

Colmers Farm Primary School's

Bereavement Policy



[Rights Respecting Schools' Article/s](#)

A3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

A12: Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

A14. Children have the right to think and believe what you choose. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

A17. Children have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspapers, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you get is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

A39: Children must receive special support to help them recover their health dignity, self-respect and social life.

Bereavement Policy

School Ethos

Colmers Farm Primary School is openly inclusive, welcoming all children from the whole community to a caring and happy environment. At Colmers Farm we believe that all children are unique, and we encourage them to develop their strengths and creativity as individuals. The school aims to be a community where children feel safe and secure.

Rationale

1 in 29 children aged 5 to 16 has been bereaved of a parent or sibling - this is potentially one in every class. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, relative, friend or significant person. Within the school community there will almost always be some children who are struggling with bereavement. Sometimes the whole school community will be impacted by the death of a member of staff or a pupil.

There is the necessity of having a Bereavement Policy in place in order that we might be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these sensitive situations. Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some children - or staff - require, though referral to more specialist support should be a consideration where the impact of grief is more complex.

Additional information and resources can be accessed at www.childbereavementuk.org

Objectives

The core intentions of the policy are:

- To provide a framework for all staff to give guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately with a bereavement;
- To support pupils and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after bereavement;
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community;
- To identify key staff within school, school improvement board and academy trust; and to clarify the pathway of support;
- To have clear expectations about the way school will respond to a death, and provide a nurturing, safe, supportive environment for all.

Section 1: Death of a pupil or member of staff

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

- To be first point of contact for family/child concerned;
- To decide, in consultation with the family, when and how news will be shared with members of staff and children;
- To monitor progress and liaise with external agencies;
- To keep the governing body fully informed;

- To advise and support staff;
- To consult on referral pathways and identification of complex grief;
- To respond to media enquiries.

The Multi Academy Trust

- To support the Headteacher in advising and supporting staff;
- To support the Headteacher in consulting on referral pathways and identification of complex grief.

The School Improvement Board

- To approve policy and ensure its implementation, to be reviewed in three years

Procedures

Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher and their wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.

- Staff should be informed before pupils and be prepared to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance;
- Pupils who are affected should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them;
- A letter to all school families affected should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to who it should be distributed to and how;
- Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Headteacher;
- School should be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a child throughout their school life so information should be recorded and shared with relevant people, particularly at transition points.

The first few days

- School can provide stability and normality for staff and children, although some flexibility may be necessary;
- Bereaved children may need time to grieve and manage overwhelming feelings. They may need to use a safe space for time out;
- A tribute book/book of condolence may be appropriate. This should be placed somewhere safe, accessible and somewhere pupils can be supervised.

The funeral

- Consultation with the family will be needed by the Headteacher about whether it would be appropriate for staff and/or children to attend;
- A decision should be made about flowers or a collection;
- Identify any practicalities of staff cover to allow for those wishing to attend the funeral to do so. Is it appropriate to close the school?
- If appropriate, identify any practicalities for children attending the funeral. How will they be supported?

Support for pupils

- Where appropriate bereavement support will be provided by school staff (mainly through the pastoral team/those trained in bereavement support) or an appropriate outside agency. Support to be discussed with all affected parties prior to support taking place.

Support for staff

- Supporting bereaved children can be very stressful for staff, particularly those who may also be dealing with their own emotions. The wellbeing of staff needs to be closely monitored and external support provided where necessary;
- Consider training requirements for all staff.

Remembering

- Consult with the family about any plans for a memorial, assembly or other tribute. A more permanent memorial (such as a tree, special garden or artwork) may be appropriate.

Section 2: Supporting a bereaved pupil

Returning to school after a bereavement

A member of the senior leadership team, and any other appropriate adults, will meet with the pupil and their family/carers to discuss their return to school. Most grieving children do not need a 'bereavement expert', they need familiar trusted adults.

The meeting should:

- Acknowledge the death;
- Find out how the child would like to share the news;
- Arrange a safe space for time out and agree a way of informing staff the child needs this space;
- Discuss possible activities to provide in this safe space: journals, art and craft, books, screen time, memory box etc;
- Talk about communication with the child, within school and between home and school;
- Consider any peers who may need support to help a grieving friend.

Longer term support

- Children will continue to grieve for the rest of their lives and may require on-going support. It is important that information about a bereavement forms part of transition between class teachers;
- Significant dates may be particularly difficult, contact with the family will help with this;
- Grief will impact children in different ways. Some will focus really hard on their learning and put themselves under pressure to succeed, others will find it difficult

to focus in class and on their learning. These changes will need to be carefully supported;

- Bereaved children can find change difficult and so may need additional transition support and they should be given the opportunity to voice any worries they have;
- More vulnerable children may need further specialist support.

Death, grief and bereavement in the curriculum

- Teaching about loss, death, grief and bereavement forms part of the PSHE/PD curriculum (the PD lead will be able to direct staff to appropriate resources);
- Family/carers should be made aware in advance when these topics are being covered so that they can support their young person. Recently bereaved children may wish to complete this learning elsewhere or take time out.

Support for staff

- Supporting bereaved children can be very stressful for staff, particularly those who may also be dealing with their own emotions. The wellbeing of staff needs to be closely monitored and external support provided where necessary;
- Consider training requirements for all staff.

Policy updated - Nov 2023

Update - As required