

**REDDIFORD SCHOOL**

**INCLUDING EYFS**

**POLICY FOR BEREAVEMENT**

**In conjunction with:**

**Behaviour,**

**Safeguarding,**

**Wellbeing & Mental Health Policy,**

**PSHE Policy,**

**SMSC Policy,**

**RSHE Policy**

## **Bereavement Policy**

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### **1. Introduction**

At Reddiford School, we recognize the profound impact of bereavement on children, families, and the wider school community. Our Bereavement Policy aims to provide comprehensive support in various aspects related to bereavement, ensuring the emotional health and wellbeing of our students and staff. This policy is applicable to all members of the school community.

Our school is fully committed to the emotional health and well-being of our children and young people and that of our staff. We are dedicated to the continual development of a healthy and thriving school community and strive to work towards this in all aspects of school life. We are passionate about providing an ethos, environment and curriculum that can provide support during difficult times.

### **2. Rationale**

This policy relates to all bereavements; including parents, pupils, staff, high profile people, news- worthy events, etc.

There is no national data in the UK on the number of children that experience the death of a parent, but studies show that by the age of 16 at least one child in every classroom (1 in 29) will have experienced the death of a parent or sibling.

These deaths are one of the most fundamental losses that a child will ever experience and without the right support it can lead to a range of problems, some of which can persist into adulthood. Other deaths may also affect a family, with one study showing that 78% of secondary school pupils felt that someone significant in their lives had died.

Pupils are at risk of:

- higher levels of anxiety and depression
- lower aspirations for continued learning
- increase in physical health complaints

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- increase in risk taking behaviours
- lower academic attainment
- increased risk of school exclusion
- anger, sadness, insomnia, poor behaviour.

### **3. Objectives**

The core intentions of the policy are:

- 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 and the Local Authority and clarify the pathway of support.
- The Children Act 1989 aimed to ensure that the welfare of the child was paramount,

working in partnership with parents to protect the child from harm

([http://www.careandthelaw.org.uk/eng/b\\_section2](http://www.careandthelaw.org.uk/eng/b_section2) ). All intentions of this policy

endorse that aim as we endeavour to counter any adverse effects of bereavement and maintain pupils' emotional well-being.

### **4. The role of the Governing Body**

- To approve this policy and ensure its implementation as an active document. To be reviewed every three years.

This includes:

- Reflecting on its effectiveness in practice.
- Utilising the expertise within the school and sharing responsibilities.

### **5. The role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the governing body, parents/carers, the Local Authority and other relevant outside agencies.

The Headteacher will work with the Deputy Head Pastoral to:

- Monitor progress and liaise with external agencies.
- Respond to media enquiries.
- Keep the governing body fully informed.
- Be first point of contact for family/child concerned.
- Advise and support staff, consult on referral pathways.

## **6. The role of teaching and pastoral staff**

- To support pupils, as appropriate, with their bereavement, both in and out of the classroom.

NB: It is important that all staff feel confident in delivering support for pupils, supporting each

other and implementing this policy. To this end it is desirable that relevant school staff have some training if possible.

- Share guidance, support materials, cascade training, advice with colleagues.
- Establishing and co-ordinating links with external agencies.
- Liaison with other primary or secondary schools if applicable.

## **7. Procedures**

- Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Headteacher and or designated / assigned members of staff following discussion, and the family's wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.

NB: We need to be mindful of the use of social media sites and their impact throughout this time as rumour and gossip spread quickly.

- Staff should be informed before pupils and be prepared to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance.
- Pupils should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them. A decision should be made as to whether this information should be given as part of a whole school approach or if only certain groups of pupils need to be informed.
- The school should be aware that the school timetable may need a degree of flexibility to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of children affected by the situation. However, minimal disruption to the timetable also offers a sense of security and familiarity.
- Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate.
- In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial school closure in some circumstances.

- 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 school should be aware of any ongoing bereavement issues for new pupils. To this end it is important to have effective communication with 'feeder' schools.
- Ongoing support - School should liaise with the family/carers about support from external services. There should also be consideration made for upcoming anniversaries, birthday or significant days e.g. Mothers/Father's Day. There may also be the need to consider the delivery of elements of the curriculum so this is delivered sensitively.

NB: Many of the guidelines in this policy are only appropriate when the school community as a whole has experienced a death, for example a teacher, a pupil or another staff member.

Perhaps a more common experience for teachers and learning support staff is that of a pupil experiencing the death of a parent. Whole school or class activities will not normally be appropriate in this situation, but the needs of that individual pupil should still be given careful consideration.

Exam Dispensations - Reddiford School is committed to providing necessary accommodations, including exam dispensations.

- Supporting the Return to School - Reddiford School recognizes the importance of supporting students' return to school after a bereavement. A phased return or designated support person may be established to assist students during this transition. How absences from school or college can be handled sensitively. There are many reasons why children might not come to school regularly following a death, ranging from their own anxieties to the mental health of their parent or parents.

### **Extra support**

There may be instances where you feel that you need to seek extra support for the children or you would like to think through the best approach to supporting a child in school.

Winston's Wish has a Freephone Helpline (08088 020 021) available for young people, family members and professionals to call between 8am and 8pm Monday – Friday.

Winston's Wish also have an e-mail service for families and professionals to access through their website. They will try to answer you within one working day.

Some schools have benefited from further training either as a whole school or sending a few staff members to their study days.

Further information about organisations that offer support to bereaved children can be found on the Childhood Bereavement Network's website.

If a child has been bereaved, it is important to involve them in decisions about how the school manages issues relating to their loss. Talk to the child about their preferred way of informing their peers about what has happened and about the support they need.

This Bereavement Policy at Reddiford School serves as a guiding document to address the multifaceted aspects of bereavement. We are committed to providing a supportive and empathetic environment for our school community during difficult times.