



Bereavement Support Policy

“A Caring Christian Community Achieving full Potential for All”

Every 22 minutes in the UK a child is bereaved of a parent making up some 24,000 every 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.

The death of someone in the family, whether sudden or expected, changes everything. The ways in which families make sense of, and cope with, their grief vary greatly. Everyone’s bereavement journey will be unique. But grief is normal – and necessary – and needs to be expressed. Although supporting a bereaved child can seem daunting, there are simple, straightforward and practical ways which can make a real difference. With support and information, children can be helped to understand what has happened and can slowly learn to live with their loss.

Objectives

- To support pupils, parents and/or staff before (if appropriate), during and after bereavement or loss.
- To create effective communication and the pathway of support between school, family and community.
- To identify relevant staff within school and clarify the support available.

Role of the governing body

To approve the policy and to review it in three years.

The role of our Head Teacher (Mr Reid)

- To be the first point of contact for the family/child concerned.
- To respond to media enquiries.
- To keep the governing body informed.
- To make decisions about informing staff and pupils.

The role of staff in school

- To inform the Head Teacher if not already aware.
- To be honest and open in an age appropriate way if asked to inform children of the death or loss.
- To use appropriate language, e.g. not referring to the deceased as being lost or asleep.
- Record significant dates as these may be a trigger for the child in the future.
- Make themselves aware of resources available in school and on line.

Staff to be aware

- Bereaved children may need 'Time out' during their school day.
- Be flexible with deadlines for tasks such as homework.
- A bereaved child may find it difficult to concentrate for a significant period of time following bereavement.
- That further advice and support can be sought from the school's Pupil Mentor.

The role of our Pupil Mentor

- To initiate a support programme specific to each family/child.
- To liaise with external support if necessary.

Procedures

- Head Teacher to have contact with the deceased's family and their wishes taken into consideration when communicating to others.
- Staff to be informed before pupils.
- If deemed appropriate pupils to be informed, preferably in classes, ensuring they are told and have their questions answered in an age appropriate way.
- A decision made as to whether it would be appropriate for a whole school letter or class letter to be sent out to inform parents
- Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Head Teacher.
- Staff to be aware timetables may need some flexibility to allow the needs of specific children to be catered for.
- Staff affected to be offered ongoing support as appropriate.
- Attending the funeral to be discussed with the family, arrangements for staff and pupils to attend will be decided and staff informed.

- The impact on a bereaved child follows them throughout their school life, information should be recorded and shared with relevant people, particularly at transition.
- Children to receive ongoing support throughout their time at St John's.

Bereavement resources available in school in Mentor Room

Activity Books

Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine. An activity book to complete 1-1 with a child.

Help Me Say Goodbye. Activity book to help children cope when a special person dies.

Story Books

Badger's Parting Gift. A sensitive book to help children come to terms with the death of someone they love.

Water Bug's. A simple way of explaining death to children.

Gentle Willow. A book that provides a transformational way of viewing death and dying.

Sad Isn't Bad. A 'Good Grief' guidebook for children dealing with loss.

I Miss You. A book for younger children written in a simple but realistic way.

Grandpa and The Grandad Tree. Books specific to grandad dying.

Death. Explores feelings and coping strategies.

We had an angel instead. Issues in dealing with miscarriage in a family, for young children.

My Bunny Died last Night. Helping children understand their feelings when a pet has died.

Making a memory box or sand jar can help children remember the person who has died in lots of different ways.



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Agencies where advice and support can be found.

www.childbereavementuk.org/

www.winstonswish.org.uk

www.support.sueryder.org/bereavement

www.mariecurie.org.uk

www.cruse.org.uk

With thanks to Child Bereavement UK who provided paperwork to use as a base.

Policy History

This is a new policy setting out the school's response to bereavement situations.

The policy was discussed at the April 2017 Curriculum Committee and agreed with some minor changes. The policy will be reviewed regularly and any significant amendments will be considered by the Governing Body.