



Bereavement Policy

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Policy Information:

Date of last review	New policy (Sep 23)	Review period	Biennial (Sep 25)
Date approved	September 2023	Approved by	Executive Team
Policy owner	Cavelle Burris Trust Safeguarding Lead	Date of next review	September 2025

Updates made since the last review:

Review date:	Changes made:	By whom:
New policy	N/A	N/A

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Responsible staff	
<p>Within each FET school there will be a designated group of staff to co-ordinate the bereavement support. This group will consist of SLT, Family Support Workers and Pastoral Staff. SLT will ensure that <i>Appendix 2</i> is completed and displayed clearly on a staff notice board in the break room/staff room area along with information of where to access this policy.</p> <p>In the Central Team the Human Resources Team will co-ordinate bereavement support. The Head of Human Resources will ensure that <i>Appendix 2</i> is completed and displayed clearly on a staff notice board in the break room/staff room area along with information of where to access this policy.</p>	
Useful contacts/courses	
Child bereavement UK	How we can support you Child Bereavement UK 0800 028 8840
Winston's Wish	Bereavement support for children with SEND Winston's Wish (winstonswish.org) 08088 020 021
Acorns children's hospice	Bereavement support Acorns Children's Hospice 0121 248 4850 (Birmingham)
Magnolia House (NHS)	Magnolia House Birmingham Women's and Children's (bwc.nhs.uk) Opening times: Mon-Fri 9am -5pm 0121 333 8609
Birmingham St Mary's Hospice	Bereavement support - The Hospice Charity Partnership (birminghamhospice.org.uk)
Edwards Trust	Edward's Trust Helping children and families facing loss and surviving bereavement. (edwardstrust.org.uk) Opening times: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9am-5pm & Weds 9am-8pm 0121 454 1705
High Speed Training	Child Bereavement Training Online Course & Certification (highspeedtraining.co.uk)
Cruse Bereavement Support	Training for individuals - Cruse Bereavement Support

Winston's Wish	Bereavement training for professionals Bereavement support training Winston's Wish (winstonswish.org)

Intent

Forward Education Trust is committed to supporting those who have been affected by bereavement.

This policy provides guidelines to be followed when a bereavement occurs and aims to support the emotional and physical wellbeing of the bereaved from as early as possible. It outlines what the schools within the trust can do to help and how. We will endeavour, to the best of our ability, to work in partnership with parents/carers to provide the right support at the right time.

Within our special schools some of our pupils may be diagnosed with life limiting illnesses.

As a trust we recognise that every bereavement is unique and will bring different challenges and that those differing challenges need to be recognised and met in the best way possible.

Bereavement procedures

If a pupil or family is bereaved the school will support them and/or their family by:

- Having a designated group of staff to co-ordinate the bereavement support.
- Appointing 1 key staff member to be the family's main point of contact. This person will be responsible for:
 1. Providing effective communication, clarifying the pathway of available support.
 2. Letting the family know that they are the family's main point of contact as well as confirming who the best person in the family is to liaise with.
 3. Establishing the family's wishes regarding how the school community is informed.
 4. Offering bereavement resource and referrals to other agencies.
 5. Discussing the return date for any pupil that has been bereaved and discuss collaboratively their needs.
 6. Home visits if appropriate.
- Ensuring that when a bereaved pupil returns to school, they have a nominated trusted adult to support them through listening if the pupil wants to talk about their loss.
- Enabling the pupil's re-integration into 'normal' school routines and create a safe and secure environment for them.

- Ensuring significant dates (such as death anniversaries, birthdays, and culturally significant dates such as annual festivals) are recorded and considered.
- Being aware of the pupil's family circumstances, including their cultural background, and its relevance to their bereavement.
- Considering a pupil's bereavement when planning school activities that might trigger thoughts or feelings about the bereavement and engage the pupil and their family in discussions regarding the pupil's involvement, providing information and choice.
- Being prepared for the possible change in behaviour in pupils, adhering to the behaviour policy.
- Remembering that not all children will need the support of specialist practitioners; they may need support from familiar people who care.
- Ensure that the appropriate staff are aware and prepared.
- In the days after a death, SLT will inform the necessary staff at the same time where possible, at the end of the working day.
- SLT will decide if it is appropriate for pupils who may be affected by the death to be informed by school. If it is deemed that it is, it will be done in an age-appropriate and sensitive way and with parental knowledge and consent.
- Providing bereavement training and refresher bereavement training, specific to supporting children/young people.
- Staff affected by the death will be offered support. (*see page 6*).

Terminally ill pupils

In the event of a child becoming terminally ill, their wishes and those of their parents/carers/guardians/next-of-kin should always be respected.

Should the child wish to attend school, the class teacher may need to inform the class of the child's condition.

Occasionally, the child may wish to talk to their fellow classmates about their predicament themselves. Honesty about death and dying may be the best line of approach and should be done appropriately taking into consideration pupils age and needs and parental consent.

Death of a pupil

In the unfortunate event of the death of a pupil, the school may be notified in several ways. A parent/guardian, family member or a professional from another organisation such as a hospice may contact the school.

Upon school receiving notification of the death of a pupil, a senior member of staff will be notified. This member of staff, usually the Head Teacher, will then assume responsibility for the dissemination of the information, briefing the designated team for managing bereavement support, the CEO and the Director of Education of the trust.

Discussion should take place with the family and their wishes considered before decisions are taken on if, how and what to tell the children and the school community. The school community may be informed by letter if deemed appropriate. (*see Appendix 1*)

Counselling should be available, if necessary, e.g. in cases of sudden or violent death.

The school **may** be closed and/or a member of SLT released to represent the school for the funeral or memorial services should it be appropriate, and they wish to do so.

Staff and children should be supported throughout the grieving period; anyone displaying signs of stress should be offered appropriate support.

Pupils may express a wish to attend, or take part in the service, but they should only do so with the prior agreement of the deceased's family, relatives or next of kin, as well as the agreement of their own parents/ guardians. Staff who wish to attend may only do so with agreement of the deceased's family and permission from the Head Teacher, taking into consideration how the staff members absence may impact the school day.

The class most affected might like to write down their thoughts and feelings; these could then be given to the bereaved family to assist in the planning of the service depending on the family's wishes.

Tips for talking to a bereaved pupil (*age appropriately*)

Do	Don't
Let the child know that you genuinely care. Make time to be available and listen. Accept all that the child is saying. Allow them to express their feelings their way. Let them know their feelings are normal. Let them know that it is OK to cry. Talk honestly and share your feelings. Be honest.	Stop the child talking. Tell them how they should or should not feel. Avoid contact. Change the subject. Deny your pain and feelings. Point out things for which they should be grateful. Be frightened of sharing your own feelings.

<p>Have eye contact. Have appropriate physical contact. Let them know that it is not their fault. Be aware of the home situation.</p>	
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Death of a parent/guardian/carer

If a pupil experiences the passing of a parent/guardian/carer, the designated group of staff will co-ordinate the bereavement support as per the bereavement procedures. Extra consideration will need to be taken as there can be long term effects on a child who has lost a parent including educational underachievement and ill mental health. ([Long-term effects of childhood bereavement: preliminary analysis of the 1970 British cohort study - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk))

Children should be supported throughout the grieving period; anyone displaying signs of stress should be offered appropriate support.

Death of a member of staff

School: In the unfortunate event of the death of a member of staff, the school or central team may be notified by a spouse, one of their children, family member, next of kin or a friend of the family.

Upon school receiving the information, a senior member of staff will be notified. This member of staff, usually the Head Teacher, will then assume responsibility for the dissemination of the information, briefing the Senior Leadership Team, the Director of Education and the CEO of the trust.

The FET Head of Human Resources will also need to be notified to support the school and start HR procedures.

Central Team: In the unfortunate event of the death of a member of staff within the central team, the team may be notified by a spouse, one of their children, family member, next of kin or a friend of the family.

Upon receiving the information, The FET Head of Human Resources will be notified and will then assume responsibility for the dissemination of the information, briefing the Executive Team, the Education Director and the CEO of the trust.

The Head of Human Resources will also be responsible for starting the HR procedures.

Trust wide: Where appropriate, discussion should take place with the deceased's family, and their wishes considered before decisions are taken on if, how and what to tell the children, the school community or FET community.

Access to counselling and other support should be available. Staff should be supported throughout the grieving period.

The school or central offices **may** be closed and/or a senior member of staff released to represent the trust and attend a funeral or memorial services should it be appropriate, and they wish to do so. All cases will be assessed on an individual basis.

Staff Supporting Pupils

It is important that staff supporting bereaved pupils and staff members, feel confident in doing so. SLT will provide guidance to staff and if required, bereavement support training will be sourced for the appropriate staff.

Staff support

Staff members who are dealing with a personal bereavement need to know how and where to access support within FET.

School: Within the schools it is the Head Teachers responsibility to provide staff with this information. Staff will have opportunities to speak to a member of SLT in private to seek support.

Central Team: Within the Central Team, it is the Head of Human Resources responsibility to provide staff with this information. Staff will have opportunities to speak to a member of the HR team who will be able to support them in identifying a key person within the Central Team that they feel would be appropriate to offer them further emotional support.

All staff can seek support through Cruse Bereavement Support:

Tel: 0808 808 1677

- Mon & Fri 9.30am – 5pm
- Tues, Wed & Thurs 9.30am – 8pm
- Sat & Sun 10am – 2pm

Website: www.cruse.org.uk

Staff can also seek support through the Health Shield (employee health benefits service) My Wellness section which provides staff with online tools and information to help them proactively manage their health and wellbeing. Included within the staff membership plan is access to the following services: GP Anytime including Private Prescriptions, 24/7 Counselling and Support Helpline, Face to Face Counselling, My Wellbeing App: Thrive Support, On-Demand Physio and Online Health Assessments.

Appendix 1

Letter Template - to be amended accordingly.



<SCHOOL LOGO>

<Date>

Dear Parents,

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

They were told that <Name> died from an illness called cancer. Sometimes people who have cancer can get better, but other times people die from it. <Name> had been ill with cancer for a long time and died at home yesterday.

When someone dies, their family and friends have lots of feelings of sadness, anger, and confusion - these are all normal. The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try and answer their questions at school, but I have made available some information which may help you to answer your child's questions as they arise. You can obtain this from the school office by asking for the Cruse Information.

You and your child may be invited to the funeral by the parents directly. If this is the case and your child is attending the funeral, please inform school.

Yours sincerely

<Name> Head teacher

Appendix 2

Bereavement Support Team – to be completed accordingly and displayed.



Bereavement Support

Forward Education Trust are committed to supporting those who have been affected by bereavement. We have a trust Bereavement Policy which provides guidelines to be followed when a bereavement occurs, and it aims to support the emotional and physical wellbeing of the bereaved.

Within each school and the Central Team there is a Designated Bereavement Team:

Designated Bereavement Team at [establishment name]			
(Key contact)		Role:	
Name:			
Name:		Role:	
Name:		Role:	
Name:		Role:	
Name:		Role:	

The Forward Education Trust Bereavement Policy can be found here:

[\[Link to policy on FET website\]](#)