

# BEREAVEMENT POLICY

Updated July 2022

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Sadly, some of our pupils will experience a bereavement during their school career. Moreover, some pupils may also be involved in a traumatic event, e.g., a serious road traffic accident or house fire during their time in school. This policy should be read in conjunction with our school Bereavement Annex.

Pupils need support when experiencing a bereavement, and therefore staff members will be a key source of care and support. We have therefore prepared a framework of response, that can be adapted depending on the individual circumstances, so that as a pastoral team and school community, we are in a good position to respond immediately and appropriately should we have students requiring support.

Pupils should also be offered the opportunity and time to attend counselling and support groups. The school counsellor will be available via referral and drop in three days a week. The key principle is to help the bereaved through the pain rather than try to remove it. To support and help students and staff to cope with the aftermath of a distressing event or personal tragedy such as death, the following guidelines are provided to help all concerned:

- It is essential that the Deputy Head Pastoral, Head of Stage or Year and School Nurse are informed to enable them to support the child at school, taking the wishes of those most personally concerned, such as the family, into consideration.
- The School Counsellor may be able to support students at this time.
- If several students are upset, pastoral staff should discuss their approach to ensure a degree of calm consistency.
- Records will be kept confidentially on CPOMS.

## Returning to school

- The return to school for a bereaved student can be hard. Withdrawal, aggression, anger, fear, guilt, regression, and symptoms of bodily distress are all signs of grief. Expectations should be tempered with sensitivity, kindness and understanding to help re-introduce the student into the normal patterns of the day.
- A student's friends may be a valuable source of support within the peer group. They, too, may require guidance on how to explore their own feelings to feel comfortable and natural in their attempts to make contact.
- Re-integration will require a degree of flexibility. It is important that the bereaved student still needs to feel part of their peer group and should be expected to function accordingly. A compassionate but structured and disciplined environment is conducive to a return to school life.
- Young people may need help and advice in making decisions at specific stages, for example which options to take, career choices, relationship issues etc. A request for special consideration may need to be made to Examination Boards.
- A remembrance of a special event such as a birthday or Christmas can be very painful. The student needs this to be understood and may feel the need to talk about how she feels.
- Open and effective lines of communication with parents should be encouraged and activated to keep both the school and the home informed about the student's progress and adjustments.



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- In the event of the death of a student or member of staff it is important for the whole school community to acknowledge this, please see further notes within the Bereavement annex.

The fundamental principle is to recognise that the students in our care react to bereavement in different ways and quiet sympathy and basic normality is what most students in this situation want.

## Resources

Useful website links as below:

1. <http://childbereavementuk.org/>
  2. <http://www.cruse.org.uk/schools>
  3. <http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/help-around-a-death/what-you-can-do/schools-professionals.aspx>
  4. <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/professionals-schools/>
  5. <https://www.tcf.org.uk/content/resources/LP06-When-a-student-dies-C14-R1507.pdf>
  6. [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)
  7. [www.daisysdream.org.uk](http://www.daisysdream.org.uk)
- Training for staff will be made available, with video links shared within the Firefly area for Staff here - <https://shrewsburyhigh.fireflycloud.net/pastoral-and-wellbeing/supporting-students-with-grief-and-bereavement>
  - Student resources are online on Firefly here - <https://shrewsburyhigh.fireflycloud.net/bereavement>



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