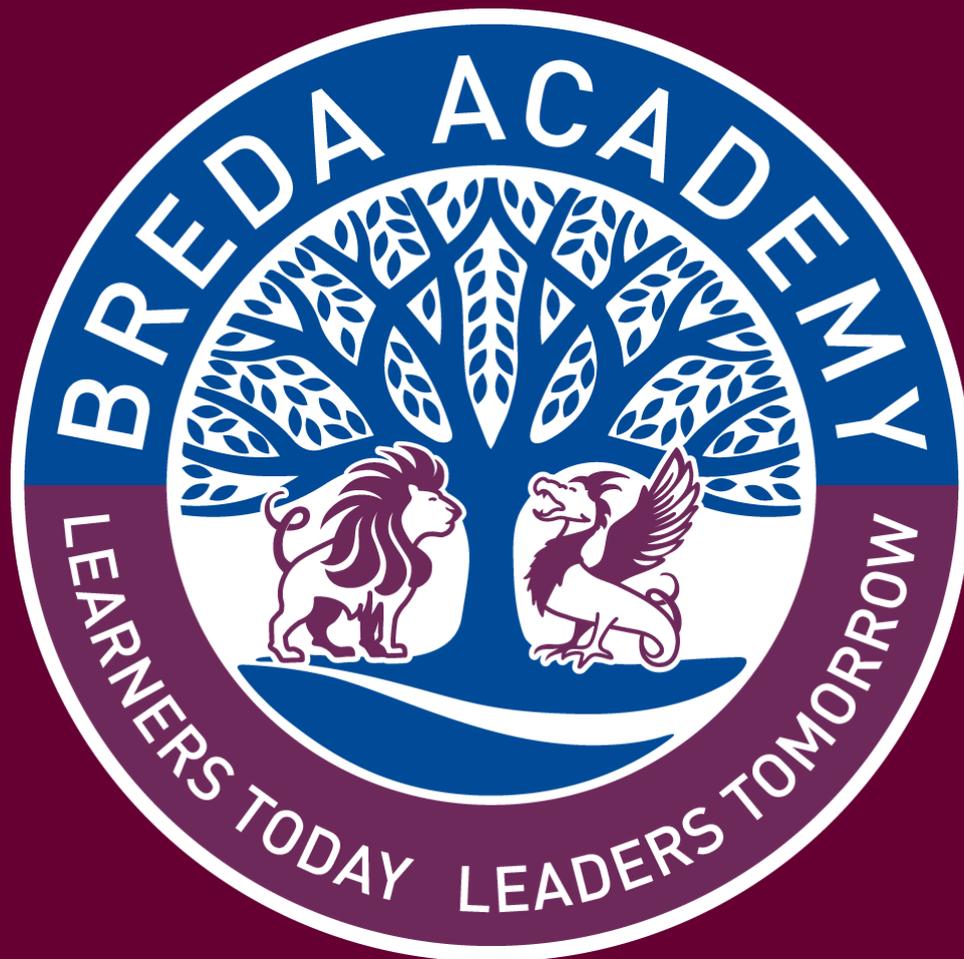
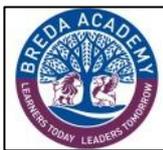


Bereavement and Loss Procedures



BREDA ACADEMY

- **Reviewed by the BoG on 23rd June 2020**
- **To be reviewed again before 23rd June 2023**



BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

Loss and death are an inevitable part of living and growing. Bereavement affects everyone in different ways and for different periods of time. By adopting a planned approach, Breda Academy aims to support the emotional wellbeing of our students, staff and families to provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all in our school community #this is community.

PROCEDURES – DEATH OF A PARENT OR SIGNIFICANT PERSON

1. When it is known that a Parent or significant other in a student's life has died, the Form Tutor or staff member involved should immediately:
 - (a) inform a senior member of staff and the Designated Teacher for Child Protection who will inform all staff, especially all of the student's teachers;
 - (b) inform the School Office to amend the student's record as applicable, so that written communication to the student's home is correctly addressed;
 - (c) inform the Chair of the Board of Governors.
2. A letter of condolence should be sent by the Principal, if appropriate (appendix 1 Template letter to Parents and Carers).
3. The Form Tutor should send a sympathy card to the student, on behalf of the Form Class, if appropriate.
4. Along with the Principal the Form Tutor or Year Teacher should represent the school at the funeral.
5. The Year Teacher and the Form Tutor should plan how the student is to be supported on their return to school, with support from the Head of Key Stage and Safeguarding Team, if appropriate.
6. If it is felt that if the student needs further support during the weeks and/or months following, the Counsellor from Family Works Counselling Service or request support from other external agencies.

PROCEDURES – DEATH OF A STUDENT

1. The Principal and/or member of the SLT will make contact with the student's family to discuss how school can best deal with the loss. SLT will then plan the most appropriate response to the death and the way forward for all those affected.
2. Students in the same Form class should be told in small groups with adults they know (appendix 2 Guidelines on dealing with Students).
3. Students in the wider school community should be told using the advice in appendix 2 also.

4. A letter should go to families within school as soon as possible to inform them of the loss in the school community (appendix 3 Template letter to Parents and Carers – Death of a Student).
5. School will provide ongoing support to allow students to explore their feelings and emotions. EA South Eastern Region and Family Works, the School Counselling Service. See appendix 5 (Useful Resources for support in Secondary Schools).
6. Staff and students will be given an opportunity to celebrate the life of the deceased student **having consulted with the family of the student to ascertain their wishes.**
7. Pupils wishing to attend the funeral will be at the discretion of the Principal and treated on an individual basis.

PROCEDURES – DEATH OF A MEMBER OF STAFF

1. The staff should be gathered together and informed of the news by the Principal and/or member of SLT, **having consulted with the family of the member of staff to ascertain their wishes.**
2. It should be acknowledged that if such a death occurs, it is doubly traumatic for the staff, supporting students but also grieving on a personal level for a colleague or friend.
3. Staff should be given time and space to be allowed to grieve.
4. Staff should be directed by the Principal/SLT on how the announcement will be made to students.
5. A letter should be sent to the school community to inform them of the loss of a member of staff (appendix Template letter to carers and parents – Death of a member of staff).
6. Under such circumstances, some staff may have difficulty coping with the loss themselves. The relevant line managers should be informed in confidence and should be made aware of those staff members who are particularly affected. They should be directed to Inspire Wellbeing for further individual support, if required.

APPENDIX 1 TEMPLATE LETTER TO PARENTS AND CARERS

Dear

We are so very sorry to hear the sad news of <Name's> death. There are no words to express our sadness and we can only begin to imagine the anguish you must be going through.

As a school community, we will miss <Name> very much and we are doing our best to offer comfort and support to <his/her> friends, classmates and teachers. <Name> was a <valued/cherished/highly-regarded/well-liked/popular/friendly> member of our school family.

If we can do anything to help as you plan <Name's> funeral, please let us know.

We will continue to keep in touch and will support you in any way we can.

With sympathy

APPENDIX 2 GUIDELINES ON DEALING WITH STUDENTS

1. Young People need information

Adults naturally want to protect, but children and young people have a much greater capacity to deal with the harsh realities of life than we realise, if they are told in an appropriate way. Even a very sad truth will be better than uncertainty and confusion. What a child does not know they tend to make up and their fantasies can be very distressing to them and difficult to deal with. Therefore, expect questions, expect to have to repeat information and allow take up time to process the information.

Use clear language. Do not be afraid to use the word “dead.” It may feel harsh but euphemisms such as “lost” or “gone away” only create confusion and misunderstanding in children and young people who take what they hear very much at face value. Often social media can present incorrect or inconsistent information.

2. Acknowledge what has happened

The most helpful thing that you can do for grieving children, is to acknowledge what has happened. Keep it very simple, “I was very sorry to hear that *** has died, that is a very sad thing to have happened.”

Acknowledge that some days will be better than others.

3. Give Reassurance

When someone close to them dies, the world can become a very scary place for a child, and they may start to wonder who else is going to leave them. Children may feel reluctant to be away from their family members or people who are important to them, particularly on school trips or overnight stays. Routines become important to them and they may react to changes within the school environment. Try to prepare them in advance, where possible, and address any anxieties they may have.

4. Try to answer them honestly

Adults act as a role models so it is helpful if everyone can take the same approach. Children need an accepting and supportive environment where they feel safe to ask questions and share feelings. When they ask difficult questions which you are unable to answer, ask the child what they think or ask them what they have been told.

5. Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, have a right to have their grief recognised, to hear the truth and to be given opportunities to express their feelings and emotions. Children with learning difficulties are no different, but they may need extra help with their understanding and ways to express feelings.

6. Be aware of different cultures and beliefs

Respect for the differing needs, rituals and practices of different cultures is essential when acknowledging a death. This overview should be used as a guide only because every family will have their own unique culture. It is important to speak to the family to find out their wishes rather than make assumptions.

APPENDIX 3 TEMPLATE LETTER TO PARENTS AND CARERS – DEATH OF A STUDENT

Dear parents and carers

Your child's class teacher/form tutor/head teacher/head of year had the sad task of informing the students of the death of <Name>, a student in <Year>.

<Name> died suddenly/in hospital/after a short illness yesterday/last week/over the weekend/during half term.

He/She was a <valued/cherished/highly-regarded/well-liked/popular/friendly> member of the class/school community and will be missed by everyone who knew him/her.

When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some students may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal.

We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, visit the Child Bereavement UK website childbereavementuk.org

Our thoughts are with <Name's> family and friends at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate/remember <Name's> life.

Sign off

Principal

APPENDIX 4 TEMPLATE LETTER TO PARENTS AND CARERS – DEATH OF A MEMBER OF STAFF

Dear parents and carers

I am sorry to inform you that a <well-respected/long-standing/well-loved/popular/ well-known> member of our staff, <Name>, died <suddenly/in hospital/after a short illness>.

The students were told today by their <class teacher/tutor/head of year/in assembly> and many will be reacting to this news. When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some students may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal.

We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, visit the Child Bereavement UK website childbereavementuk.org

Our thoughts are with <Name's> family at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate/remember <Name's> life.

Sign-off

Principal

APPENDIX 5 USEFUL RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Leaflets

A Teenage guide to coping when someone dies Child Bereavement UK Available from Child Bereavement UK's online shop. This pocket-sized leaflet contains practical advice and guidance for a young person managing confusing emotions when someone important in their life dies.

Websites

Child Bereavement UK childbereavementuk.org/young-people

A dedicated area for young people, created by bereaved young people.

Cruse hopeagain.org.uk

A website run by CRUSE Bereavement Care.

Grief Encounter griefencounter.org.uk

Has a dedicated section for young people with videos.

Winston's Wish winstonswish.org.uk

Videos, guidance and case studies.

Childline www.childline.org.uk

Barnardos www.barnardos.org.uk

Samaritans www.samaritans.org.

Free app

Grief: Support for Young People Child Bereavement UK

Available from the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Designed by bereaved young people for young people.

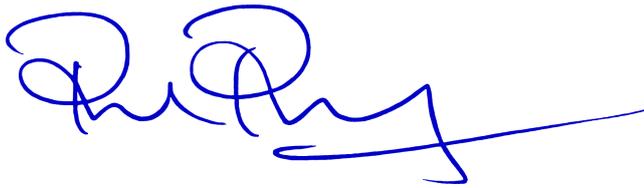
Can also be used by friends, parents and professionals supporting bereaved people.

Useful publication and guidance

The Education Authority has a critical incident response team who can be contacted to provide support to schools. Critical Incident Line: 028 3751 2515

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/dealing-critical-incident>

The policy will be reviewed again before May 2023

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Signature – Principal

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. H. Wilson' with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Signature – Chairperson of the Board of Governors

Date: 19th May 2020
