

	Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School Bereavement Policy
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*Joyfully, unique in Jesus' family we learn to use our special gifts
to love, serve and make the world a better place.*

Approval		Board of Governors	
Chairperson	Joanna Hooper	Headteacher	Simon Lennon
Date of last review	March 2023	Date of review	July 2026
Date of next review	July 2029	Maintenance	FGB

'Even though I walk through the darkest valley you are with me' Psalm 23:4

Introduction:

Corpus Christi has a holistic approach to the support and care of its pupils and staff. Death is an inevitable part of human existence. When bereavement occurs, it can have a wide ranging affect on many people, not just the family concerned. We recognise that families, children and young people are given:

- the opportunities to develop skills to cope with loss and grief
- have access to appropriate information and support when needed

There is no single recipe for provision and services will always need to be organised in the light of needs, priorities and resources.

Government legislative and guidance documentation provide a framework to support schools covering death and bereavement. The Education Act (1996) emphasises the importance of promoting the personal, social and spiritual development of children and young people as part of their education through the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship Frameworks (DFEE).

We also stress the need for Corpus Christi School to address bereavement specifically as well as other losses such as divorce and separation which will be addressed through the use of the Rainbows Bereavement Support materials (www.rainbows.org).

We recognise that, in order to fulfil our responsibilities in delivering the five outcomes outlined in the Children Act 2004, as a school we need to be reactive in supporting pupils and staff through loss and grief taking into consideration the wishes of relevant parties.

The management of a bereavement situation will be a central role for the members of the Senior Management Team and Inclusion Team including the Pastoral Support Workers.

The Aim:

This bereavement policy is intended to reflect our positive ethos and contribute to the caring community we wish to nurture. It is hoped it will contribute considerably to the emotional health and well-being of our school community.

The main aim of the policy is to ensure that pupils and all members of staff faced with bereavement are provided with support.

This support includes the opportunity for them:

- to express their feelings in a safe environment.
- to be given space and time to come to terms with their loss.
- To be offered the opportunity to be part of a bereavement support group within school, where other children who have suffered bereavement, grief, loss or separation can gather and share experiences and express their feelings.
- Where necessary be signposted to access for more specialist advice.

It is recognised that the situation for the child, young person and/or family will be monitored over time. It is the hope of the school that anyone faced with bereavement will regard its community as a place where children and young people can grow and face the challenges that lie ahead. This, in turn,

will contribute to the learning community.

Procedures:

Once the situation occurs concerning a bereavement the following steps will be taken:

- Please refer to **Information Sharing Pathways** set out in this document below.
- Use will be made of the 'RAINBOWS BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT' materials where appropriate
- My concern - for staff to note concerns including 'low level'
- Pastoral Support Team to be informed and consulted
- External support/advice be sought where necessary

Responsibilities:

The management of bereavement is a whole school issue but there needs to be clear lines of accountability to ensure our aims are fulfilled. The following summarise the main areas of responsibility (the Governors/ Head teacher/Senior Management Team/Inclusion Lead):

- ensure the policy is implemented.
- monitor progress and deal with external agencies.
- co-ordinate the media's inquiries where necessary
- be the first point of contact for the individual concerned and their family.
- identify appropriate support within the school community for the individual concerned.

On the death of a pupil and a member of staff from school the first point of contact would be the Headteacher. The Headteacher would then contact BCP and the Diocese and follow their guidance with sensitivity.

Guidelines for breaking news about a death to staff and Governors

- Contact the Diocese and the LA for advice
- Arrange a staff meeting which should take place as soon as possible.
- Impart factual information. Never make assumptions or repeat what has been said by rumour.
- Give news sensitively and empathetically, being aware that people may react in different ways.
- Be cognisant of the relationships staff may have had with the person who has died.
- Ensure that there is someone responsible for telling people who are unable to attend the staff meeting i.e. part time staff, peripatetic staff, lunchtime supervisors. Consider the best way of imparting the information to those absent e.g. by doing home visit, by telephone, text or e-mail etc.
- Identify individual members of staff who feel able to (The most appropriate person to support the children should be well known to them and trusted):
 - a) support members of staff
 - b) support groups of children
- Identify a member of staff who will liaise with the individual's family, to deal with staff condolences and any funeral arrangements (if necessary).
- Identify an appropriate member of staff who will 'take' phone calls and/or direct them as appropriate. Try to establish a "protected" telephone line to ensure free flow of accurate information (telephone line providers may provide an additional line if the situation requires one).
- Identify a member of staff who will provide a newsletter for parents (see examples of letter templates) which should be sent the same day.
- Arrange a staff meeting at the end of the day to ensure staff are coping with the situation.

- Identify any unresolved problems or ongoing issues.
- Ensure that those staff who live alone have contact numbers of friends in case of need.
- Identify sources of advice and support to access for help in coming to terms with the bereavement (see Rainbows toolkit).

Guidelines for breaking news of the death to the children/young people

- Contact the Diocese and LA for guidance
- Inform the children/young people as soon as possible about the death.
- Have a school/class worship to pray for and remember the person
- Where possible, the pupils should be informed in small groups i.e. class
- Identify those children who had a long term and/or close relationship with the person so that they can receive additional support if needed
- If appropriate, a special assembly could be held at a later time in the day to remember the person who has died.
- Allow the children/young people to ask questions and answer them honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.
- Allow the children/young people to verbalise their feelings.
- Allow the children/young people to discuss the situation and share their experiences of death.
- Be honest about your own feelings and talk about your relationship with the person.
- Avoid using euphemisms.
- Those children/young people who have had more involvement with the person should be given the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences either within the group or on a one-to-one basis.
- Ensure the children/young people understand that the death is not related to anything they have said or done. It is in **no** way their fault.
- Reassure them that not all people who are ill or have had an accident will die and that many people get better.
- Put an appropriate time limit on the discussion. It is preferable to resume normal school activities as soon as possible thus ensuring minimal disruption within the school.
- Conclude the discussion with a prayer or special poem to remember the person who has died and their family.
- Be available for any child/young person who needs additional help and support.
- Refer to the Rainbows bereavement toolkit for further guidance.

Things to consider in the days following the news of the death

- It is important to consider any cultural or religious implications and seek advice if necessary.
- Ensure nominated staff with responsibilities for supporting staff and children are available to do so.
- It may be necessary temporarily to provide staff cover for their normal activities.
- Identify an allocated quiet place where children, young people and staff can go if necessary.
- It is preferable for there to be minimum disruption to the timetable but some flexibility may be required.
- Try to engender an awareness of when people need help and support, particularly those who worked closely with the person who has died and secretaries/administrative staff who are taking telephone calls, dealing with parents etc.
- Through the nominated staff member who has responsibilities for liaising with the individual's family, ascertain their wishes about the school's involvement in the funeral, if any.

Consider practical issues like:

- Putting an obituary in the paper, sending flowers to the home or to the funeral, making a collection etc.
- Who will attend the funeral, making a collection etc.
- Cover for any staff who may be going to the funeral.
- Transport to and from the funeral.
- Informing the parents of those pupils who will be involved.
- Possible closure of the school. If this is the case remember to tell lunchtime supervisors, caretaker etc in advance.