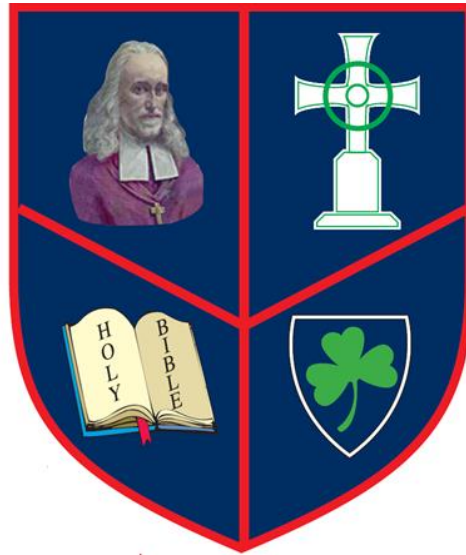


St Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit

Loss/Bereavement Policy



Loss/Bereavement Policy

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Governors)

Dated: _____

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Dated: _____

ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY UNIT BEREAVEMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Here at St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit we realise that many of the children in our care at school are likely to encounter the death of a grandparent, other relative, family friend or pet during their time in primary school. Grief is unique for each individual, and it is important to remember there is no right or wrong way to grieve. For some the loss will be more immediate and traumatic, involving the loss of a parent, sibling or personal friend.

This policy has been designed to manage the grieving and adjustment period for a child returning to school following a significant loss or bereavement and outlines our whole school response loss and bereavement.

PRINCIPLES AND VISION:

St. Oliver Plunkett PS is a learning school, where we wish to create a warm, welcoming atmosphere in which we show commitment to a Catholic way of life.

School Vision:

- Staff, Parents, Governors and the Wider Community working in partnership with Pupils to enable each child to achieve their full potential;
- Fostering an inclusive approach so that everyone has access to all the school has to offer;
- Having high expectations of high achievement leading to excellence in all aspects of school life;
- Creating a safe, sustainable environment for our school community;
- Valuing Children, Staff, Parents, Governors and the wider school community for the unique contributions that they make to school life;
- Striving for excellence through a culture of Self-Evaluation;
- Encouraging enjoyment, participation and making learning fun;
- Promoting the importance of a healthy active lifestyle and emotional well being; and

- Setting high standards of good behaviour and respect and tolerance for others.

Our mission is to provide an exciting and stimulating learning experience for all of our children. Their journey through our school will be happy and filled with genuine deep learning. We are and will always be committed to improvement and it is incumbent upon all of us to be life-long learners, to keep abreast of new ideas, innovations in education continually challenging expectations and to develop personally as a result.

This mission will be pursued in a culture of mutual openness and trust, high emotional intelligence and a deep spiritual commitment to our principles, values and to all of the children and the community which we serve. In doing so, we accept the need to challenge and be challenged, to initiate change and to move ourselves culturally towards visionary excellence.

AIMS:

1. To foster a caring attitude to those suffering a bereavement.
2. To encourage a consistent, yet flexible approach to the situation.
3. To inform all those concerned, including teaching staff, ancillary staff, general assistants and parents of possible approaches.

GUIDELINES:

These guidelines are particularly relevant and appropriate in cases where the loss concerned is of a close relative or friend but can and should be adapted according to individual circumstances.

1. Children should be allowed time to grieve. Acknowledge their grief, reassuring them that feelings whilst frightening are normal.
2. All staff and classroom assistants involved in the care of a bereaved child should be aware of the situation.

3. It should be made known to the child that staff will find the time to listen and talk and will do their best to comfort when necessary.

4. Children should be aware that staff will help them to come to terms with their feelings.

The distressed child should be allowed time and access to materials (Bereavement related activities i.e. memory box, memory balloon, sensory room, Lego therapy, counselling agencies) in order that he/she may express their feelings in their own way.

5. Bereaved children often suffer a loss of concentration at school, which may have a detrimental effect on their work. Give them encouragement and reassurance.

6. The possible fears, insecurities and emotions of other children which may arise from this situation should be recognised and addressed sympathetically.

7. Religious, Cultural and Social backgrounds, as well as parental wishes, should be taken into account when considering appropriate responses.

8. Answer questions as they arise -be honest and straight forward -be thoughtful about your responses -give bite size information pieces of information - be pro-active - have information ready for possible questions. These factors should be taken into account when considering appropriate responses.

(Refer to Winstons Wish website www.winstonswish.org.uk)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Board of Governors

- Ensure that the school has a Loss and Bereavement Policy and that staff implement the policy.

Principal:

Ensure that Educational Psychologist has been contacted as well as the Critical Incident Team.

- Inform all staff of the situation;

- Support staff and ensure the school has a written policy for Bereavement;
- Acknowledge the loss and support the pupil;
- Encourage families to seek support
- Seek advice and support of external support agencies (See Appendix B.)
- Provide continuity, security, coping skills and a supportive response;
- Listen to child / staff member and help them to ask questions and express fears or grief; and,
- Follow the above guidelines.

Teacher:

- Ensure the child's return is as normal as possible
- Acknowledge the loss and support the pupils;
- Encourage families to seek support;
- Provide continuity, security, coping skills and a supportive response;
- Observe behavioural changes and monitor progress;
- Seek advice and support of external agencies (See Appendix B.)
- Listen to child and help the pupil to ask questions and express fears or grief; and,
- Follow the above guidelines.

MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING:

We keep a school record on any child who has suffered loss / bereavement.
(Appendix A)

Any behavioural changes observed will be recorded and monitored by the class teacher and noted in Pastoral Care book.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCING:

Staff must be provided with opportunities for:

- Adequate and appropriate accommodation and resources;

- Professional development; and,
- Support and advice from colleagues and external bodies.

CONCLUSION:

A bereaved child, especially if the death concerned is of a close relative, parent, sibling or friend, is likely to be feeling confused, anxious and insecure. A school should aim to provide a stable and supportive environment in which he/she is able to gradually come to terms with the loss. It is recognised that this process is lengthy and support is likely to be required for a long time.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL RECORD ON CHILD WHO HAS SUFFERED LOSS/BEREAVEMENT

Name: DOB: Age:

Religion: Key Support Person:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: (to include relationship, illness, suddenness)

FAMILY DETAILS: (names, ages, relationships, school etc)

SIGNIFICANT DATES: (anniversary, birthday, child's/young person's birthday etc)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY STAFF:

Signed: Date:_____

APPENDIX B.

External Support Services

- Family Doctor
- EA Pupil Personal Development Services Team: Sheila Gamble (028 7186 4785)
Ann Hart Henderson (028 8224 4821)

EA Loss and Bereavement Document

- EA Support Systems

Mary Aileen Lynch

Welfare Officer

Tel: 028 71272300

Staffcare services

- Carecall (24/7 confidential telephone counselling services)
Tel: 0808 800 0002 or support@carecallwellbeing.com
- Cruse Bereavement Care (NI) 0844 477 9400 www.cruse.org.uk
- Winstons Wish www.winstonswish.org.uk
- CCMS support Systems

Brendan Hardy

Teacher Welfare Officer

Tel: 028 90426972