

BEREAVEMENT POLICY



Introduction

Sullivan Upper School believes in adopting a holistic approach to the support and care of its pupils. When bereavement occurs it can affect a variety of people not just the family concerned. To this end we aim to ensure that those involved are given the appropriate support and advice required.

Aims

- The bereavement policy is intended to reflect our positive ethos and contribute to the caring community we wish to nurture.
- The main aim of the policy is to ensure that all pupils and members of staff faced with bereavement are provided with support.

Bereavement, Loss and Change Procedures

To help children cope with a bereavement we must be prepared to support them through their pain, sorrow and anxiety. We cannot make things different but we can make a difference.

Before a child returns to school after the death of a parent or sibling:

1. The Year Head should inform the Pastoral Vice-principal and other relevant staff as soon as they become aware of the death.
2. The Vice-principal should make contact with the family to express the condolences of the School and to offer support to the young person when they return to class.
3. If possible the Year Head should meet the nearest relative to discuss any changes in daily routine eg where they live, how they will come to school. [If suitable the pupil should be consulted as to whether they mind their class talking to them about the bereavement.]

When a child returns to school after the death of a parent or sibling:

1. The Year Head should meet the pupil at the start of the first day back - the pupil should be given 'permission to grieve' - reassured that they may feel emotional and given channels of help to talk to if they wish to use them eg Form Teacher, Year Head, or School Nurse.
2. Unless parents advise the school otherwise all the teachers who teach the pupil should discreetly acknowledge the death when the child returns (even if it is only a few words). If this does not happen then the pupil may assume that the teacher does not care.
3. The Year Head should make a short note of the death and its cause including the date and place it in the pupil's file.

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4. The Year Head should inform the School Office to:
 - a place a red sticker on the pupil's file
 - b up-date the card index system
 - c up-date the CLASS record
 - d up-date the parents' information at the top of the conduct file.
5. It is recognised that peer support is vital, but one pupil should not feel burdened or responsible for the rest of their school life. A set period of time should be given if a pupil is asked to look after their peer and that person then changed in due course.
6. Where appropriate the Year Head and Form Teacher should decide who will attend the funeral.

Premature Death of a Pupil

In the event of the premature death of a pupil then:

1. The Year Head should inform the Pastoral Vice-principal and other relevant staff as soon as they become aware of the death.
2. The Critical Incident Management Plan should be consulted and depending on the nature of the death the appropriate steps should taken from the Plan on how to proceed in the situation.
3. A decision should be made about who will contact the family to offer the condolences of the School.

Curriculum

Pastoral themes of death, loss and change are dealt with in the school curriculum, either through specific pastoral lessons or the statutory curriculum. Within these lessons the guiding principle is death should be acknowledged as a part of life.

Staff Bereavements

The school wishes to support staff who are going through a period of bereavement and loss.

Before a member of staff returns to school

1. The Headmaster will contact the member of staff involved to offer support and convey the condolences of the staff.
2. The Headmaster will put a note onto the staff notice board regarding the funeral arrangements.
3. Requests to attend the funeral should be given to the Staffing Vice-principal.
4. Where appropriate the staff will be invited to contribute towards a sympathy card and a gift.

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When a member of staff returns to school

1. As a general rule it is better to acknowledge the death of a relative than to ignore it. However, the Headmaster will advise members of staff of the person's wishes.
2. The school will be sensitive to the tasks that the person will be asked to undertake when they return.
3. A useful contact number for bereaved staff is
Staff Care Services
Freephone: 0500127079

Responsibilities

The management of bereavement is a whole school issue but there are clear lines of accountability to ensure our aims are fulfilled. The following summarises the main areas of responsibility:

The Governors

- To ensure that the policy is implemented.

The Pastoral Vice-principal

- To monitor progress and liaise with external agencies.

The Staff Vice-principal

- To liaise with the bereaved member of staff

The Year Head

- To liaise with the family and keep other relevant members of staff informed of the situation.

The Form Teacher

- To be the first point of contact for the pupil concerned.

Teachers and non-teaching staff

- To offer support as appropriate to pupils in the wider school community.

Training

The training and development of staff is a vital aspect of our human resources management and as such all staff will have an opportunity to undertake relevant training in the management of bereavement. This will involve general awareness-raising for all staff and more specialised training for those with specific responsibility.

Monitoring and evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Senior Management Team and reported to the Governors.

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