

Our Loss and Bereavement Policy is a reflection of our Mission Statement. At St Scholastica's Primary School we:

*"wish to educate the whole person through the integration of intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, psychological, social and physical development."*

This is done in *"partnership with the wider community, especially the home and parish, where the development of the whole person is nurtured."*

St Scholastica's School, being a faith school, has a particular perspective on life and death. This perspective allows us to understand death as something that is ultimately inevitable and part of the cycle of life.

In the school we cultivate the ethos of openness and honesty in relation to life, death and bereavement. We use opportunities within religious education, and the school curriculum to explore issues of feelings around loss, death and bereavement with the children.

### **Learning Points**

Over recent years the school community has supported each other through the death of a five year old pupil, the death of loved members of staff and the death of our head teacher, the following points are for the consideration of all staff in dealing with death and bereavement.

- Through prayer we seek to thank God for the life of the departed member of our community and through prayer seek to assist their souls so that they may experience everlasting joy with our risen saviour. We will particularly remember them immediately following their death and in accordance with Catholic tradition in the month of November.
- Give the whole school community (teaching and support staff, children, parents and carers, governors) space and time to acknowledge the death and the grief.
- Recognise that any death has the potential to bring previous experience of loss, bereavement and pain to the foreground, which can make it difficult to find a way of 'managing' the current death. This recognition is critical when supporting teaching staff.
- Be clear, open and honest about what has happened.
- Provide opportunities for and encourage pupils to express their feelings openly. Make use of poems, drawing and painting to support the grieving process. Honour pupils' feelings by displaying the work they create if they are happy for that to happen.
- Accept that it is fine for adults to show grief. Acknowledge and be respectful of the different expressions of grief by people from different cultural and faith backgrounds
- Draw on the support resources that are available to the school. These may come from the wider community, the local church, the local education authority, local bereavement services and educational psychology services.
- Make sure that members of staff are well trained, supported and sensitive. Bishop Harvey Family Services (Catholic Children's Society) Hendon Centre 0208 202 5115 supported the staff, pupils and parents in our school.
- Plan a series of processes to help the members of the school community through the bereavement. This could include initial support, a memorial event or space and remembering the individual with photos, video and/or 'do you remember' phrases.
- Do not expect things to return to normal too soon. Accepting a death and grieving takes time.
- Ensure that annual religious festivals celebrate each person who is being mourned.
- Include and support parents and keep a special lifeline to those parents who no longer come to the school because their child has died. St Scholastica's continues to invite family members into the school with an approach that is supportive – 'We're here, come when you are ready'

It is important to have ongoing support, which needs to last as long as the need and want is there. Bereavement is not a short process and birthdays and anniversaries of the death need to be remembered.

### **Resources for school**

Water bugs and Dragonflies – Doris Stickney

Badger's Parting Gift – Susan Varley (6+)

Ways to Live Forever – Sally Nicholls (11+)

The Great Blue Yonder – Alex Shearer (10+)

Amal and the Letter from the King – Rabindranath Tagore (6+)

[www.healthybooks.org.uk](http://www.healthybooks.org.uk)

Bishop Harvey Family Services (Catholic Children's Society) Hendon Centre  
020 8202 5115  
St Vincent's Family Service 118 Mayfield Gardens Hanwell  
020 8578 6378  
Cruse Bereavement Care - Helpline: 0870 167 1677  
Young Person's Helpline freephone: 0808 808 1677

[www.rd4u.org.uk](http://www.rd4u.org.uk)

This is a website for young people to hear how other young people feel about death. Cruse Bereavement Care suggested the web for children. I suggest that you stay with them as they explore this site.

**Lead Person: Naomi Mulholland**

### Procedures

**Below are possible procedures that maybe be followed in the event of the death of a member of staff, one of their close family members or a pupil:-**

- ✓ Memorial Mass
- ✓ Remembered at School Masses
- ✓ Whole school assembly
- ✓ Class support, circle time
- ✓ School closed for funeral
- ✓ Bereavement Counsellor invited into school for pupils, staff and parents
- ✓ Book of Memories
- ✓ Memorial in school Grounds
- ✓ Open invitation to speak to a staff member if request is made
- ✓ SMT Attend Funeral
- ✓ ASpace referral
- ✓ Educational Psychology Service (EP) referral

**NB** School will only normally be closed for a funeral in the event of the death of a serving member of staff or of a pupil that is on the current school register.

### Loss

As a society we have well established traditions to deal with Bereavement, hard though this is. Many children also experience loss, which may be due to bereavement but may also be due to families who have broken up, children taken into care, older children who have moved away, loss of their parent on a short holiday as well as a longer working time away from home. Often the distress of the children is not acknowledged. This can be because the family members do not think that the child has lost anything, but for many children the loss of a parent through family split up is harder to deal with than death of a parent. This is because the support is not in place for the child, in family or in school. The child may be left in a situation where they are unable to express their pain; it is less socially acceptable and the parent that they are with may not feel the same way as the child, and they therefore have no-one who understands their feelings.

Young children can also be very upset when their parent goes away for a holiday or goes into hospital. Children do not have the same concept of time, and they may think that their parent will never return. Similarly children may be very upset and experience feelings of loss due to the death of a family pet.

Sensitivity and thoughtfulness as a staff is necessary, whilst keeping in mind that it is important to keep other adults informed, but on a 'need to know' basis (Data Protection Act 1999). Discussion with EP Service and 'ASpace' could be utilised as well as confidential workshop discussions.

Agreed By Governors: May 2015

Presented to staff: May 2015

Signed by Chair of Governors \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by head teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Review date: May 2017