

Salendine Nook High School (Academy)

Bereavement Policy

Date policy written:	June 2017
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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.

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

Before the pupil returns to school:

- The Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team, Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year and Chair of Governors should be informed of the death.
- All staff should be informed of the death by the Head Teacher or Associate Head Teacher.
- 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 Head Teacher should make contact with the family to express condolences and offer support to the young person.
- The Head Teacher 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, Assistant Head of Year, Welfare Officer, and where they can go if they need to leave a class.
- A note should be made in their planner 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. This may be only a few words, but if it doesn't happen the pupil may think that the teacher does not know, or does not care.
- 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 a school trained bereavement counsellor.
- The Head of Year will monitor the pupil over the next 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 whole school community.

- On hearing of the death of a student the Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher or Associate Head Teacher 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.
- The Head Teacher should contact the family to offer condolences and support.
- The Head Teacher will also need to consider a selection process as to 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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher 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 it may be appropriate to consult the Educational Psychologist to provide more specialist resources.
- Staff should be provided the opportunity to meet as a group at the end of the school day to discuss any concerns and 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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher to be informed of any concerns.
- The family should be involved in any commemorative events held by the school.
- Should the death be of interest to the media, then the Head Teacher 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.

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.

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

Links

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