Booker Avenue Infant School

Bereavement Policy
2026-29

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 not to 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 may be proactive, rather than reactive when responding to these situations. Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some children – or staff – may require. Where the impact of grief is more complex referral to specialist support would be considered. Additional information and resources can be accessed at www.childbereavement.org.uk

Objectives

- 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 and clarify the pathway of support

The Role of the Headteacher

- to be the first point of contact for the family/child concerned
- to inform Pastoral Lead, Staff and Governors
- to ensure the school possesses the salient details about the death
- to respond to media enquiries

The Role of Pastoral Lead

- to be the first point of contact for the family/child concerned in the absence of the Head
- to have bereavement training and cascade learning to other staff

Procedures

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Head and their wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential, to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.

2. Staff should be informed before pupils and be prepared 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. A letter to all school families affected, if the situation is appropriate, should be composed and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed.

5. The school should be 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.

6. Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate.

7. 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.

8. In consultation with the bereaved family, the school may decide to send flowers, donate to a charity or make an appropriate gesture of remembrance.

9. Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Head.

10. 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, particularly at transition points.