

# **Salendine Nook High School (Academy)**

## **Bereavement Policy (Non-Statutory)**

<b>Date policy written:</b>	<b>May 2021</b>
<b>Produced by:</b>	<b>Mr D Christian</b>
<b>Approved by SLT:</b>	<b>21.06.21</b>
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## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Bereavement Policy is to help everyone involved at a time when there may be upset and confusion, ensuring that there is as little disruption as possible affecting the community, and that each member of the school community is supported to help them through a very difficult time.

## **Aims**

- To provide a framework for the pastoral care of the pupil(s) and the school community in the event of loss through bereavement.
- To provide a framework of support for a staff member experiencing bereavement.

## **1. Upon the death of a parent or sibling of a pupil**

### **Before the pupil returns to school:**

- All staff should be informed of the death by the Principal, in consultation with the bereaved party;
- The Head of Year will co-ordinate the support offered to the pupil;
- Other pupils in school should be informed in familiar groups, probably form groups;
- The Principal should make contact with the family to express condolences and offer support to the young person;
- The Vice Principal should decide who attends the funeral to support the pupil. This would normally be the Head of Year and/or Form Tutor.

### **When the pupil returns to school**

- On the first day, back the pupil should be met by the Head of Year, reassured and made aware of channels of help if they wish to use them, e.g. Form Teacher, Student Support Manager, Welfare Officer, and where they can go if they need to leave a class.
- A note should be made available to avoid any confusion arising.
- Small group activities with form class members or close friends may be appropriate to help integrate the pupil back into school.
- The Head of Year will ask parents if teachers who teach the pupils should discretely acknowledge the death when the pupil returns.
- An individual link person should be provided to support the pupil when necessary, this may be the Head of Year or a member of staff the pupil chooses.
- In addition, the pupil will be offered the support of the school's pastoral mentor
- The Head of Year will monitor the pupil over the proceeding few months and will be in regular contact with home.
- Referrals to outside agencies will be considered and discussed with the parents e.g. Educational Psychologist, Kirkwood Hospice Youth Group or the Child and Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

- On the anniversary of the death, as this will be a particularly vulnerable time, the Head of Year will contact the parent/guardian and if deemed appropriate will then see the pupil.

## 2. Upon the death of a pupil

Appropriate pastoral support should be provided for the school community.

- On hearing of the death of a student the Principal should meet immediately with the Senior Leadership Team and Head of Year to plan the school's response. Decisions as to which groups of pupils should be informed will need to be made, e.g. close friends, form group, friends of brothers and sisters of the deceased.
- As soon as possible the Principal or Senior Vice Principal should inform all staff about the student's death. Staff should also be given details as to which groups of students will be informed and when and how this is to occur.
- Staff members who are particularly vulnerable should be offered help and support. This should include phone details being exchanged in order to provide a point of contact for the member of staff.
- **It should be strongly emphasised that normal school routine will be maintained as much as possible.**
- Staff should be asked to be vigilant and provide immediate information to pastoral staff about students who may be showing signs of stress and need of support. Pastoral staff should be made available to offer support and the School Welfare Officer. The Educational Psychologist may be brought in to assist.
- Designated areas may be established to provide pupils a place to reflect during the day. Pupils who feel too distressed to attend lessons should be allowed to go to the areas designated. This should typically be made available for one week following the death.
- The Principal should contact the family to offer condolences and support.
- The Principal will also need to consider which members of staff and which pupils should attend the funeral. In this matter the wishes of the family must be taken fully into account. The school should give due consideration to accompanying a small number of close friends to the funeral.
- Should the death be of interest to the media, then the Principal should formulate any response in conjunction with the LA Press Officer. It may be necessary to advise staff and students not to speak to the media and to avoid making comments that might be misconstrued.
- The Head of Year will continue to monitor the impact on individual pupils and keep parents informed of any concerns.
- Parents/family to be invited to any commemorative events held by school.

## 3. Upon the death of a member of staff

- On hearing of the death of a member of staff, the Principal should meet with members of the Senior Leadership Team to plan the school's response. At this meeting the method of informing other staff will be decided. Decisions as to how and when pupils will be informed will also need to be made.
- The Principal should contact the family to offer condolences and support.

- Adequate support for staff and pupils must be available. The expertise of pastoral staff, School Welfare Officer and the Educational Psychologist should be more than adequate to provide support for pupils. In general staff members will be able to support each other, but further support may be required.
- Staff should be provided the opportunity to meet as a group at the end of the school day to discuss any concerns, difficulties and for support.
- Staff members with a particularly close relationship to the deceased should be offered specialist support, including appropriate cover if applicable.
- Pupils with a particularly close relationship to the deceased should be told one-to-one or in a separate group.
- Minimum disruption to the school timetable is ideal. Structure and regularity will ensure pupils are not overwhelmed. However, flexibility may be required and great sensitivity should be shown when determining how lessons will be covered following the death.
- Attendance of staff and pupils at the funeral should where possible be discussed with the deceased's family.
- The Principal should ensure that as many staff as possible are able to attend the funeral. This may involve the school having to put special timetable arrangements in place.
- Heads of Year should continue to monitor the impact on pupils. The Senior Leadership Team should continue to monitor individual members of staff.
- The family should be involved in any commemorative events held by the school.
- Should the death be of interest to the media, then the Principal should formulate any response in conjunction with the LA Press Officer. It may be necessary to advise staff and students not to speak to the media and to avoid making comments that might be misconstrued.

#### **4. Upon the death of a family member of a member of staff**

- Bereavement affects people in different ways. This policy therefore reflects a broad approach rather than specific detail.
- Staff will be allowed time off from school with pay to attend a funeral of a family member/close friend/colleague. This is at the discretion of the Principal/Senior Vice Principal.
- In practice, depending upon the individual circumstances (particularly prolonged illness of a close family member/friend, staff may require longer periods of support through paid leave. This will be considered on an individual basis.
- Referral to Employee Healthcare may also follow a bereavement, especially where it is leading to long term absence.

#### **Examinations/Assessments**

Bereavement can have serious effects of a pupil's ability to study and undertake examinations and assessments. The school is mindful of this and the following considerations will be made to assist pupils. This may include applications for special consideration with examination boards.

#### **Pupils currently taking examinations or assessments**

Pupils who are taking examinations during a time of bereavement are likely to be affected by the loss. The circumstances will be reported to the appropriate Examination Board and they will decide on whether special considerations will be applied. The relationship between the pupil and the person concerned will be a determining factor in the Examination Board's decision as will the proximity to the exam from the death.

### **Pupils missing examinations or assessments**

This will be a very rare occurrence but provision should be in place should it occur. If a pupil misses an examination due to the death of a close family member or friend it will be reported to the appropriate Examination Board. The Examination Board will then make a decision based on the information provided by the school, as to whether or not to apply special consideration and amend their result. This may mean the use of the pupil's predicted grade.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

After a bereavement, the school will review what was done at each stage and will evaluate the actions taken to enable the school to plan for the future.

### **Other Related Policies**

Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Suicide Response Plan

### **Links**

- The Samaritans <http://www.samaritans.org/>
- The Educational Psychology Service (contactable through the school)
- Compassionate Friends <http://www.tcf.org.uk/>