

Northway Primary & Nursery School



Bereavement Policy

Written: *October 2018.*

Adopted: *November 2018.*

Review: *November ~~2019~~
2021.*

Bereavement Policy

At Northway we are committed to promoting positive emotional wellbeing for all pupils, families and staff. Children are welcomed into our happy, nurturing school where they will be encouraged and supported to achieve to the very best of their ability.

We believe in the development of the whole-learner intellectually, physically and emotionally.

We recognise that circumstances may alter for children during their time at Northway and we are committed to supporting and nurturing children through any challenges that they may face.

As part of this, we are committed to supporting all those affected by bereavement and will always respond in a manner appropriate to the individual.

We are passionate about providing an environment that can provide support during difficult times, including a time of death or dying.

Rationale

- Every 30 minutes in the UK a child faces the death of a parent. This equates to around 41,000 bereaved children each year.
- Many more are bereaved of a sibling, grandparent, friend or other significant person
- Within our school community, there will almost always be some recently bereaved children struggling to cope with their own situation
- Close bereavements bring profound effects and changes to a child's life
- There is no fixed pattern for grief and children will deal with death in many ways
- Factual information and emotional support are the best means of helping a child deal with bereavement

Having a bereavement policy in place enables school to be proactive rather than reactive to bereavement. It enables us to provide appropriate support to our children, families and staff during times of bereavement.

Aims

The core aims of the policy are:

- To support pupils, families and staff before, during and after bereavement
- To implement effective support in school by identifying key staff to support pupils, families and staff during times of bereavement
- To ensure open, effective communication between school and home following bereavement

- To work with children and families to implement extended support through relevant agencies when appropriate
- To always prioritise the welfare of the child by endeavouring to counter any adverse effects of bereavement on the emotional wellbeing of the child as per The Children Act 1989
- To allow pupils time and space following a bereavement
- To ensure that children feel safe to grieve in their own way in a nurturing, secure environment
- To ensure details of any significant bereavement are shared during times of transition
- To honour and respect children and their families wishes following a bereavement

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

- To approve policy and ensure its implementation
- To review policy in three years

The Local Authority

- To advise and support staff
- To consult on referral pathways and identification of complex grief

The head teacher

- To be the first point of contact for the family, child or staff member concerned following a bereavement
- To keep the governing body fully informed of any significant bereavement
- To work closely with designated bereavement lead to monitor progress and liaise with external agencies
- To deal with any media enquiries
- To inform staff of any significant bereavement
- To work closely with the bereavement lead to establish most appropriate form of support for the child, family and staff

Bereavement Lead

- To attend relevant bereavement support training
- To work closely with the head teacher, governing body, pupil, family and staff following a bereavement
- To provide the first level of support to pupils following a bereavement

- To inform and advise families of additional support available via outside agencies
- To liaise and make referrals to outside agencies where appropriate and with the agreement of parents/carers

All Staff

- To support pupils as and when needed following a bereavement
- To liaise with the head teacher and bereavement lead if they have any concerns about a child before, during or after a bereavement

Parents and carers

- To inform head teacher as soon as possible following a bereavement
- To inform school of their wishes regarding support following a bereavement

Procedures

There may be occasions when a death has a significant impact on the wider school community. In such instances the following procedures will be followed.

- Contact with the family will be established by the head teacher who will confirm and ensure that wishes are respected when communicating with others. Factual information is vital to avoid rumour and confusion. Cultural and religious beliefs will always be respected.
- Staff will be informed before pupils to ensure that correct information is shared in an age-appropriate manner. This will be agreed as per individual requests.
- Pupils who may be directly affected by a death should be told individually or in small groups by a familiar member of staff
- A letter to inform families who may be impacted by a death should be issued at the earliest opportunity and the head teacher will decide with whom and how the information will be shared
- School will have a flexible approach and will ensure that the needs and wellbeing of individual children are prioritised following a bereavement
- Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support
- The head teacher will consult with the bereaved family to clarify funeral attendance. The wishes of the family will always be honoured and respected
- Where necessary a press statement will be issued by the head teacher

At Northway we understand the impact that bereavement can have on a child throughout their school life. As such we are committed to supporting any child through

this difficult time and will ensure that support remains in place throughout their time at Northway and beyond.

'Northway Primary School is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment.'

Useful websites

www.childbereavement.org.uk

www.winstonswish.org.uk

www.lovejasmine.org.uk

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk