

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Malmesbury

## Bereavement Policy



*“Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, loving and serving together”*

### Rationale

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we understand that bereavement is faced by members of our school community at different times and that when the loss is of a member of our school community – such as a child or staff member, it can be particularly difficult. Pupils need to be supported when they experience family bereavements and other significant losses in the course of their lives while they are at school.

This policy will provide guidelines to be followed after a bereavement. The aim is to be supportive to both pupils and adults, and for staff to have greater confidence and be better equipped to cope when bereavement happens. Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and this policy has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances.

This school is committed to the emotional health and well-being of its staff and pupils. We are dedicated to the continual development of a 'healthy school'. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that support and prepare pupils for coping with separation or loss of a loved one, either through death or divorce.

**NB.** In this policy, all mentions of 'the family' refer to the family of the deceased individual. The wishes of the family will always be considered when carrying out any of the actions outlined in this policy. If the family objects to any of the procedures, the school will work to ensure reasonable adjustments are made.

### Aims & Intents

We will ensure that all pupils and members of staff faced with a significant loss or bereavement are provided with appropriate support.

At St Joseph's Catholic School we will provide support to pupils who experience bereavement within their families, and support to pupils and staff on the death of a

member of the school community, whether it be an adult or a child.

The way in which children and young people are treated when someone important in their lives dies has a profound effect on their future ability to manage their own lives. The caring and supportive school environment has a key role to play and we recognise that every situation is unique and demands careful handling, with the wishes of the pupil or family being of paramount importance.

In our school, we believe in a holistic approach to the support and care of our pupils. When bereavement occurs it affects many people, not just the family concerned. We aim to ensure that the whole school community, both inside and outside the school, are offered the appropriate support and the advice they require.

## Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2018) 'Good Work Plan'
- The Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Regulations 2020
- Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018

This policy has been created with due regard to the following guidance:

- Winston's Wish (2019) 'A Guide to Supporting Grieving Children and Young People in Education'
- Winston's Wish (2019) 'A Strategy for Schools: Positive Responses to Death'
- Samaritans (2017) 'Help When We Needed it Most'
- Child Bereavement UK (2018) 'Schools' Information Pack'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

## Roles and responsibilities

### **The governing board will be responsible for:**

- Overseeing the implementation of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy with the head teacher on an annual basis to ensure its effectiveness.

### **The Headteacher will be responsible for:**

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Liaising with external agencies, as appropriate.
- Informing governors and staff when a death occurs and arranging for pupils to be informed, as appropriate and with approval from the family.
- Being the first point of contact for staff, pupils and parents directly involved in a death, or designating this role to another appropriate member of staff.
- Responding to any enquiries from the media or the wider school community, or appointing a member of staff to undertake these duties.
- Ensuring staff have the necessary training to support bereaved pupils and to deliver sensitive news.

### **Staff will be responsible for:**

- Undertaking bereavement support training and conducting in-school training to share their knowledge with other staff.
- Supporting the Headteacher in carrying out the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Supporting staff, pupils and parents following a death, as directed by the Headteacher.
- Supporting other staff members with communicating the news of a death.
- Making referrals pupils, staff and other members of the school community to receive support.

### **The media spokesperson will be responsible for:**

- Liaising with the media as required.
- Monitoring media and social media activity regarding the death.
- Respecting the family's wishes in relation to what information can be provided to the media.

### **All staff members will be responsible for:**

- Undertaking any bereavement support training arranged by the head teacher or pastoral staff.
- Seeking support from pastoral staff as appropriate.
- Supporting their colleagues and pupils following a death, as appropriate.

## The Initial Response

1. If the family or member of staff contacts the school to inform them of a death, the member of staff that answers the phone will transfer the call to the Headteacher or the most senior member of staff available.
2. If the school is made aware of the death through a source other than the family, the Headteacher will contact the family either by phone or through a home visit.
3. The Headteacher will gather factual information about what has happened and establish the family's wishes with regards to what information will be communicated to the school community and how.
4. If a death affects the entire school, e.g. the death of a pupil or member of staff, the Headteacher will inform the family that staff and pupils will be informed as soon as possible.
5. If the death affects an individual member of staff, e.g. the death of a relative, the Headteacher will ask the member of staff if they would like this to be communicated to any of their colleagues.
6. If it is decided that the death will be communicated, the Headteacher will discuss with the staff member what information will be communicated and how they would like it to be delivered.
7. If a death affects an individual pupil, e.g. the death of a parent, the head teacher will ask the family if they would like this to be communicated to the school community.
8. If it is decided that the death will be communicated, the Headteacher will discuss with the family, and the pupil if possible, what information will be communicated and how the family would like it to be delivered.
9. If the death of a pupil's family member occurs while the pupil is at school, a member of the pupil's family will be asked to come to the school to take them home if the family wishes. If this is not possible, arrangements will be made for a member of staff to take the pupil home.
10. The Headteacher will make contact with any other agencies as required, e.g. the police.
11. The Headteacher will decide if any temporary variation needs to be made to the school timetable, e.g. rearranging or cancelling certain lessons.
12. In the event of the death of the Headteacher, a Senior Teacher /Chair of Governors will be responsible for the duties outlined above.

## Informing Staff and Governors

Staff and governors will be informed of the death before pupils.

- All staff and governors will be invited to a meeting by the Headteacher as soon as practicable.
- Absent staff and governors, including part-time and peripatetic staff, will be identified so they can be informed as soon as possible. If it is not possible for absent staff to be told in person, a phone call will be arranged.
- Any information provided to staff and governors during the meeting will have prior approval from the family.
- During the meeting, the Headteacher, with the support of pastoral staff, will:
  - Explain what happened leading up to the death.
  - Give a factual explanation of how the death occurred.
  - Allow time for staff and governors to discuss what has happened and how they feel.
  - Designate a member of staff as media spokesperson who will be responsible for liaising with the media as required.
  - Identify what internal and external support is available to staff and governors.
  - Discuss the arrangements for informing pupils, including whether all pupils will be told and who will be responsible for informing them.

Staff members that will be responsible for informing pupils about the death will be provided with a script which sets out what pupils should be told and includes information on how to answer some difficult questions.

The following people should be considered:

- Current school staff not in school that day – including therapy staff
- The parish community
- Previous school staff who worked closely with the child
- Social Work team if applicable
- SEN team
- Medical team – the school nurse for example
- Taxi driver and escort
- Chair of Governors
- Respite centres if applicable
- Other professionals who work with the child – Ed Psych
- Other parents – if children have been informed, the school needs to send a note to parents informing them of the loss, and they may need to support or comfort their children.
- Some parents may need to be telephoned if their relationship is closer but who

may not have been informed by the family.

The Headteacher and relevant pastoral staff will create the script, with input from the family.

## Informing pupils

The Headteacher will have a discussion with the family about whether all pupils need to be informed about the death.

If the death affects the whole school, e.g. the death of a staff member or pupil, the head teacher will strongly recommend to the family that all pupils should be informed; however, if the death does not affect the whole school, it may be more appropriate to just inform certain groups of pupils.

The Headteacher will make the final decision regarding which pupils will be informed.

Where possible, pupils will be informed about the death in small groups by a member of staff who is familiar to them at the same time, e.g. during class time.

Pupils with specific needs that may influence their response to being informed about the death will be identified and told separately. These needs include the following:

- Pupils that had a long-term and/or close relationship with the individual who has died
- Pupils with a history of loss
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have difficulty managing their emotions or behaviour

Staff responsible for informing pupils will use the script provided to them.

To ensure all pupils are told about the death in an age-appropriate way, a number of scripts may be created and distributed to staff with clear instructions of which script to use for which year group.

Where possible, a member of pastoral staff will be present when pupils are told about a death so they can help with answering any questions.

Pupils will be given time to ask questions about what has happened and to talk about how they are feeling.

Any questions that are asked by pupils will be answered factually.

Pupils will be told where they can go to in school for support and will also be directed to any external support.

## Informing pupils in a large group

If it is not possible to inform pupils about a death in small groups, the Headteacher, in communication with the family, will decide if it would be appropriate to inform pupils in a large group, eg. during an assembly.

Where an individual pupil has been bereaved, they will be asked if they want to attend the assembly and, if they do not want to be involved, appropriate support will be arranged for the pupil during and after the assembly.

The Headteacher will tell the family and, where relevant, the bereaved pupil exactly what they will say and to whom.

The Headteacher, with support from relevant pastoral staff, will deliver the information to pupils.

After pupils have been informed, they will go to their classrooms and be given time to express any thoughts or feelings about what they have been told.

## Informing parents

The Headteacher will have a discussion with the family about whether any parents need to be informed about the death.

If the death affects the whole school, e.g. the death of a staff member or pupil, the head teacher will strongly recommend to the family that all parents should be informed; however, if the death does not affect the whole school, it may be more appropriate to just inform parents that are directly affected, if any.

A nominated member of staff will compose a letter to parents about the death. The letter will contain the basic, factual information about the death, information about how the school is supporting pupils, how they can support their children, and who to direct questions or concerns to.

## The funeral

- It is essential to sound out the family's wishes. The family may well welcome involvement of members of the school community but equally, may wish to keep things private.
- The Headteacher and/or the Deputy Headteacher will make arrangements for the school to be represented at the funeral, and identify which staff and pupils may want to attend, together with the practicalities of issues such as staff cover and transport. For some schools it is appropriate to close, for others it is not, consequently difficult decisions will sometimes

- have to be made concerning attendance.
- Will flowers be sent and/or a collection made? Involve staff and pupils in the decision.
  - Cultural and religious implications need consideration.

## The media and social media

Any communication with the media or social media activity will be agreed with the family.

Only the appointed media spokesperson will deal with media enquiries and communications. Staff, governors and pupils will not respond to any media enquiries themselves or make any public statements about the death.

Staff, governors and pupils will not post any information about the death on social media. The media spokesperson will investigate any post made regarding the death and will refer any concerns to the head teacher.

If information about the death is circulated on social media prior to the school making an official statement, the head teacher and media spokesperson will release a statement on the school's social media channels, with the agreement of the family, to prevent rumours from spreading.

Comments and other activity on school-posted social media statements will be monitored and moderated by the media spokesperson.

If staff, governors or pupils find any false, negative or malicious information being posted about the death on social media, they will report this to the head teacher.

If a member of staff is found to have been posting content on social media or providing information to the media that is false, negative or malicious, action will be taken in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

If a pupil is found to have been posting content on social media or providing information to the media that is false, negative or malicious, action will be taken in line with the Behavioural Policy.

## Support for the family

The Headteacher will be the main point of contact between the school and the family, or will appoint another member of staff to this role where necessary.



The Headteacher will invite the family into the school to discuss how the school can best support them.

The family's wishes and feelings will always be considered and respected when making decisions and conducting activities relating to the death.

Any support that is put in place will be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the family's needs and wishes. Support could include the following:

- Sending a letter of condolence
- Giving the family the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who has died
- Inviting the family to commemorative events held by the school

## Support for staff

Staff directly affected by the death, e.g. if they are a relative or close friend of the individual that has died, will be identified and the appropriate support will be put in place.

The level of support will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher, and may include the following:

- Ensuring the staff member is not left on their own
- Arranging for lessons or other duties to be covered
- Organising bereavement leave

Staff who lose a child under the age of 18, or suffer a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy, irrespective of how long they have worked at the school, will be given a minimum of two weeks' paid bereavement leave.

Staff may take bereavement leave as either a single block of two weeks, or as two separate blocks of one week, each taken at different times across the first year after their child's death.

Any member of staff who loses a child under the age of 18, and has been employed at the school for six months or more, will be able to claim statutory pay for the period of bereavement leave.

Any member of staff who loses a child after 24 weeks of pregnancy, or during maternity leave, will not lose their entitlement to maternity leave and pay.

All staff members will be offered the opportunity to speak to the Head teacher or PSA.

Staff members will be given information about the in-school and external support they can access.

A designated room will be made available to staff where they can go during break and lunchtimes to meet with other staff and share their thoughts and feelings.

Staff will be vigilant to the signs that indicate their colleagues have been affected by bereavement and will offer them support or make a referral to a member of pastoral staff.

## Support for pupils

### **Pupils that have experienced a significant bereavement, eg. of a family member**

A member of staff that is familiar with the pupil will be appointed to act as their main point of contact – the pupil will be made aware of who the staff member is.

The Headteacher will contact the pupil's family to discuss whether the pupil will be attending school.

Any support put in place for a pupil will be pupil-led, based on their needs and wishes.

When deciding what support will be put in place for a pupil, the impact the death will have on the pupil will always be considered in the context of pre-existing factors. The following contextual factors will be considered:

- The circumstances surrounding the death, e.g. was it under traumatic circumstances, was the death expected, or did multiple people die?
- The relationship between the pupil and the person who has died.
- The ability of the pupil's family to support them following the death, eg. if a pupil's parent has died, how able is the surviving parent to support the pupil?
- Family factors such as size, financial state, structure, style of coping, communication and stressors that affect the child.
- The support the pupil has from their peers and other organisations and people.
- Characteristics of the pupil, including their age and any SEND they have.

The pupil will be a part of discussions regarding who should be informed about the death and how, where appropriate.

If a pupil chooses to attend school immediately after a bereavement, they will be allowed a flexible timetable and staff members will be made aware that the pupil may not be able to work to their usual capacity. The designated staff member will keep in communication with the pupil's family to inform them about how the pupil is doing.

If the pupil is absent from school following the bereavement, they will be made aware of who has been informed about what has happened and what they were told.

The designated staff member will make regular contact with the pupil during their absence.

The Headteacher, designated staff member, pupil and the pupil's family will make arrangements for the pupil's return to school, e.g. a phased return.

If a death occurs soon before or during a time where the pupil will take an exam, the head teacher will report the circumstances to the exam board who will decide if special considerations apply.

If a pupil misses an exam due to the death of a close family member or friend, the head teacher will report this to the appropriate exam board who will then make a decision as to whether special considerations can be applied.

Any safeguarding concerns regarding a bereaved pupil will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## Points to remember when talking to the bereaved child

**It is really important that we are honest with ourselves and recognise that someone else may be in a better position to support a child facing loss.**

- Understand the age and level of comprehension of the child.
- Listen and consider the child's needs.
- Make sure the child's voice is heard.
- Use the given name of the deceased when speaking about them. (Nanny B, Gramps).
- If you don't know the answer to a child's question be honest with them and say so.
- Talk about the funeral if this is appropriate.
- Give the child the opportunities to remember even if this is very sad.
- Children grieve as adults do, but sometimes need more help in recognising

and expressing their emotions.

- It is important to know what the families beliefs are around death and dying and work with that even if very different from your own.
- Be aware of Cultural and Religious differences within the family.

## Support for all pupils

All pupils, even those not directly affected by the death, will need to be supported following a death, particularly if the death affects the whole school community, e.g. the death of a staff member.

Pupils will be given the opportunity to speak to a member of pastoral staff. Staff will talk to pupils about what has happened using age-appropriate and developmental stage appropriate language.

Following a death in the school community, pupils will be invited to take part in remembrance activities, e.g. remembrance assemblies.

Staff will identify any pupils that may need more direct support and make a referral to the head teacher who will assess what support might be required in collaboration with pastoral staff.

## Behaviour and SEMH issues

Staff will remain vigilant to the following behaviours that a pupil may display immediately after the death of someone close to them:

- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of motivation
- Tiredness and irritability
- Heightened sensitivity to comments and remarks
- Inability to take others' feelings into account
- Anger, frustration or aggression
- A general change in behaviour, e.g. becoming unnaturally quiet or withdrawn
- Anxiety
- Being easily upset by events that would normally be trivial to them
- Physical complaints, such as headaches, stomach aches and a general tendency to be prone to minor illness

The pupil's designated staff member will keep in contact with the pupil's family and share information about how the pupil is behaving at school and home.

Any challenging behaviour displayed by bereaved pupils will be addressed using the individual graduated response outlined in the Behaviour and Self Esteem Policy.

A record will be made of anniversaries and days with regards to the death which may act as a trigger for challenging behaviour.

Any incidents of bullying, where a bereaved pupil is the victim or perpetrator, will be addressed in line with the Anti-bullying Policy, taking into account the pupil's needs and circumstances.

All staff members will remain vigilant to signs that a bereaved pupil is facing difficulties in relation to their psychological, physical and social development and will refer the pupil to pastoral staff who will put appropriate support in place.

The school's SEMH Policy will be followed to ensure pupils that may be vulnerable to developing or experiencing SEMH issues following a bereavement can be identified and appropriately supported.

## Following a Bereavement:

We believe that children and adults alike have the right to:

- be given space and time to grieve
- be given support from whichever source is deemed the most appropriate – if possible, of their own choice.
- encounter a caring environment in which they feel safe to demonstrate grief without fear of judgement.

## We recognise that:

- grief may not always be apparent to the onlooker, but its invisibility makes it no less real.
- differing religions/cultures view death and bereavement from different perspectives and all viewpoints should be taken into consideration and given equal value in the school environment.
- the death of a child has huge repercussions beyond the immediate teaching/care team of that child and every effort should be taken to inform and deal sensitively with the far reaching contacts.

## Specific circumstances

The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed for all deaths affecting the school community and individual pupils; however, specific measures will be implemented for certain circumstances.

### **Pre-bereavement – when a family member is not expected to live**

If a pupil has an illness where they are not expected to live, their family will make the school aware of the situation and the school will ensure the appropriate support is in place. The parish community will be involved following the requests of the family.

A member of pastoral staff will meet with the pupil fortnightly to provide the pupil with an opportunity to talk about what is happening and how they are feeling.

All staff will remain vigilant to signs that the pupil is facing challenges in relation to their psychological, physical and social development and will refer any concerns to pastoral staff who will ensure appropriate support is put in place.

### **Pupils with a life-threatening illness**

Pupils with life-threatening illnesses will be encouraged to take part in school routines as much as possible, and the school will continue to expect the usual standards of behaviour as appropriate.

The Headteacher, the pupil and their family, and other relevant staff members (e.g. a member of pastoral staff) will decide how to share the news that a pupil is terminally ill with the school community.

Other pupils will be informed about how they can best support the pupil in the most appropriate way.

If the pupil is receiving treatment from a local hospice or hospital, the key professional responsible for the pupil will be identified and the Headteacher will contact this person for advice and support as necessary.

### **Suicide**

The school will respond to a suspected suicide as soon as suitably possible.

The Headteacher, or other appointed member of staff, will contact the police or the family as soon as possible to confirm the death and whether it is being treated as a suicide.

If the family does not wish the cause of death to be disclosed to the school community, the school will state that the nature and cause of death are still being determined and that additional information will be forthcoming.

If the death is subject to an ongoing investigation, the Headteacher will check with the police before speaking about the death with pupils who may need to be interviewed by the police.

Staff will be told about the death first, in line with this policy.

The script that staff will use to inform pupils of the death will be factual while avoiding excessive detail about the suicidal act itself.

Immediate emotional support will be arranged for any pupils and staff who require it.

A designated room will be set up where pupils and staff can go to if they are struggling with the news.

Liaison with the media will be handled in line with this policy.

Any information distributed to the school community and media regarding the death will:

- Be factually correct but not include detail of the cause of death or method used.
- Not romanticise, glorify or vilify the death.
- Not include details of any suicide note.
- Not include speculation over the motivation for suicide.

Research indicates that pupils that have been directly affected by suicide are at an increased risk of taking their own life. Staff will report any concerns about pupils to the Headteacher and the appropriate support will be put in place or a referral to specialist services will be made in line with the SEMH Policy.

Any memorial activities conducted by the school will be held within two weeks of the death; following this, any memorial material will be given to the family.

Permanent memorials will not be held at the school; however, the school may set up a memorial on the website that will be moderated by a designated member of staff and removed after an agreed time.

Pupils and staff will be warned about the risks of un-moderated online memorials (e.g. those on social media), such as their comments becoming public without their permission and online memorials attracting negative comments.

## **Cultural and religious behaviours**

The school will keep in mind the cultural attitudes and behaviours relating to a death and will make sure these needs are taken into consideration when putting support in place for those affected, including the length of bereavement leave for members of staff.

## **Forces' families**

The needs and feelings of bereaved forces' pupils will always be considered prior to any school activities relating to the armed forces, e.g. commemorating Armed Forces Day, and additional support will be put in place for pupils as required.

Appropriate support will be implemented for bereaved forces' pupils, particularly during times of change.

Bereaved forces' pupils will be protected from any unwanted media attention and there will be a designated area in school that the pupil can go to if they are feeling overwhelmed.

## **A death involving murder or manslaughter**

The Headteacher will contact the police or the family to establish the facts about what has happened.

A designated staff member will be available to talk to the pupil to help them to answer any questions they may get from their peers about what has happened.

Research indicates that pupils that have been bereaved due to murder or manslaughter can be at significant risk of developing PTSD. Any concerns relating to the pupil will be addressed in line with the SEMH Policy.

Media personnel will not be permitted onto the school site at any time.

## **Remembrance activities**

Following a death in the school community, the school may conduct some remembrance activities, e.g. a remembrance assembly.

The family will always be consulted prior to any remembrance activities being planned and will be invited to take part in the activities.

All members of the school community, including staff, governors, pupils and parents, will be invited to take part in remembrance activities.

All remembrance activities will be planned so that they are respectful of the culture and religious beliefs of the family.



## Managing transitions

Information about pupils that have been bereaved will be recorded.

This information will be shared with relevant parties at key transition points, including the following:

- If the pupil moves school
- When the pupil moves to secondary school
- If the pupil moves class
- When the pupil will be taught by a new teacher

Good communication will be established with pre-schools so pupils that have experienced bereavement can be identified.

## Teaching about bereavement and grief

Different aspects of the curriculum will be used to discuss relationships, feelings and emotions, and to think about how to manage these in relation to family events and death.

Before delivering any lessons that cover topics of death and bereavement, the teacher will consider how the lesson may affect the bereaved pupils they are teaching.

Bereaved pupils and their families will be consulted over whether it is appropriate for them to attend lessons about death or bereavement, and alternative arrangements or additional support will be put in place as required.

Where appropriate, the teacher will discuss what the lesson is going to cover with the pupil and will work with the pupil to design activities that the pupil feels they are able to get involved with.

Any lessons covering topics of death or bereavement will take account of religious and cultural beliefs.

## Staff Training

All pastoral staff will receive training in bereavement support.

Pastoral staff will organise whole-school training sessions to share their knowledge with all staff members, including support staff, annually.

If any members of staff are not confident in delivering some level of bereavement support to pupils or other staff members, or in implementing this policy, they will speak to the Headteacher who will arrange for the staff member to undergo the appropriate training.

The Headteacher will check if the staff that work for third party providers that deliver extra-curricular activities for pupils have received bereavement training and will recommend them to do so if this training has not been undertaken.

## If A Child Dies In School

- If any member of staff has concerns regarding a child's health they will contact a first aider and ideally the Headteacher or School Business Manager.
- In the case of serious concern, the school will call for an ambulance. Due to the seriousness of the situation, this decision can be taken by the first aider or a member of the SLT.
- Immediately inform the Headteacher or, in her absence, the most senior member of staff on site.
- The Headteacher will then ensure that the parents are contacted and seek their agreement to meet the ambulance at the hospital.
- If the child stops breathing a trained school staff member will administer CPR. In some cases, parents may have given the school a protocol to be followed in the event of a serious health incidence. In rare cases, this may include a request that mechanical resuscitation is not administered. However, whilst the school respects the parents' preference in this matter, due to the statutory responsibility imposed on the school regarding "duty of care", the need for school staff to administer manual CPR overrides such preference. Once the ambulance has arrived at school, the child is given over to their care and it is the ambulance team's decision as to where the child is taken or which form of treatment is administered.
- Where the parents have given the school a protocol to be followed in the

event of an emergency medical issue occurring - e.g. no resuscitation - this protocol will be handed to the paramedics.

- Any change in circumstance following the first call to parents should be reported to them as soon as possible. NB: Staff must not impart shocking or worrying news to a parent if they are travelling in a car alone.
- Once the child is placed in the ambulance a member of staff will be appointed to travel to the hospital either in the ambulance or in their own transport. The purpose of this is to be a familiar face to the child's family on their arrival at the hospital. This person will remain in regular contact with Headteacher and or the School Business Manager.
- The school will notify the LA if there is a death in school at the earliest opportunity. All press enquiries are to be sent through the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and LA/Diocese Media Team.

## If a Child Dies on a School Trip

If a crisis situation occurs whilst a child is out on an educational trip, then the adult with the child - or the teacher in charge - should telephone for an ambulance first and then contact the school to inform the Headteacher. The school will then take the responsibility of contacting the parents. Once the ambulance team reaches the child, the child becomes the responsibility of the ambulance team and they will direct any subsequent actions. The off sites visits protocols give guidance for such situations and should be followed. The school will notify the LA, at the earliest opportunity, if there is a death out of school. The above procedures and protocols will then apply.

## On-Going Support for staff:

Following bereavement, it is only to be expected that some members of staff will be emotionally affected and would benefit from the provision of some time for reflection. The following support may be helpful:

- A specific room could be allocated- e.g. the Meeting Room - for the duration of a lunchtime to enable staff to meet and share their thoughts over a coffee or tea. It should be emphasised that anything shared on such occasions should be held as confidential and not for public airing.
- Access to one to one time with a member of staff who is trained in bereavement support.

- The Educational Psychology team offer counselling support and staff will be reminded about this service.
- Availability of information about accessing bereavement support outside of school, eg: CRUSE.

### On-Going Support for pupils:

- Experience in many special schools has shown that most pupils can be supported by the school staff.
- In most cases, each child will have a favoured member of staff to approach.
- The PSHE co-ordinator will ensure that we have suitable books and other materials to help children discuss death and come to terms with loss.
- Social Stories may be one way to help pupils to understand loss.
- The Educational Psychology team can offer support to pupils who may need more help.

### On-Going Support for the Family:

- Communicate with the family straight away and offer support. Send a letter of condolence from the school.
- Give parents and family the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who has died.
- Send a representative to the funeral.
- Hold a collection /flowers to be sent as appropriate.
- Invite parents/family to any commemorative events held by the school, both at the time and in subsequent years.
- If memorial work has been completed, for example a remembrance wall or book, then this should be returned to the parents at an appropriate time, and pupils informed where it has gone.
- If the parents wish to visit the school at any time after the funeral, this will be agreed.

- Parents will be told that they are welcome in the school and will be encouraged to come and visit. Past experience has shown that this can be helpful in their grieving. The first visit to the school is often difficult and will be arranged sensitively in accordance with the parents' wishes. It will then be for the parents to decide if they wish to maintain ongoing links. Each family will be different, with differing needs. Therefore, the school will always be there to act as a source of support and information.

#### **Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review**

<b>Responsible committee for monitoring &amp; evaluation:</b>	Mission and Vision Committee
<b>Policy reviewed by:</b>	Mission and Vision Committee
<b>Policy review &amp; approval date:</b>	June 2020
<b>Next review date:</b>	September 2021