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DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
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ACCIÓN
EDUCATIVA
EXTERIOR



BEREAVEMENT POLICY

This is a whole school policy

Revised: September 2023

Review Date: September 2025

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RATIONALE

We understand that bereavement is faced by members of our school community at different times and that when the loss is of a member of our school community – such as a child or staff member, it can be particularly difficult. Pupils need to be supported when they experience family bereavements and other significant losses in the course of their lives while they are at school.

This policy will provide guidelines to be followed after a bereavement. The aim is to be supportive to both pupils and adults, and for staff to have greater confidence and be better equipped to cope when bereavement happens. Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and this policy has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances.

Our school is committed to the emotional health and well-being of its staff and pupils. We are dedicated to the continual development of a 'healthy school'. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that support and prepare pupils for coping with separation or loss of a loved one, either through death or divorce.

FOLLOWING A BEREAVEMENT

We believe that children and adults alike have the right to:

- be given space and time to grieve
- be given support from whichever source is deemed the most appropriate – if possible, of their own choice.
- encounter a caring environment in which they feel safe to demonstrate grief without fear of judgement.

We recognise that:

- grief may not always be apparent to the onlooker, but its invisibility makes it no less real.
- differing religions/cultures view death and bereavement from different perspectives and all viewpoints should be taken into consideration and given equal value in the school environment.
- the death of a child has huge repercussions beyond the immediate teaching/care team of that child and every effort should be taken to inform and deal sensitively with the far reaching contacts.

THE MANAGEMENT OF BEREAVEMENT IN OUR SCHOOL

A universally accepted procedure outline will, in itself, not enable everyone to feel comfortable in dealing with the practicalities of death and bereavement. Each bereavement is unique and comes with its own specific challenges; however, it is helpful to have a framework on which to build. One of our main concerns must be the immediate family of the deceased and as a school we state our commitment to any such family as may need practical, emotional and ongoing support.

TRANSITION

It is vitally important to ensure that if a child has experienced bereavement that this information is passed on to the relevant persons when they move on to a new class or school.

DEATH OF A PUPIL

The school may be notified in a number of ways. Upon notification of the death of a pupil:

- If death occurs parents usually let the school know directly and the person answering the phone will put them through to the Headteacher or Head of Studies on site.
- Where death occurs in the holidays or at weekends the parents will contact by email the school office or a member of staff they are familiar with.
- In that instance the member of staff who takes the call/email will immediately contact the Headteacher of the school team and that person will then assume responsibility for the dissemination of the information.

SHARING INFORMATION

It is important to agree, with the parent, before the school can take on the role of informing concerned parties within, or outside, the school community. Evidence from many schools has shown that parents are often happy to have this burden taken away from them, as they have many people unconnected with the school to contact. There can be no definitive list of people to contact and, therefore, it will be different for each child.

The school should ensure that all people who are close to the child are told in a sensitive and supportive manner rather than risk them hearing it 'on the grapevine'. The school needs to ensure it does not add to the sorrow by leaving people feeling marginalised.

The following people should be considered:

- Current school staff not in school that day
- Previous school staff who worked closely with the child
- Social Work team if applicable
- Other professionals who work with the child
- Other parents – if children have been informed, the school needs to send a note to parents informing them of the loss, and they may need to support or comfort their children. See Appendix A.

The process for telling the other pupils will be decided by the Headteacher following consultation with the teaching staff. The class teacher of the class with the loss will usually be the best person to tell the rest of the children in that class, with different aged pupils there will be different decisions made. It is important that staff avoid adding worry – for example, if the child died in hospital we do not want to give children a fear of hospitals. Although the finality of death cannot be diminished, if there are mitigating circumstances that may help - such as that the child was in pain and now is free of pain - this can be used to help alleviate sorrow. Children must be told that, while they may feel sad, they do not have to feel guilty if they go on to have fun and pleasure in their day ahead. They must not feel obliged to assume a burden of grief. Children must be allowed to ask questions at this time or at any point in the following days or weeks. Staff must answer honestly and to the best of their knowledge. See Appendix B

THE FUNERAL

- It is essential to sound out the family's wishes. The family may well welcome involvement of members of the school community but equally, may wish to keep things private.
- The Headteacher and/or the Head of Studies will make arrangements for the school to be represented at the funeral, and identify which staff and pupils may want to attend, together with the practicalities of issues such as staff cover and transport. For some schools it is appropriate to close, for others it is not, consequently difficult decisions will sometimes have to be made concerning attendance.
- Staff and pupils will be involved in the decision about sending flowers and/or making a collection.
- Cultural and religious implications will be taken in consideration.
- If the parents wish to visit the school at any time after the funeral, this will be agreed.
- Staff need to be able to show pupils that it is perfectly normal to feel upset at the loss of a friend and that helpful rituals, prayers, and remembering can be shared in a manageable way together. A memory assembly for the child may be held.

IF A CHILD DIES IN SCHOOL

- If any member of staff has serious concerns regarding a child's health they will contact the Headteacher, DSL or Head of Studies.
- In the case of serious concern, the school will call for an ambulance. Due to the seriousness of the situation, this decision can be taken by the first aider or a member of the SLT.
- The Head Teacher will then ensure that the parents are contacted and seek their agreement to meet the ambulance at the hospital.
- If the child stops breathing a trained school staff member will administer CPR. Once the ambulance has arrived at school, the child is given over to their care and it is the ambulance team's decision as to where the child is taken or which form of treatment is administered.
- Where the parents have given the school a protocol to be followed in the event of an emergency medical issue occurring, this protocol will be handed to the paramedics.
- Any change in circumstance following the first call to parents should be reported to them as soon as possible. NB: Staff must not impart shocking or worrying news to a parent if they are travelling in a car alone.
- Once the child is placed in the ambulance a member of staff will be appointed to travel to the hospital either in the ambulance or in their own transport. The purpose of this is to be a familiar face to the child's family on their arrival at the hospital. This person will remain in regular contact with Headteacher, DSL or Head of Studies
- The school will notify the LA if there is a death in school at the earliest opportunity. No press enquiries are to be routed through any member of staff, only the Spanish Education Office will be in contact with the Press.

IF A CHILD DIES ON A SCHOOL TRIP

- If a crisis situation occurs whilst a child is out on an educational trip, then the teacher in charge should telephone for an ambulance first and then contact the school to inform the Headteacher.
- The school will then take the responsibility of contacting the parents.
- Once the ambulance team reaches the child, the child becomes the responsibility of the ambulance team and they will direct any subsequent actions.
- The school will notify the LA, at the earliest opportunity, if there is a death out of school. The above procedures and protocols will then apply.



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RESPONDING TO THE MEDIA

All members of staff are advised not to respond to journalists and to refer all enquiries to the Headteacher, who will contact the Spanish Education Office.

ONGOING SUPPORT

For staff

Following bereavement, it is only to be expected that some members of staff will be emotionally affected and would benefit from the provision of some time for reflection.

- A specific room will be allocated for the duration of a lunchtime to enable staff to meet and share their thoughts over a coffee or tea. It should be emphasised that anything shared on such occasions should be held as confidential and not for public airing
- Information about accessing bereavement support outside of school will be made available by the Safeguarding Lead,

For Pupils

Some of the staff in our school have undergone training in bereavement and loss and act as facilitators for the Rainbow bereavement programs:

- The School Counselor will ensure that we have suitable books and other materials to help children discuss death and come to terms with loss.
- The School Counselor can offer support to pupils who may need more help.
- The team of teachers trained in Rainbow (bereavement Program), will develop the program with students who have suffered the loss of a family member or undergone a traumatic situation in Early Years, primary and secondary education.

For The Family

- The school will communicate with the family straight away and offer support and send a letter of condolence from the school.
- Parents and family will be given the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who has died.
- A representative will be sent to the funeral.
- If the case is, a collection /flowers will be sent.
- Parents/family will be invited to any commemorative events held by the school, both at the time and in subsequent years.
- Should the parents wish to visit the school at any time after the funeral, this will be agreed. Parents will be told that they are welcome in the school and will be encouraged to come

and visit. The first visit to the school is often difficult and will be arranged sensitively in accordance with the parents' wishes. It will then be for the parents to decide if they wish to maintain ongoing links. Each family will be different, with differing needs. Therefore, the school will always be there to act as a source of support and information.

The Death of a Member of Staff

- All of the principles and procedures listed above apply to the death of a staff member. For a letter template see Appendix B.
- In addition to the above, the school will notify the Spanish Education Office and the Spanish Education Inspection as representative of employer. Where appropriate to the wishes of the staff member's family, the Headteacher will seek permission from the Spanish Education Office to close the school so that all members of staff are able to attend the funeral.
- If a death takes place in the workplace, it must be reported to the police and corporate health and safety who will report it to the health and safety executive in line with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The designated person within the school who has overall responsibility for support and liaison in event of a death or traumatic loss is the Headteacher. In the event that this person is absent then another Senior Leader will take responsibility.

Their responsibilities are:

- Policy development and review, involving pupils, staff, parents/carers and relevant local agencies.
- Implementing the policy and reflecting on its effectiveness in practice.
- Using the expertise within the school and sharing the responsibilities.
- Establishing and co-ordinating links with external agencies.

RESOURCES

There are a number of services available to help in the event of the death of a member of the School Community

- [Child Bereavement UK](#) - supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement
- [Cruse: Bereavement Care](#) - bereavement support.

- [Child Death Helpline](#) - helpline offering confidential support and befriending to anyone affected by the death of a child, teenager or young adult.
- [Sue Ryder](#) - provides care and support for people living with terminal illnesses and neurological conditions, as well as individuals who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

INITIAL RESPONSE

1. Headteacher/tutor/class teacher/head of studies (whoever is thought to be more appropriate for each particular case) makes contact with the family to:

- acknowledge what has happened
- express support
- discuss how to share the news with the rest of the school community
- check if family want their contact information shared

2. Headteacher shares the information with rest of staff and, where possible, follows family choice on how this news is shared more widely with the child's peers and the rest of the school.

3. Headteacher/ tutor/class teacher/head of studies (whoever is thought to be more appropriate for each particular case) makes contact with the person through a written card or letter to the child/young/person to acknowledge what has happened and express support.

4. One (or two) contacts are agreed with the family to liaise with them and the child. This may be the headteacher and class teacher, or a supporter requested by the child.

5. The information is shared with the school community, as agreed with the family. A simple form of words that parents can share with their children is appreciated.

6. The impact of this news on any other children in the school who have been bereaved or whose relative is seriously ill should be considered and direct contact made by their class teacher/tutor.

7. Check in on the staff response. Any death affecting a student can trigger other remembered griefs and, at this time of crisis, a sense of helplessness in not being able to respond as wished.

FURTHER SUPPORT

1. Keep the support-at-a-distance coming through the chosen contact/s.

2. Consider compiling condolences for the child from their peers. This could include collected messages and compiling an electronic book of condolence to email to the family. Other people might choose to send photos or drawings to remember them by. Once school is open again, you could offer a memorial of these drawings to display in school and then give to the family afterwards.

3. Obtain, if possible, resources for the family, for example: information about grief and children, suggested books and resources. If they are teenagers, offer them helpful websites.



4. When schools reopen, remember the support needs of bereaved children in planning their return to the classroom.

Appendix A

Template of a letter informing parents of the death of a pupil

Before sending a letter home to parents about the death of a pupil, permission must be gained from the child's parents.

The contents of the letter and the distribution list must be agreed by the parents and school.

<Address>

<Date>

Dear Parents

Your child's class teacher had the sad task of informing the children of the death of <Name>, a pupil in <Year>.

(<Name> died from an illness called cancer. As you may be aware, many children who have cancer get better but sadly <Name> had been ill for a long time and died peacefully at home yesterday.)

He/She was a very popular member of the class and will be missed by everyone who knew him/her.

When someone dies it is normal for their friends and family to experience lots of different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion. The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try to answer their questions at school but if there is anything more that you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to contact the school office and we would be more than happy to help you.

(We will be arranging a memorial service in the school in the next few weeks as a means of celebrating <Name.. 's> life.)

Yours sincerely

<Name> Head Teacher

Appendix B

Template of a letter informing parents of the death of a member of staff

<Address> <Date>

Dear Parents

Your child's class teacher had the sad task of informing the children of the tragic death of <Name> who has been a teacher at this school for a number of years.

Our thoughts are with <Name>'s family at this time and in an effort to try to respond to his/her death in a positive way, all the children have been informed.

When someone dies it is normal for family and friends to experience many different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion, and children are likely to ask questions about the death that need to be answered honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.

The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try and answer their questions at school but if there is anything else you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to contact the school office and we will be more than happy to help you.

(We will be arranging a memorial service in the school in the next few weeks as a means of celebrating <Name..>'s life.)

Yours sincerely

<Name> Head Teacher