

Hurworth School Bereavement Policy

Accepted by: Board of Directors January 2012

Leadership Team Lead Reviewer: Head of School

Review Cycle: 3 Years

Last reviewed: September 2018

Date for next review: September 2021

Underlying Principles

This policy is seen to be closely linked with the school's Discipline policy and Safeguarding policy. The following is for guidance only and all actions are at the discretion of the Head of School.

Objectives

- To provide pupils and their families with effective, non-intrusive support at a time of great personal stress
- To provide all staff and those adults who work with our pupils (e.g. supply teachers, trainee teachers, School Counsellor), with a clear framework to enable effective handling of bereavement issues

Guidelines: Death of a pupil's family member or close friend

- When a close family member or close friend of a student dies the Head of School and Assistant Head Teachers will ensure that others are informed.
- An appropriate member of the Leadership team will pass on this information to the form tutor
- A member of staff will contact the family and identify any help from the school that may be needed
- Staff will also be notified of the event via the school Student Support bulletin system
- The pupil may choose to confide in a member of staff he/she knows well. This member of staff should inform the Assistant Head (Student Support) / School Manager that the pupil has chosen to discuss the bereavement
- Subject staff will be understanding of problems with concentration, homework etc but will provide a normal working environment for the pupil
- The School Manager will ensure that the office staff are aware of the situation
- The office staff will make the necessary adjustments to the pupil's personal details, address form etc if applicable
- A decision will be made in collaboration with the child and the family as to the level of information that is to be passed onto other students in preparation for the child returning to school

- Pupils in the form will be asked not to question the bereaved child about any details but will be ready to express sympathy and to listen should the child wish to speak
- The Assistant Head (Student Support) will ensure that part-time staff are aware of the situation
- The Head of School or appropriate adult will always see the pupil on return to school in order to tell him/her that staff and the tutor group are aware of the death and they will also discuss both present and future support that is available to the pupil
- All staff will need to be prepared for delayed shock or sudden outbursts. In this case, a friend will accompany the pupil to an appropriate adult for support
- If the pupil's reaction causes long-term concern, we will seek to work with families and support services, e.g. Counsellor, Family Support Officer, Educational Psychologist, to assist in providing help and guidance
- If the pupil suffers bereavement which is likely to have an impact on external examination preparation, families will be advised to ask for medical notes or letters from the GP to support a request for special consideration
- The Examinations Officer will inform the relevant Examination Board if necessary

Guidelines: Death of a member of staff's family member or close friend

- When a close family member or close friend of a member of staff dies the Head of School will be informed
- The Head of School will then decide if this information should be passed on and to whom
- The Head of School will meet with the member of staff upon their return to school and offer support

Guidelines: Death of a pupil in Years 7-11

- When a pupil in Years 7-11 dies the Head of School and Assistant Heads will ensure that the whole staff are informed
- The Chair of the Board of Directors should be informed by the Head of School
- A school assembly with the relevant year group should be delivered by the Head of School or a senior member of staff
- Subsequent assemblies should then be delivered to ensure all pupils in the school are aware of the news
- Pupils who were close friends of the pupil who has died should be permitted to attend the funeral

Training and Teaching

- Staff will be given the opportunity to participate in in-service training courses which lead to a greater understanding of loss and bereavement issues

Conclusion

- As a school, we accept the responsibility of recognising and dealing with a pupil's or member of staff's experience of bereavement
- We will act in a supportive and sympathetic way aiming to ease the pupil's or member of staff's transition back into school
- We will act in a supportive and sympathetic way to all pupils and members of staff when a pupil, currently attending this school, dies