

Holy Trinity Primary School



Holy Trinity Primary School Bereavement Policy

March 2025

Aims & Ethos

At Holy Trinity Primary School, we are committed to the emotional health and well-being of our staff and pupils. We aim to provide a supportive environment that helps pupils and staff cope with difficult experiences, including bereavement. Our policy aligns with our ethos of empathy, understanding, and support within the familiar and secure surroundings of our school.

Rationale

Bereavement affects many pupils and staff within a school community. It is essential to help children understand bereavement clearly and provide them with opportunities to experience and express their emotions in a safe and supportive atmosphere.

Objectives

- Provide a framework for staff to deal sensitively and compassionately with bereavement.
- Support pupils and staff before, during, and after bereavement.
- Enhance communication and clarify the support pathway between staff, pupils, families, and the community.
- Identify key staff responsible for managing bereavement situations.
- Establish clear expectations for the school's response to a death, ensuring a nurturing and supportive environment.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Principal will take overall responsibility for managing bereavement situations.
- A designated staff member will communicate with the bereaved family.
- News of a death will be shared with the school community through appropriate channels, considering the impact of social media.
- Support for staff and pupils will be coordinated by the pastoral care team.
- The Principal or a designated spokesperson will liaise with the media if necessary.

Procedures

- Speak to the bereaved family to offer condolences and obtain factual information.
- Inform staff as soon as possible through a staff meeting, email, or other appropriate means.
- Share the news with pupils in small groups with a familiar adult.
- Send a letter to parents/carers if required.
- Provide guidance to parents on supporting bereaved children.
- Allow pupils and staff time to process the news and maintain normal school routines with flexibility.

Funerals

- Consult the bereaved family about the school's involvement in the funeral.
- Send a representative to the funeral if appropriate.

- Send cards or flowers as a gesture of support. Place an insertion in the paper, if appropriate.
- Make arrangements for staff and pupils who wish to attend the funeral.

Support for Pupils

- Provide support from familiar staff members.
- Create a safe space for pupils to grieve and take time out if needed.
- Offer activities such as art, and memory boxes to help pupils process their grief.
- Maintain regular communication with the bereaved pupil's family.
- Refer to the school counsellor.

Support for Staff

Supporting bereaved pupils can be very stressful for staff who may already be struggling with their own reactions and emotions. At Holy Trinity Primary School, we recognize the importance of providing comprehensive support for our staff during such times. Our approach includes the following:

- **Emotional Support:** We acknowledge that staff members may be affected by bereavement and provide opportunities for mutual support. This includes informal support networks where staff can share their feelings and reactions in a safe and supportive environment.
- **Professional Support:** We offer access to professional support services for staff who may need additional help. This includes counselling services and resources provided by our school counsellor external organizations specialising in bereavement support.
- **Training and Resources:** We provide regular training for all staff on how to support bereaved pupils and each other. This training includes understanding the grieving process, recognising signs of distress, and effective communication strategies. Staff will also have access to a range of resources, including literature and online materials, to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- **Time Off for Funerals:** We allow staff members to take time off to attend funerals if appropriate. This ensures that they can pay their respects and support their own grieving process without the added pressure of work responsibilities.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** We offer flexible work arrangements for staff who may need time to manage their grief. This includes adjustments to their workload, temporary changes in duties, or time off as needed.
- **Regular Check-Ins:** The principal will conduct regular check-ins with staff members who are supporting bereaved pupils or who have experienced a bereavement themselves. This ensures that they receive ongoing support and that any additional needs are identified and addressed promptly.
- **Communication and Collaboration:** We encourage open communication and collaboration among staff members to ensure that everyone is aware of the support available and can contribute to a supportive school environment. This includes regular staff meetings to discuss any concerns and share best practices.
- **Recognition of Personal Circumstances:** We recognize that some staff members may be more vulnerable due to their own personal circumstances. We ensure that these staff members receive the necessary support and adjustments to their workload or responsibilities as needed.

- **Access to External Support:** We provide information about external support services and organizations that specialise in bereavement support. Staff members are encouraged to seek additional help if needed and are provided with the necessary contact details and resources.

Remembering

- Consult the bereaved family about any plans for a memorial or tribute.
- Involve pupils in planning any memorial activities.
- Manage the removal or relocation of temporary tributes sensitively.

Supporting a Bereaved Pupil's Return to School

- Meet with the bereaved pupil and their family to discuss their return to school.
- Provide a safe space and time-out options for the pupil.
- Communicate with staff about the pupil's needs and support plan.
- Offer flexibility with homework, uniform compliance, and other expectations.

Longer-Term Support

- Monitor the bereaved pupil's progress and well-being.
- Maintain regular contact with the family and provide ongoing support.
- Record significant dates and anniversaries to offer additional support when needed.
- Prepare the pupil for transitions and changes to ease their anxiety.

Death, Grief, and Bereavement in the Curriculum

- Include lessons on death, grief, and bereavement in the curriculum to help pupils understand and prepare for these experiences.
- Inform parents in advance and provide options for recently bereaved pupils to opt out if needed.

Staff Training

- Provide regular training for staff on supporting bereaved pupils and each other.
- Ensure staff are aware of available resources and support services.

Inclusion and Equality

- Recognise and respect the cultural and religious customs related to death and bereavement.
- Value and respect the diverse responses to bereavement within the school community.

Responding to the Media

- Refer all media inquiries to the Principal, who will provide a considered response.
- Advise staff not to respond to journalists directly.

Links to Other Policies

- This policy is linked to the Managing Critical Incidents, Pastoral Care, Safeguarding & Child Protection, Positive Behaviour, School Attendance, and Health and Safety policies.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Principal will review this policy every three years in consultation with staff and pupils.
- Any changes will be shared with the staff and presented to the Board of Governors