


All Saints' Church of England Primary School



Bereavement Policy

Date approved by FGB	January 2024
Date for review	January 2027
Signed by COG	

Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education

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1. Introduction

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” Matthew 5:4

A school which takes time to formalise a response before a critical incident or tragedy occurs, will be much better placed to cope should it ever have to be put into practice. However, every school is different and every situation unique. What is deemed appropriate will vary. This policy should be viewed as a framework to work around rather than something prescriptive. We believe that all people are made in the image of God and unconditionally loved. Our school is a place where we love one another as God loves us. We want everyone to thrive, irrespective of whatever life faces them with. Therefore, we aim to prepare and support pupils and staff to cope with the stresses of life and respond to needs as they arise enabling pupils and staff to flourish. (See the Church of England’s Vision for Education, Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good – Autumn 2016)

2. School background

We are a smaller than average Church of England primary school serving our local community. Our Christian vision shapes all that we do.

In our distinctively Christian school, our children and staff feel safe and supported. We encourage everyone to become caring, resilient and reflective learners to prepare for an ever changing world.

Never give up on people. Never stop trusting. Never lose hope and never quit. - Inspired by 1 Corinthians 13:7

We are an openly inclusive school, welcoming all children from the whole community to a caring and happy environment where they can achieve to the very best of their abilities. We emphasise the development of the whole-learner physically, intellectually, emotionally spiritually and ethically.

3. Rationale

Every 22 minutes in the UK a parent of dependent children dies, leaving about 41,000 bereaved children each year. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, sibling, friend or other significant person, and, sadly, around 12,000 children die in the UK each year.

Within our school community there will almost always be some recently bereaved children who are struggling with their own situation –or sometimes the entire school community is impacted by the death of a member of staff or a pupil.

We would hope to not encounter such circumstances, but the statistical inevitability of such an occurrence implies the necessity of having a Bereavement Policy in place in order that we might be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these sensitive situations. Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some children, families or staff require,

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though referral to more specialist support is always taken into consideration where the impact of grief is more complex.

4. Objectives

We will encourage a consistent, yet flexible approach based on a belief in the wellbeing of the 'whole child'. We aim to reflect our Christian vision, including a belief in life after death, whilst being sensitive to various other beliefs and practices. This policy provides a framework within which all staff, can work; and give guidance on how to deal sensitively and compassionately in very difficult and upsetting circumstances.

The core intentions of the policy are:

- To support pupils and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after bereavement.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.
- To identify key staff within school, the Diocese and Local Authority, and to clarify the pathway of support.

5. Role of the Governing Board & Headteacher

The Governing Board:

- To approve the policy and ensure its implementation, to be reviewed in three years.
- To encourage identified staff to engage with Diocesan training on bereavement issues and consider arranging bespoke training for school staff.

The Head Teacher

- To have bereavement support training and cascade learning to other staff.
 - To refer to other relevant policies such as the school's Critical Incidents Policy, Mental Health and Well-Being Policy and /or the Church of England's Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach as required.
 - To contact and liaise with the school's incumbent or representative of the Parish Church.
 - To monitor situations and liaise with external agencies, if appropriate.
 - To respond to media enquiries after speaking with Tom Geldard Communications and Media Director at the Diocese of Chelmsford.
 - To be the first point of contact or nominate someone to be the first point of contact for the family/child.
 - To keep the governing body fully informed.
 - To advise and support staff. Consider referral pathways and identification of complex grief, i.e. Diocese of Chelmsford School Adviser for Bereavement, spiritual advisors, school counsellors or mentors.
 - If a pupil dies by suicide, ensure that staff know that the Samaritans provide a step-by step programme to support schools. [Step by Step resources | Samaritans](#)
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6. Procedures

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Headteacher or nominated person and their wishes respected in communicating with others.
2. All staff should be informed including part-time, sports coaches and peripatetic staff before pupils and be prepared (through prior training) to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance.
3. Pupils who are affected should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them.
4. After speaking with the bereaved family, a letter to all school families affected should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed.
5. Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate. The school's Critical Incident Policy to be used – as appropriate.
6. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial school closure in some circumstances. The Headteacher will inform all relevant parties (Governing Body, Local Authority and Diocese) of any closure.
7. Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Headteacher – after speaking with the Communications and Media Director at the Diocese of Chelmsford.

7. Points to note

Factual information is essential so people do not make assumptions, avoiding rumour and any confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.

All staff should be made aware that the school timetable may need a degree of flexibility to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of children affected by the situation. However, minimal disruption to the timetable also offers a sense of security and familiarity.

The school should be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a child throughout their school life so information should be recorded and shared with relevant people. This is particularly important on the age of the pupils affected by the bereavement and on transition from one school to another of the bereaved pupil/s.

8. Additional resources

Additional information and resources can be accessed at:

- [Bereavement and loss resources | Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education \(cdbe.org.uk\)](http://cdbe.org.uk)
- ['Never the Same' - Resources for school leaders | The Church of England](#)