



# HENLEY-IN-ARDEN SCHOOL

*Achieving Excellence Together*

<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>Crisis and Bereavement Policy</b>	
<b>Lead</b>	Mr Jonathan Lowdon, Deputy Headteacher	
<b>Governor Committee</b>	BSII	
<b>Policy Status</b>	Updated	October 2025
	Governor Approved	Yes
	Date Governor Approved	
<b>Review Frequency</b>	Annual	

## Table of Contents

Aims .....	1
Roles and responsibilities.....	1
The Headteacher.....	1
Pastoral Support Staff .....	1
Provision for Supporting Staff who Support the Bereaved.....	1
Immediate Actions Following a Death .....	2
Clarifying Information and the Wishes of the Family .....	2
Follow-up actions and support following a death .....	3
Support for pupils and staff .....	3
Timetables.....	3
Tributes and condolences.....	3
Funerals .....	3
Reintegration meeting .....	3
Ongoing support .....	4
Support for Staff Returning to School after Bereavement.....	4
Reintegration Meeting.....	4
Ongoing Support .....	4
Monitoring Arrangements.....	4
Links with other policies .....	4
Appendix: Useful Contacts.....	5

## **Aims**

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how the 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 students 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 students or staff returning to school following bereavement

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher or designated member of SLT 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:

- 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 and help with the identification of more complex grief.

### **Pastoral Support Staff**

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

The pastoral support team will:

- Have bereavement support training and cascade learning to other staff. NB: It is important that all staff feel confident in delivering support for students, supporting each other and implementing this policy. To this end it is desirable that the whole school staff have some awareness of bereavement through a whole school training if possible.
- Establish and co-ordinate links with external agencies.
- Act as cross-phase liaison with other primary or secondary schools. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for delegating any responsibilities under this policy to other members of staff.

### **Provision for Supporting Staff who Support the Bereaved**

Supporting students and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported. There is significant support for mental well-being in place for colleagues who will be encouraged and supported to access this.

For support, please contact the Headteacher. Warwickshire will also be contacted to ask for advice and resources to support this.

## **Immediate Actions Following a Death**

- Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Headteacher, or key members of SLT, and the family's wishes should be 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 students and be prepared (through prior training) to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance.
- Students 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.
- A letter to all school families affected should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed.
- 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, birthdays or significant days e.g. Mother's/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.

## **Clarifying Information and the Wishes of the Family**

Perhaps a more common experience for teachers and learning support staff is that of a student 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 student should still be given careful consideration.

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.

## **Follow-up actions and support following a death**

Following a death, a member of the pastoral team will support the student with support in a scaled approach. Staff will also be offered support avenues that are appropriate. SLT will remain available to coach and support where applicable.

### **Support for pupils and staff**

Initially the family will be supported to facilitate return to school and then in liaison with need referral for bereavement support will be facilitated either internally or as a support to external support, e.g. community mental health resources and bereavement charities

Communications which are appropriate will inform staff of need and developments.

### **Timetables**

As appropriate adjustment to the timetable for some or even all students will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **Tributes and condolences**

In cases where a death has affected the whole school community, consideration of memorials both physical and spiritual will be considered as appropriate.

### **Funerals**

We will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

- Whether members of staff and/or students are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service.
- How condolences should be made and how staff and students can contribute.
- If staff are welcome to attend the funeral, they should speak to the Headteacher.

#### **If students are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:**

- They should apply to the Headteacher or seek the support of the attendance officer via their pastoral team support where appropriate
- Support for student returning to school after bereavement
- Whether a student 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.

### **Reintegration meeting**

An appropriate member of the pastoral team will meet with the bereaved student 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 student 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 student and their parents/carers have about the return to school
- Consult with the student about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant)
- Open lines of communication between the student and relevant staff to ensure support should the student feel overwhelmed

- Open lines of communication between the school and the student's parents/carers to coordinate support
- Consider any additional support needed for a student who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability

## **Ongoing support**

We will maintain regular contact with the student's parents/carers to monitor how the student is coping

We acknowledge significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult and we will liaise to mitigate for these.

We know that grief may impact a student's progress and affect their behaviour. To manage this, we will offer appropriate support.

We will take care to manage changes for bereaved students by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions

## **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.

### **Reintegration Meeting**

The Headteacher or a designated member of SLT 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 students 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

### **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 recognize 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 each individual to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed. At every review, it will be approved by the Governors.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our Behaviour Policy and Child Protection Policy

## Appendix: Useful Contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 <a href="https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us">https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us</a>
Winston's Wish	Helpline: 08088 020 021 <a href="https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/">https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/</a>
Cruse Bereavement Care	Helpline: 0808 808 1677 <a href="https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us">https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us</a>
Mind	Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393 Further contacts: <a href="https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/">https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/</a>
Echoes	01789 266852 <a href="mailto:enquiries@theshakespearehospice.org.uk">enquiries@theshakespearehospice.org.uk</a> The Shakespeare Hospice, Church Lane, Shotton, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 9UL