



St Julie's Catholic High School

Bereavement Policy

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Pastoral Support Worker

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**Reference
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Pastoral Support Worker

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1. Aims

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how our school will respond to a death in our school community
- Set out a plan for communicating deaths in a timely manner that balances our school community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased
- Identify best practices for supporting pupils and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the governing board
- Provide a roadmap and framework for pupils or staff returning to school following bereavement

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The headteacher

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for delegating any responsibilities under this policy to other members of staff.

The headteacher will:

- Liaise with the family of the deceased
- Where appropriate, communicate details of a death to pupils and staff or activate communication teams

- Respond to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Participate in any multi-agency reviews as requested
- Lead reintegration meetings for staff returning to school after a bereavement
- Arrange for monitoring and support of the pastoral support team or any individual staff members who are supporting bereaved pupils or staff
- Organise memorials such as temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages.

2.2 Pastoral support staff

The pastoral support team has responsibility for monitoring and supporting bereaved pupils and staff members (including before their bereavement, where relevant – for example, in the case of terminal illness).

The pastoral support team will:

- Lead reintegration meetings for pupils returning to school after a bereavement
- Provide direct support to bereaved pupils and staff
- Signpost / put in referrals to external support agencies to help support bereaved pupils and staff
- Organise safe spaces for bereaved members of the school community to take a time out
- Organise memorials, such as temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages
- Arrange for the attendance and supervision of pupils at funerals (where permitted)
- Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved pupils or staff and ensure they're supported on those days
- Provide additional support during significant transitions – for example, when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school

2.3 Governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and supporting the headteacher.

The governing board will:

- Reflect on the policy's effectiveness in practice.
- Monitor the headteacher's emotional wellbeing – for example, through regular meetings between the headteacher and chair of governors.

- Assist the headteacher, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Where necessary, arrange for another staff member to take the lead if the headteacher is not available to respond to a death immediately

3. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

Supporting pupils and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported.

Ensure supervision is available if staff require support.

Line manager to check in with staff member during KIT meetings.

Staff members can up skill and complete bereavement training if they wish to.

4. Immediate actions following a death

4.1 Clarifying information and the wishes of the family

- Headteacher will be responsible for contacting the family to confirm news of a death and determine the wishes of the family in terms of what can be shared with the rest of the school community and how.
- Headteacher will communicate to the school community the news of a death in the way which has been agreed by the family.

4.2 Sharing the news with staff

Explain:

- Headteacher will communicate to staff members the news of a death in the way which has been agreed with the family.
- Depending on when the death has happened Headteacher will communicate information in timely manner and in the most appropriate way e.g email or staff meeting
- Headteacher will outline how we move forward as a school community and what support is available for staff e.g external agency support and internal support via pastoral team and leadership team.

4.3 Sharing the news with pupils

- Depending on when the death has happened Headteacher will communicate information in timely manner and in the most appropriate way to students.
- Headteacher will be responsible for sharing the news with pupils and explaining what support will be available to those who need it. This can be done in assemblies for each year group.
- Headteacher will outline how we move forward as a school community and what support is available for pupils e.g external agency support and internal support via pastoral support and leadership team.

4.4 Informing parents/carers

- Depending on when the death has happened Headteacher will communicate information in timely manner and in the most appropriate way to families this could be done via a text message/email /letter. This will outline how pupils have been told about the death and what support has been put in place for pupils.
- Headteacher will signpost families to where they can get support

4.5 Responding to specific causes of death

Some deaths need to be handled more sensitively due to their potential to cause fear, anger or imitation.

- If the death is the result of suicide school will provide external support for Staff and pupils and will signpost families to the Samaritans website. School will follow the step-by-step programme to support schools.
- If the death is due to homicide or family violence school will provide external support for staff and pupils. School will signpost families to Child Bereavement UK where they can access support.
- If the death is due to contagious disease, we will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team

4.6 Responding to the media

In the event that a death that affects the school raises media interest, we will respond in the following manner:

- Headteacher will liaise with chair of governors and discuss how to move forward with media requests.
- Staff members should not respond to media requests but instead direct the requests to Headteacher.

5. Follow-up actions and support following a death

5.1 Support for pupils and staff

Pupils and staff may require support to grieve in the initial days and weeks following a death.

- Support will be available for staff members and pupils via pastoral support team and leadership team. This will be available 1-1 or in a group setting depending on what is preferred by the individual. For staff or pupils who need more in-depth support external agencies can be contacted and brought into school.
- Staff and pupils will be signposted to external agencies via school newsletters and social media outlets.

5.2 Timetables

- Headteacher will meet with staff members following a personal bereavement and check their wellbeing and discuss how to support them moving forward and discuss reasonable adjustments being made if necessary.
- A progress leader or pastoral support worker will meet with a student on their return to school to check in on their wellbeing and what support is needed in school and make reasonable adjustments to school day/timetable if needed.

5.3 Tributes and condolences

Explain:

- Headteacher will listen to any suggestions from staff members / family of deceased on how the school community can remember the member of staff. Headteacher will then delegate to other staff to follow through with suggestions that have been agreed.
- Physical memorial will be permitted in different ways depending on family wishes. For example, memorial book can be in physical form or online.
- Tributes can be collected from pupils and presented to the family.
- The chapel will be a quiet space for students to reflect and to sign the book of condolences if in physical form.

5.4 Funerals

We will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

- Whether members of staff and/or pupils are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service
- How condolences should be made and how staff and pupils can contribute

If staff are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:

Headteacher will communicate the wishes and feelings of the family to staff members.

If pupils are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:

This will be communicated to parents/carers in the most appropriate way for parents to follow the wishes and feelings of the family.

6. Support for pupils returning to school after bereavement

Whether a pupil has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

6.1 Reintegration meeting

Progress Leader/ Pastoral support will meet with the bereaved pupil and their parents/carers to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the pupil is emotionally ready to return to the classroom either full time or with adjustments to the timetable to allow for a phased return
- Address any concerns the pupil and their parents/carers have about the return to school
- Consult with the pupil about how or even if they want staff / classmates to know of the death (where relevant)
- Open lines of communication between the pupil and relevant staff to ensure support should the pupil feel overwhelmed
- Open lines of communication between the school and the pupil's parents/carers to coordinate support
- Consider any additional support needed for a pupil who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability

6.2 Ongoing support

- We will maintain regular contact with the pupil's parents/carers to monitor how the pupil is coping
- We acknowledge significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult – this will be done through a bereavement calendar so it is consistent for all pupils. Workshops will take place for Mothers Day, Fathers Day and Christmas
- We know that grief may impact a pupil's progress and affect their behavior. To manage this, we will have regular check-ins with the pupil and ask for staff members to inform progress leader or pastoral staff if there is any change in behavior or progress.

- We will take care to manage changes for bereaved pupils by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions
- We will inform pupils of any PSHE lessons which may be triggering for them and provide another safe space for them to sit with a member of staff.

7. Support for staff returning to school after bereavement

Whether a staff member has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

7.1 Reintegration meeting

Headteacher will meet with the bereaved staff member to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the staff member is ready to return to work and the best way to make that return (e.g. a phased return to work or a temporary change in duties)
- Address any concerns the staff member may have about the return to school
- Consult with the staff member about how or even if they want their pupils and colleagues to know of the death (where relevant)
- Set guidelines for communication between the staff member and their line manager to monitor and support the staff member

7.2 Ongoing support

We acknowledge that grief can have an impact on a staff member's physical and mental health, which can then go on to impact their performance.

We also recognise that grieving is highly personal and that there can't be a one-size-fits-all solution for monitoring and supporting a bereaved person.

We will work with everyone to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person. This may include:

- Pastoral staff / Chaplain can check in with the staff members supporting them on their return to work.
- Use external providers to provide extra support if needed.
- Reasonable adjustments when returning to work – this will be monitored to ensure staff member feels supported.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by Hannah Woods, Pastoral Support Worker every 2 years. At every review, it will be approved by the Full Governing Body.

Appendix: useful contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	• Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 • https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us
Winston's Wish	• Helpline: 08088 020 021 • https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/
Cruse Bereavement Care	• Helpline: 0808 808 1677 • https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us
Mind	• Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393 • Further contacts: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/
Liverpool Bereavement Service	Telephone 0151 2363932 Email enquiries@liverpoolbereavement.co.uk
The Bobby Colleran Trust	takecare@thebobbycollerantrust.org.uk slowdown@thebobbycollerantrust.org.uk
Alfie's Squad	info@alfiessquad.org
Paul's Place	support@beaconcousellingtrust.co.uk