

BEREAVED PUPIL SUPPORT POLICY

Date Policy Reviewed	1 September 2018
Date of Next Review	1 September 2020
Person(s) responsible for review	SLT

It is possible that staff will be called upon to support pupils who have been bereaved.

The school's advice is for the relevant members of staff to meet with the Head to discuss the best way forward with that particular child. The Head will consult with the family and, if necessary, with SeeSaw, an Oxfordshire Charity that specialises in this area (Contact: Christine Druce, See-Saw, Bush House, 2 Merewood Avenue, Headington, Oxford OX3 8EF tel: 01865 744768 www.seesaw.org). The Head will discuss with the surviving parent and also, if the child is sufficiently mature, with the child about how they would like the loss to be announced to staff and peers at school, and any other related issues.

Advice for supporting a bereaved pupil

In general, the advice for members of staff supporting a bereaved pupil is as follows:

1. **Acknowledge the death with the parent/carers** and child – simple, genuine expressions of sympathy (in person or by cards) – plus reassurances of support for the child in school eg “I am so sorry to hear what happened. I will let the other teachers know and we will all keep a close eye on your child. If it is OK with you we will also let the class know what has happened so they can help your child when back in school. We want to make sure we offer the right support so please let us know if there is anything you think we need to be aware of and I will keep you posted about how things are going at school”.

2. **Offer support to the child** – eg “I am so sorry to hear about what happened. Sometimes it helps to talk about it and if you want to you can come and talk to me. Sometimes you might find things a bit difficult in the classroom or playground, and if that happens do come and find me and together we can try and find a way to sort it out.” The Manor has a School Counsellor who can visit pupils weekly and can be accessed as required through the School Nurse.

3. **Be prepared to listen if the child wants to talk** – if you can't, find someone who can.

4. **Watch and listen for any changes in behaviour** – these might indicate that the child is beginning to struggle – this may be weeks, months or even years after the death.

5. **Watch out for deterioration in academic ability** – normalise this, give praise for what has been achieved and try and involve the pupil in ways to improve the situation eg “sometimes when someone we love dies it can be difficult to concentrate in the classroom for a while, and I am wondering if this is what is happening for you at the moment? What do you think we can do that might help?”
6. **Watch out for significant dates** – get the family/child to identify special times when things might be difficult for them. What might help?
7. **Watch out for absences** – might be connected with bereavement difficulties at school or home – check them out.
8. **Watch out for children revisiting their grief over time** – this can happen years after the event especially if the death happens when the child is very young and the implications of the loss are not realised and understood.
9. **Keep in touch with pupil/family** – this way you will be aware of any difficulties/changes that are happening to the wider family and the impact this might have on your pupil.
10. **Ensure future staff are aware of the child’s loss and any significant dates**
11. **Take care of yourself** – you are important – supporting a bereaved pupil is not always easy – make sure you have support for yourself.