



## **Nancealverne School** **Bereavement Policy**

*This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the managing medical conditions policy, leave of absence policy and critical incident protocol.*

### **Introduction**

#### ***Why we need this policy:***

Sadly, all schools at some point will be affected by a death: the death of a pupil, a member of staff, someone close to the school community or a pupil's family member.

Most adults struggle to know what to say to another adult who is mourning, but when it is a child who is bereaved, they often ignore or avoid the issue of the death. This can be a result of fear that they will do or say the wrong thing – or because they think avoiding the subject protects the child from any extra sadness and distress.

It is our instinct to protect children, but trying to protect them from death and the emotion of grief is unwise and unhelpful.

Children who have SEND may communicate their grief differently, but grief is grief, and their grief is just as valid and powerful as anyone else's and must not be overlooked, ignored, deflected, or forgotten. Doing so will only leave them in a greater state of confusion and, just like anyone whose grief is neglected, this could impact on their emotional and psychological health.

This policy has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively, and compassionately, with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances relating to bereavement/critical incident. It seeks to reflect the values and philosophy of Nancealverne School.

### **Aims:**

#### ***This policy aims to:***

- Provide information and guidance to staff so that any pupils, staff, or members of the school community faced with a bereavement or loss are given the support they need and in a manner that is appropriate to them.
- Outline the range of support mechanisms available to pupils, staff, and members of the school community (including parents, carers and the wider family).



- Give an overview of the procedures to be deployed by staff following a bereavement.

### **Key People in supporting this policy:**

- Key coordinator: Head Teacher
- Bereavement Coordinator: Caroline Williams.
- Crisis Team (Head teacher, Bereavement Coordinators, Wellbeing Team Coordinator & Champions, Senior Leadership Team, Family Liaison Worker)

### **Roles and responsibilities:**

#### Key coordinator:

- Has overall responsibility for support and liaison in the event of a death or traumatic loss. If the head teacher is absent, then the Deputy Head teacher will assume responsibility.

#### Bereavement Coordinators:

- Monitor and review the policy and information sharing pathways.
- Provide emotional support to staff in times of loss and liaise with staff wellbeing champions regarding on-going support.
- Ensure all actions identified by the information sharing pathways are adhered to.
- Attend up to date bereavement training and disseminate accordingly.
- Ensure the bereavement toolkit is up to date and resources are organised accordingly to uphold the aims of our policy.
- Coordinate with any outside agency support (e.g., counsellors) deemed necessary.
- Offer advice and guidance in regard to memory/celebration events to be held in school (with consideration to family views).

#### Crisis Team:

- Role of communication: with staff, pupils, families, governors, the wider school community, emergency services, press/media (as appropriate), medical teams and authorities (Health and Safety Executive and Public Health England regarding any infectious diseases).
- Role of liaison: with the affected family/families,
- Role of trouble shooting resolving any issues related to the school site following the death, especially if the death occurred at school; repairs, maintenance, informing outside agencies and so on
- Monitor how staff and pupils are coping with the bereavement.
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- Have a regular presence around the school to see how people are doing (pupils, staff, parents) and be available to provide support to these people as required.
- Have information available to signpost pupils, parents/careers/families, and staff to extra support as required.

### **Guidelines and key responsibilities:**

It will be part of the Bereavement Coordinators role to identify the key responsibilities for all staff members to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively, and compassionately, with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances relating to bereavement.

The development of our bereavement support kit will aim to provide resources, signpost support, suggested lesson/assembly outlines, key vocabulary, and information in relation to pupil's cognitive understanding of death and associated grief.

### **Responsibility of Governors:**

- Identified Governor to monitor the policy and any subsequent updates of this.
- The identified Governor to attend any whole school training regarding bereavement.
- To attend the funeral of pupil/staff member, representing the Governing body of the school (considering the wishes of the family).

### **Resources:**

#### ***Bereavement toolkit to include:***

- List of agencies/support groups, websites, specialist support
- Lesson and assembly ideas
- Bereavement support information (including child development – levels, cognitive understanding etc)
- Information sharing pathways.
- Books/flyers
- Social story examples
- Bereavement Makaton signs and symbols
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### **Equal Opportunities:**



We will be receptive to personal needs and wishes and always consider cultural and religious differences. Through consultation with the family/staff member we will identify their needs and acknowledge their wishes when relaying information back to the members of the school community.

The school will adhere to all information relating to 'end of life' plans ('Wishes' document) which outline ways the school community will receive/share information relating to any pupil who are in receipt of such plans.

The school will continue to gather any information and cascade this to the appropriate people in relation to any pupil from appropriate agencies while they are not in school – e.g. – school nurse (in accordance with parental permission received), we acknowledge it is important not to make assumptions based upon a religious or cultural background; however, knowledge of other backgrounds may make communication and understanding easier. At all times the family/staff should be treated sensitively and with respect.

#### **School representation at funerals:**

The school acknowledges the close relationships staff form with pupils via their everyday working practice with them. It is acknowledged that several staff members may wish to attend the funeral of a pupil; in such instances the bereavement coordinators will meet with the class team to determine the funeral arrangements and who will attend to represent the school/class team at a funeral. This measure aims to enable the school to carry on its everyday working practice and minimise any impact to the safety, teaching and learning of the class group.

#### **Supporting bereaved staff:**

The procedures in this policy also apply to bereaved members of staff. Staff should also be guided to and offered support from outside agencies including the Educational Psychology Service.

#### **Appendices:**

##### Appendix A: Further Information Contacts

<b>Policy approved by the Local Governing Body</b>	Summer 2023
<b>Policy to be reviewed</b>	Every 2 years.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Head Teacher



## Further Information: Appendix A

### Child Bereavement Network:

[www.childbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

Child Bereavement Network supports professionals working with bereaved children and young people.

### Child Bereavement UK:

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

Child Bereavement UK provides:

- A confidential information and support line for families and professionals when a child has died and when a child is bereaved.
- Direct support for children and families
- A nationwide database of other local support services
- A web discussion forum for families
- Resources for bereaved children and young people, families, and all professionals
- Training courses on bereavement for health care and other professionals

### Cruse Bereavement Care

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Cruse provides support after the death of someone close. Many local branches of Cruse offer individual or group support for bereaved children. Cruse also has a special website for young people: [www.hopeagain.org.uk](http://www.hopeagain.org.uk)

### Grief Encounter

[www.griefencounter.org.uk](http://www.griefencounter.org.uk)

Grief encounter helps bereaved children get help, recognition and understanding following their loss.

### Penhaligon's Friends

[www.penhaligonsfriends.org.uk](http://www.penhaligonsfriends.org.uk)

Penhaligon's Friends are a Cornish Charity supporting bereaved children, young people, parents and carers throughout the county. They offer children and young people the chance to meet others and share their experiences, as well as practical resources for children and parents.

They also deliver an extensive programme of training and advice for other childcare professionals.



### **Rainbows**

[www.rainbowsgb.org](http://www.rainbowsgb.org)

Rainbows helps children and young people grieve and grow after a loss.

### **Sudden**

[www.suddendeath.org](http://www.suddendeath.org)

Sudden supports people after they have experienced a sudden death.

### **Support after Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM)**

[www.samm.org.uk](http://www.samm.org.uk)

SAMM supports families bereaved by murder and manslaughter

### **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide**

[www.uk-sobs.org.uk](http://www.uk-sobs.org.uk)

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide is an organisation offering emotional and practical support for people bereaved through suicide.

### **Victim Support**

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Victim Support helps people affected by crime and traumatic events.

### **Winston's Wish**

[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

Winston's Wish provides:

- A National helpline for all those caring for a child or young person who has been bereaved.
- A website with activities for children and young people (plus the facility to ask questions of a trained clinician)
- A programme of direct support for families bereaved through suicide, murder, or manslaughter.
- Resources including books and memory boxes.
- Training courses and bespoke training