



'OPENING DOORS OF
OPPORTUNITY TOGETHER'

BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS POLICY

REVIEWED FEBRUARY 2024



Mission Statement

Meadow Bridge Primary School aims to foster a safe, happy and caring environment where each child's personal development is nurtured.

Every child's educational journey is enhanced and their lives enriched through stimulating learning experiences.

Equal emphasis will be placed on pastoral care and on ensuring each individual reaches his or her academic potential, equipping them for the future.



Bereavement and Loss Policy

Introduction

Meadow Bridge Primary School is committed to the provision of a safe, happy and stimulating learning environment. It is our intention that everyone feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment.

Rationale

No matter how prepared we think we are, death is often traumatic and unexpected. A considered, planned and organised response to an event is often more effective than acting on impulse.

Guidance

The DENI document – [A Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools](#) provides guidance for schools in these circumstances and should be referred to:

- Appendix 6 Announcements to Pupils - Advice for Teachers
- Appendix 7 Breaking the News to Pupils - Advice for Teachers
- Appendix 8 Children and Young People's Understanding of Death - Information for Staff
- Appendix 9 Death by Suspected Suicide - Information for Staff
- Appendix 10 How to Support Pupils at a Time of Crisis – Information for Staff
- Appendix 11 Responding to Pupils' Questions Following a Sudden Death - Information for Staff
- Appendix 12 Understanding Your Reactions - Information for Pupils
- Appendix 13 Informing Parents of a Sudden Death - Letter to Parents
- Appendix 14 Understanding Your Child's Reactions and How You Can Help - Information for Parents
- Appendix 15 Press Statements - Information for Staff
- Appendix 16 Media Interviews - Information for Staff
- Appendix 17 Pupils Returning to School After Bereavement - Information for Teachers
- Appendix 18 School Record of a Pupil Who Has Experienced Loss/Bereavement

The Education Authority's Critical Incident Team can also be contacted on 028 3751 2515.

Critical Incident Team – Bereavement

Principal: -	Mr D J Ball
Vice-Principal: -	Mr A McCollum
Deputy Designated Teacher: -	Ms R Stirling
Chair of Board of Governors: -	Miss J Townsley

When news of a death reaches the school, a member of the **Critical Incident Team – Bereavement**, must be informed so that the Team can meet to make decisions on how best to progress and also to ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures. A member of the Team will contact the next of kin of the child/member of staff to discuss how school can best deal with the child's/member of staff's needs.

The Team will take guidance from the School Counsellor regarding the most appropriate time and manner in which school should offer and provide support.

Death of Child or a Member of Staff

The sudden death of a pupil or member of staff challenges the very heart of the school community, its identity and its coping mechanisms. By talking to the deceased's family and being sensitive to their wishes, the Team should plan the most appropriate response to the death and the way forward for all those affected. It is important to be open and honest and to follow procedures, communicating with and reassuring all members of the school community.

Sharing grief in a supportive environment can facilitate the grieving process. However, for pupils or staff particularly affected, it may be necessary to contact appropriate outside agencies.

Supporting a Pupil Dealing with the Bereavement of a Family Member

Children and young people's understanding of death will depend on their cognitive and developmental stage. Therefore, the circumstances of the death and the age and developmental stage of the pupil will determine the approach used by teachers. The Critical Incident Team – Bereavement, will advise and support staff.

Return to School

In this phase of the process, the work of the Team should be reactive, sympathetic and supportive to meet the needs, feelings, and emotions of both staff and pupils.

In most cases it is advisable, with the agreement of the bereaved or family of the bereaved, that everyone is aware of the situation before the pupil returns.

Teachers should endeavour to foster a compassionate yet disciplined environment. School, with its routines and rituals, often provides a respite at this traumatic time although a phased return may be appropriate.

Anniversaries or birthdays often spark a revival of feelings of bereavement and it is important to be aware of such dates and to react with sensitivity and respect.

Terminally Ill Pupils/Staff

The wishes of the person and their next of kin must always be respected. Honesty about death and dying is the best line of approach.

Funerals/Memorial Services

The wishes of the bereaved family should be taken into consideration before attending funerals or memorial services or planning a special assembly in school.

Self-Care

Teachers also require support structures when dealing with grief. If you are having difficulty dealing with your own or others' grief, talk to a partner, friend or colleague. Staff support is also available from the EA Human Resources Section Tel: 028 9056 6200.

Bereavement Information and Resources

Barnardo's:	www.barnardos.org.uk
Childhood Bereavement Network:	www.childbereavement.org.uk
Childline:	www.childline.org.uk
Cruse Bereavement Care:	www.cruse.org.uk
Lifeline 24hr support helpline:	0808 808 8000
Samaritans:	www.samaritans.org.uk

[PHA Memorial Advice for Communities Groups and Schools](#)

[EA - Bereavement Books and Resources for Primary Schools](#)

[EA - Children and Young People's Understanding of Death](#)

[EA - Practical Activities to Support a Bereaved Pupil](#)

[EA - Supporting Pupils on their Return to School](#)

[EA - Useful Bereavement Websites](#)

[DENI – Protecting Lives in School](#)