

A Bereavement in your School Community - Checklist

Before any action is taken

- Consider the family's wishes (e.g. *what information they want to be conveyed. It may be helpful to say something like "We have to wait for the results of the inquest" to deflect speculation e.g. if the death appears to be a suicide or other traumatic death*)

Who to Inform

- Staff (*Ideally at a meeting. In school holidays contact key staff on a need-to-know basis. Don't forget absent staff, non-teaching staff, governors as appropriate. Staff could be given a brief script to follow when telling people / talking about the death*)
- Pupils (*small groups, tutor sessions, assemblies, consider special attention for SEN pupils, those who have a close relationship with the deceased. Consider carefully the message, age-appropriateness & language used : be as factual and honest as possible . See Winston's Wish below*)

For a traumatic death

- Media (*Head - possibly together with Chair of Governors - to provide a news statement if necessary, liaising with family*) LA or MAT comms team will do this normally.
- Parents/ Carers (*consider a letter home, liaising with family*)
- Local Authority (*Director of Children's Services, School Improvement Team , Educational Psychology Service ,*

Council press office , police , social services ,CAMHS, School Nurse, other organisations that are already providing support to pupils e.g Off The Record - possibly multi-agency meeting to find out what support, counselling etc., is available)

Support for Staff and Pupils

- *Special attention for those closest to the deceased (also bear in mind that those who are most affected might be those who are not friends with the deceased but who have their own issues triggered by the death. Opportunities for support should be made available equally to all pupils / staff)*
- *Allow time, as appropriate and needed, to discuss the bereavement and for expression of feelings. (Give pupils and staff choice about how to do this e.g.in tutor groups, one-to-one , counselling , time out of lessons - some may just want support from family and not want to access school support)*
- *Routine is really important so carry on as far as possible "as normal"(normality with compassion)*
- *If a pupil / member of staff is returning to school after a bereavement, make sure their / their family's wishes are respected (e.g. ask them how they want to be supported - Winstons Wish has useful resources e.g. Difficult Days. They may not want to talk about it at school)*
- *Encourage a supportive network within the school community*
- *Obvious signs of grief may not appear immediately. (Poor concentration , organisation or behaviour may occur)*
- *Make sure Headteacher, Chair of Governors , Pupil Welfare staff are also supported (Heads may find it useful to talk to other Heads who have experienced*

bereavement in their school recently - the education psychology service can be contacted for this information)

Support for Parents / Carers

- Telephone / visit / write as appropriate
- Find out what the pupil has been told (*if a member of the family has died*)
- Agree what information is to be given to the rest of the school community (*inform parents of other pupils in school asap*)
- Funeral arrangements - who would the family like to attend ?
- If a pupil is absent, think about how they will return , family wishes and their wishes
- Cards of condolence if appropriate

Memories

- Consider the wishes of the family
- Consider pupil / staff wishes
- Memorial service / ceremony / assembly / bench / walk
- Memorial trophy
- Compile a list / book of tributes from pupils and staff
- Fund-raising event
- Memorial plaque / garden
- Consider particular birthdays, anniversaries, mother's / father's day in the future

Useful Contact details

Winston's Wish www.winstonswish.org

Cruse www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Childbereavement UK www.childbereavementuk.org

School Improvement & Achievement Service (Kate Murphy
01225 394502)

School Nurse (Team Lead : 01225 831666)

CAMHS (01173 604040)

Educational Psychology Service (01225 394901)
Local Religious Groups