died and seek permission to inform pupils and parents.
- Inform the local authority, staff and Chair of Governors and/or Vice Chair.
- Inform pupils of the death. Small group are preferable and the younger the children, the smaller the groups should be.
- Prepare a brief personal tribute about the person who has died to pass to Corporate Communications (Public Relations) who can liaise with the Press on behalf of the school.
- Prepare a letter for parents informing them of the death. The letter should be sent on the day the pupils are informed so that parents can support their children.

Help can be provided by:

- The Education Psychology Service - 01952 381045
- Corporate Communications (Public Relations Team) - 01952 382402
- Local clergy

It is important to be open, honest and considerate when talking with others about a death. Above all be mindful that what you say must be supportive to everyone.

Remember:

- grief is painful but normal and healthy.
- children need to be allowed to grieve just as much as adults.

Children are unlikely to need “experts” counselling them. Rather they need **familiar and trusted adults** who can be sensitive to their feelings and offer a listening ear.

Next steps

- Head Teacher/Chair of Governors visit the family.
- Consider arranging a meeting for staff so that they can be advised on how best to support pupils and one another. The Emotional Health and Wellbeing Lead will be able to direct this with the Educational Psychology Service if required. The Educational Psychology Service do offer free support for schools who has experienced sudden death of a pupil or member of staff.
- Ensure that pupils have the opportunity to talk about the death with familiar, trusted adults with whom they have daily contact. Try to be honest, use clear language, expect questions from the pupils, be prepared for their reaction, try to normalize their feelings.
- Consider whether further support may be required for pupils and/or staff who have directly witnessed an incident.
- Maintain contact with the family prior to the funeral and for some time afterwards, depending on individual needs.

Further steps

- Establish the family's wishes regarding funeral arrangements and find out if the family would like staff and individual pupils to attend.
- In consultation with the family, decide if the school should have a memorial service and/or a more lasting memorial such as a sensory garden, a cup or trophy, a tree or a painting.

When an individual pupil is affected by a bereavement which may not impact on the whole school

- Gather the facts and liaise with the family to find out what the pupil understands.
- Maintain routines but adjust expectations.
- Let the pupil know, in a sympathetic manner, that you are aware that someone close to them has died.
- Dedicate a member of staff to make daily contact with the pupil, whilst allowing the pupil to seek support elsewhere. Use story books to support understanding of the process.
- Remember and reassure the pupil that:
 - * Grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss of any kind.
 - * Grief is painful. It is supposed to be.
 - * Feeling sad and crying are normal, healthy emotions.
 - * Silence or avoidance of the realities about loss creates more problems than it solves.

More specific support and advice is available from:

- Winston's Wish – www.winstonwish.org.uk
- Hope House Children's Hospice www.hopehouse.org.uk
- Cruse – www.rd4u.org.uk
- The Samaritans – www.samaritans.org.uk
- Severn Intervention Services www.siservices.life
- Child bereavement UK Charity www.childbereavementuk.org
- Royal College of Psychiatrists <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk>

Death in the curriculum

Pupils are likely to cope better with bereavement if they have had natural opportunities to think about death within different areas of the curriculum such as in stories and role play, Drama, English, PSHE, Science, RE and Assemblies.

There are also specific resources in school which focus on bereavement:

- The Wellbeing Toolkit by Dr Tina Rae has a section on grief and loss
- Future in Mind resources on Grief and Loss, by Phil Edmonds
- Respect Yourself Scheme of Work (Shropshire Council),
- SEAL resources (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning)
- Seasons for Growth
- Selection of story books, such as 'The Heart and the bottle', 'The Memory Tree'

Recommendations of additional and current resources can be obtained from www.telford.gov.uk/libraries.

When a member of staff is affected by bereavement – see Staff Handbook.