

# Millbrook Primary School



## BEREAVEMENT POLICY

<b>Policy Creation &amp; Review</b>	
<b>Author(s)</b>	Jespy Pereira-Barker Karen Parkyns
<b>Last review date</b>	September 2023
<b>Ratified by Governing Body</b>	September 2023
<b>Next Review Date</b>	September 2024

## Introduction

MPS is fully committed to supporting all those affected by loss and death in a supportive and caring environment in which everyone can respond appropriately to individual circumstances. MPS ensures that all children have the opportunity to learn in a happy, safe and challenging environment. To achieve this we need to work with the parents on being open, have mutual respect and all agree to have the highest expectations. At MPS we are fully committed to the emotional health and well-being of our children and staff.

This is implemented through our Wellbeing policy. We are passionate about providing an environment and curriculum that can provide support during difficult times, including a time of death or dying.

## Aims and Objectives

This policy outlines practical measures to be taken when people are in shock, or upset, especially with sudden or multiple deaths or traumatic circumstances -

1. To ensure there are designated, named members of staff who will provide support to pupils and/or staff during and after bereavement.
2. To enhance the effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and the community.
3. To set out how to inform the children and staff about a death and what to do when you are required to tell a child that someone close to them has died.
4. To identify key staff within the school to clarify the pathway of support
5. To decide what support will be offered to children and staff if they have been bereaved.
6. To set out clear procedures in respect of what to do in the case of a crisis or disaster situation on the school premises or on a school trip.
7. To ensure all staff members are trained and confident in recognising common symptoms and behaviours associated with grief.
8. To ensure the contact details of all local and national support agencies specialising in bereavement such as Child Bereavement UK and Cruse Bereavement Care.
9. To set out a procedure on how to deal with media interest surrounding a death and designating two members of staff to act as media coordinators.

## Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Additional information and resources can be found at [www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)

## Rationale

- Every 30 minutes in the UK a child loses a parent
- 290 children a week are bereaved, approximately 41,000 bereaved children each year
- Staff in Primary schools are certain to encounter children who have been deeply affected by bereavement
- 3% of 5-15 year olds have experienced the death of a parent or sibling and many others have lost Grandparents
- It is thought that 92% of children in the UK will experience bereavement before the age of 16
- There is no fixed pattern to how a child will grieve
- The 'Five Stages of Grief' (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance) can be used as a way of understanding what a child may be experiencing

## The Role of the Governing Body

To approve the policy and ensure it is implemented  
To review the policy every two years

To support the Head Teacher in overseeing the way in which bereavement is taught in the curriculum

## The Role of the Head Teacher

To keep the governing body fully informed

To be the first point of contact for the family/child concerned  
To respond to media enquiries

## The Role of the Learning Mentor

To complete the bereavement support training and cascade the learning and practical ways of supporting bereaved pupils to all staff

## Procedures to be followed in the event of a sudden death within the school community:

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Head Teacher and their wishes respected in communicating with others
2. The facts are essential to avoid rumours and confusion, whilst being sensitive to any cultural and religious considerations
3. Staff should be told before the pupils and be prepared to share the information in an age appropriate way, as agreed for each individual case.
4. Pupils who are affected should be told, preferably in small groups and by a member of staff they know
5. A letter to all families should be sent out at the earliest opportunity to stop any playground gossip or rumours
6. The school will make time by having a flexible timetable to accommodate the wellbeing of the children and staff affected by the situation

7. Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support and sign posted to the relevant agencies
8. In discussion with the bereaved family, arrangements for the funeral attendance may be clarified and consideration of a whole school closure in some circumstances
9. A press statement should be prepared by the Head Teacher
10. School should be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a child throughout their school life so any information should be recorded on CPOMs and shared with the relevant people. During transition information will be shared.

## Breaking News to Staff, Pupils and Families

- This is usually done when a pupil or staff member has died.
- Speak to the family if possible, offer them support before asking them what they would like to happen. Give them a key person in school who they can speak to
- Gathering the facts should be made a priority
- It is essential that all staff are told straight away including lunch time staff and part time staff before the children are told
- Decisions need to be made about where the children will be told. Identify the vulnerable children and what support they might need
- Staff may need support on what words to use and the approach to take
- If necessary, send a letter out to all families as soon as possible

## Funeral

- Establish whether the family would welcome any involvement of members of the school community or if they wish to keep it private
- Identify which members of staff and/or pupils may want to attend the funeral
- Plan for staff cover and transport. It may be necessary to close the school for half a day or a whole day depending on the circumstances
- SLT to decide whether to send flowers and/or make a collection
- Cultural and religious implications may need to be considered
- Talk to the child regarding the funeral process

## Return to School

- Consider a home visit or a return conversation before the child returns to school
- Ensure the appropriate staff are aware of the return and are prepared
- Inform their peers and discuss with them in a circle time how they can support their friend
- Plan a quiet place for the child to go to if needed alone or with a friend

## SUPPORT

### Support for the Bereaved Pupil

- Not all children will need specialist support; they will need support from family, school staff and their peers
- Keep a routine, providing a sense of normality

- Offer a safe place in school for children who need some space if too upset in the classroom and adults who they can go to for support
- Offer a space and people to share their feelings without the worry of upsetting their loved ones
- Time to be themselves without feeling guilty (being with friends, time to play in a safe place outside the home environment)
- Regular communication with home, assuring family about behaviours and wellbeing.
- Refer to appropriate resources via Bereavement counselling, Healthy young minds, Safe place
- A key adult to support the child when necessary

#### Support for Parents

- Communicate with the family straight away and offer support
- Send a letter of condolence from school
- Depending on the families wishes, give out information to the appropriate people
- Give the parents and/or family the opportunity to have any personal belongings of the person who died
- Send a representative to the funeral unless the family states otherwise
- Invite parents/family to any assemblies or memorial services in school
- If memorial work has been completed, for example a remembrance book, this should be returned to the parents at an appropriate time and the children told where it has gone

#### Monitoring/Supporting Children

- Support may need to be offered to other vulnerable pupils
- A recap of the anti-bullying message to all children and monitored closely
- Therapeutic books should be readily available to help with counselling. These books can be found in the Beehive

#### Monitoring/Supporting Staff Members

- Supporting bereaved children will be very stressful for staff who may be struggling with their own emotions
- Give staff time to attend the funeral
- Staff to become aware of what is available for them to support them with their grief

## Useful Websites

[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)  
[www.childhoodbereavementwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementwork.org.uk)  
[www.griefcounser.org.uk](http://www.griefcounser.org.uk)  
[www.winstonwish.org.uk](http://www.winstonwish.org.uk)