

MEREWORTH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Bereavement Policy

Date of Publication	November 2020
Person with responsibility	Head Teacher
Governing Body	Teaching & Learning
Review Date	November 2022

Chair of Teaching & Learning <i>Signature and Date</i>	
Head Teacher <i>Signature and Date</i>	

Bereavement Policy

At Mereworth Community Primary School, we recognise the need for a policy that outlines how the school would deal with the sad death of a child or member of staff, within the ethos and values of the school.

Although this policy does not cover everything, it outlines some of the responses that need to be in place in the eventuality of bereavement within the school community.

Generic Plan

Immediate Actions

- As soon as news of a death is confirmed, Headteacher will inform class teacher and senior leadership team.
- Meeting for all teaching and support staff to be held before school, to inform them of situation.
- Chair and Vice Chair of Governors informed, but asked not to come to school at present.
- Meeting for Teaching Assistants to be held after they arrive at school – approximately 9.30am.
- If news of death arrives during the day, staff to be informed at first available break.
- Headteacher to contact family, to express sympathy and discuss how they wish situation to be dealt with and how much information they wish to be shared with staff, pupils and parents.
- Headteacher or senior member of staff to contact KCC team to seek support for pupils and staff.
- Class of deceased child or staff member to be kept out of assembly and told of death by Headteacher and class teacher. The class will be dealt with sensitively and in an appropriate way.
- Work to be collected, to make into a memorial book for family.
- Parents of a particular best friend (in case of a child's death) may need to be contacted if the deceased Parents request this.
- Rest of school to be informed during assembly and then continue with normal timetable if possible.
- If parents arrive, wanting to take children home, senior staff member to express the view that they are better occupied at school.
- A letter to be sent home to all parents that day, informing them of the sad news. Family/parents of deceased to be consulted on contents of letter.
- Meeting for all staff to be held at end of the day, to share experiences of day, update on events and for mutual support.

- Headteacher to contact deceased parents at the end of the day, to update them of actions to date and offer any support.
- Next day to be as normal as possible for most of the school. Headteacher and class teacher of deceased child or staff member's class to decide how and when class will gently work back towards the curriculum.
- Office staff to ascertain reasons of unexplained absence and parents to be encouraged to return children to school.

Funeral

- Headteacher to liaise with family about funeral arrangements. Would they like a staff member to attend? Will there be flowers? etc
- Headteacher and Chair of Governors to send letters of condolence.
- School and Governors to send flowers if family wishes.
- If donations for charity requested, then a letter will be sent home to parents inviting them to contribute.
- Class teacher, Headteacher or member of SLT and possibly Chair of Governors to attend funeral after discussion with Parents.
- Other staff wishing to attend funeral will be at discretion of the Headteacher.
- Counselling for pupils and staff to continue for as long as is deemed necessary.

Siblings

- School to be aware of issues surrounding return of sibling(s) of the deceased child to school.
- Child to know a Teacher or Teaching Assistant (mentor) they can go and talk to.
- School to access support for sibling(s) as appropriate and in agreement with Parents. We will also be able to offer Mrs Baker (in school Play Therapist/Counsellor) support.

Longer Term

- In discussion with parents if appropriate and requested at a later date, special celebration of life assembly to be held at school for all staff and pupils. Family to be invited and any close relatives or friends they wish to invite. This assembly will not be open to all parents. Family to be asked if they wish photos to be taken at assembly. Refreshments to be offered to family after event.
- Memorial tribute to be arranged – tree, bench or other suitable item.
- Class Teacher to sensitively move furniture / tables in order that effects of deceased child can be removed eg tray, cloakroom labels without upsetting class or feeling that new child has moved into place of deceased.

- Find out if parents would like school to support a particular charity.
- Personal Christmas card to be sent to family on first Christmas after death.
- One year later, school to send a card to parents on anniversary of death.

Death of Child following illness

- Children will be aware that child has been ill and may have been prepared by parents or school for possible death.
- No teacher or Teaching Assistant is to say anything to individual or class concerning a child's illness, without consulting Headteacher, to ensure child's confidentiality is not breached.
- Headteacher to ask parents to keep school informed of child's condition and give them an emergency contact number.
- Family may wish to nominate a friend to be a link between home and school.
- Links to be maintained during the illness with child and family.
- On receiving confirmation of death, from a trusted source, generic plan to be put into operation.

Sudden death

- This plan to take effect in event of death due to accident / natural causes, away from school premises.
- If school receives a phone call informing them of death, as much information as possible to be gained from informant regarding when, where, witnesses. This information will need to be verified.
- Headteacher to be informed at once. If Headteacher is not on premises, most senior member of staff on site to take control pending arrival of Headteacher.
- Enquiries from concerned parents should meet with response 'We do not know at present and are awaiting confirmation.'
- Enquiries from press should be given same response and told school will get back to them.
- Headteacher to speak with family if possible
- Generic plan then becomes operational.

Death of a Child or adult at School

- If a child/adult has a fatal accident, chokes, has seizure etc, a qualified first aider will take control of situation.
- All children to be removed from the scene and taken to another part of the school.
- Staff to be informed that a child/adult has been taken ill / had an accident, but 'death' not to be mentioned.
- Ambulance to be called at once.

- Parents of child or next of kin of adult, to be called by senior member of staff and informed that child has had an accident and an ambulance has been called.
- If parents arrive before ambulance, they will accompany child. School to ask permission for a member of staff to accompany them.
- Member of staff and another member of staff to go to hospital with their car.
- If parents are at work, senior staff member to accompany child and another member of staff to follow by car.
- Contact to be maintained with school at least every 30 mins.
- If necessary, school, to arrange to transport parent from station or other location to hospital.
- Senior staff member to keep parents updated until they can reach the hospital – child is in ambulance, receiving treatment, but not given extreme news until arrival at hospital, when medical staff will tell them of death.
- If ambulance enters school grounds, class teachers to draw blinds to protect privacy of sick child and prevent distress of remaining children.
- Once child has been removed from school, classes to return to normal (wherever possible).
- If children have witnessed an accident parents to be informed as soon as possible
- Staff to be kept updated at ‘breaks’, but not to be informed of death until parents have been told.
- Letter to remaining parents as soon as possible (either on day of incident or following day. KCC to agree wording (school to liaise with child’s parents if possible)
- Following day – School to be gathered together to be told news. The class most affected should be kept separate and told away from others – staff on hand to help with grief.
- A letter will be sent home in all bags to ensure no one misses information.

Follow Up

Close liaison with family to arrange memorial service as appropriate and in line with their wishes.

Continued counselling for all children and staff who may require support.

Review of procedures at 3 month period to adapt or review policy.

Continued contact with family - school to be aware of significant school dates as these may cause concern and upset.

Resources

The policy and practice outlined in this document is not a 'quick fix' solution, but is part of the on-going practice within school where learning about bereavement is linked to the curriculum through Circle Time, Assemblies and Religious Education, where children also learn about other faith's beliefs and practices.

Within school a resource bank containing reference materials for staff, parents and pupils should be developed and maintained, including a list of suitable books with stories which deal with difficult concepts. This will be kept in the PPA room alongside PSHE resources.

Evaluating the success of the policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the staff and Governing Body. The policy and/or procedures will, where necessary, be revised in light of these evaluations. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Autumn Term 2020

To be reviewed Autumn Term 2022