

Newhaven School Bereavement Policy and Procedure

Rationale

Members of our school community whether adults or children will face bereavement at different times and in different contexts, and this is particularly challenging when this is a member of our community or one of their close relatives or loved ones.

It is important that schools have a bereavement policy and teachers and staff understand how to support the grieving children and young people in their school especially as different religions and cultures manage death and bereavement in different ways.

Newhaven School is committed to the emotional health and well-being of our staff, pupils and their families. We take a collective approach to bereavement and loss as it is through our school and wider community that strength and support can be harnessed.

Objectives

Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs will be different and this policy and its procedures have been constructed to guide us in dealing with such a challenging scenario sensitively and compassionately. Through this policy, staff will have greater confidence to cope when a bereavement happens due to more effective communication and clear pathways of support for all involved.

The Role of the Head Teacher

The Head Teacher should be the first point of contact (if appropriate) or lead the contact with the family concerned. S/he has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the pupils, governing body, parents/carers, the Local Authority and other relevant outside agencies.

The Role of Pastoral Staff

For many pupils of Newhaven School they have a strong relationship with their Pastoral Managers and in some circumstances they will need to lead alongside the Headteacher to ensure that communication between the school and the family continues effectively and in a sensitive manner. They may need to liaise with external agencies and professionals and act as the lead professional for a young person where appropriate.

The Role of all Staff

To work within this procedure, to communicate openly, and supportively while also respecting the rights of the family and those close to the deceased to privacy and dignity. To report concerns about well-being and safety to appropriate colleagues in the usual manner, for example through the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedure.

Procedure in the event of a bereavement:

- 1) Headteacher to contact family and offer condolences to the family affected, gather information about the incident and also cultural, religious context of the family. Elicit the wishes of the family around information sharing. Find out any rituals that may need to be observed during the period immediately after the death.
- 2) Headteacher to trigger the Schools' Safeguarding and Critical Incident Procedures, where appropriate.
- 3) Headteacher to communicate to support staff, governors and local authority
- 4) Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team to inform pupils through assemblies, year groups or small groups as appropriate
- 5) Send letter home to all pupils, if agreed with bereaved family
- 6) Offer support to bereaved family, school pupils and staff in the form of talking therapies, pastoral sessions, mentoring, staff support session through employee assistance program or on-site psychological support
- 7) Consider providing condolences books, memorials, assemblies to help process the loss

Resources

www.bbc.co.uk - Bereavement

Information on the way bereavement affects children

[COVID 19 Resources for Bereavement](#)

Information and handouts

[Childhood Bereavement and COVID19](#)

Selection of resources targeted towards a pandemic

[ACAS – Bereavement in the Workplace](#)

A guide to dealing with bereavement in the workplace.