

Farrowdale House

INDEPENDENT PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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Bereavement Policy

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Aim

All of us will experience death as a part of life. A death can affect school life and the school community in a variety of ways. Farrowdale encourages an environment of openness, listening and sharing and as part of this adults and pupils can benefit from being kept informed of a death. Children and young people have a healthy curiosity and if they are not informed of the circumstances or feel they are unable to ask questions, their normal grief process can be obstructed.

Rationale

At Farrowdale, we believe that bereavement and loss are an inevitable part of living and growing. We provide opportunities within our setting for children to develop their own appropriate range of emotional, spiritual and intellectual responses to manage these experiences. We believe that the ethos of the school based on openness and mutual support, provides a framework in which these experiences can be realised in a supportive manner. Bereavement affects everyone in different ways and for different periods of time. Whatever the level of understanding about bereavement, we have a duty to help support anyone when they could be feeling their most vulnerable, in the way that best meets their needs. By adopting a planned and considered approach the school can support the emotional well being of the child, family and staff.

Objectives

Farrowdale's bereavement policy aims to create a bereavement aware culture.

- A framework for all staff to give guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately with the bereavement.
- To support pupils and/or members of staff before, during and after bereavement.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between members of staff, pupils, the family/carers and the community.
- To have clear expectations about the way school will respond to a death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all.

1. Supporting a Bereaved Pupil

When school is informed of a bereavement that is linked to a school pupil eg. family member, close family friend, pet:

- The family should be asked how the school can be involved to support the child and family.
- It should be explained to the family how school can provide resources to support the pupil.

- Both parties will monitor any changes in child's behaviour and share any information.

2. The death of a pupil, member of staff or member of the school community

The following guidelines will provide a framework for informing staff, governor and pupils following a death.

Informing staff and governors of a death in the school community

Where possible discussion should take place with family and their wishes taken into account before decisions are taken on how and what to tell the staff in school.

All staff should be informed of a bereavement as soon as possible with factual information. A staff meeting will be arranged as soon as practicable and absent staff will be identified. Arrangements will be made to inform absent staff over the telephone.

The proprietors will be prepared for reactions to this news including visible upset and feeling of anger/guilt. People may connect the incident to their own personal experience of bereavement, so feelings about past bereavements may need to be discussed. This is perfectly natural response.

The proprietors will be available to talk things through with a member of staff, parent or child if they are finding the situation particularly hard. Advice for families will also be provided of support services available to them.

Where possible all staff that have requested to attend the funeral or memorial service will be released from class.

Informing pupils of a death in the school community

Pupils of all ages can experience grief and loss.

Pupils in the same class should be told, in small groups with adults they know.

A letter or email should go to families within school the same day if possible.

Staff will be provided with guidelines of how to inform pupils.

Time and space will be provided.

Staff will be as honest as possible about their own feelings and experiences and talk about their relationship with the person.

Ongoing support

The family and staff will be given an opportunity to celebrate the life of the child with a special assembly held in school at an appropriate time.

School will provide ongoing support children to explore their feelings and memories through identified activities. Some opportunities may include story telling, remembering activities, and expressing feelings activities

Useful online resources and information

www.winstonswish.org.uk – a useful website offering practical ideas for helping those bereaved in the family and school community.

www.childbereavement.org.uk-a bereavement support service for children who have suffered a loss

bhf.org.uk/smallcreature British Heart Foundation site to help children come to term with loss using carton creatures.

Books on Bereavement

Granpa – John Burningham

When Dinosaurs Die – L & M Brown

Liplap's Wish – Jonathan London And Sylvia Long

The Memory Tree – Britta Teckentrup