



## Schools - Bereavement Policy

**Accepted by:** Board of Directors March 2024

**Approving Body:** Board of Directors

**Committee:** Standards

**Review Cycle:** 3 years

**Last reviewed:** June 2023

**Version:** 1.0

**Date for next review:** June 2026

### 1. Underlying Principles

- 1.1 This policy is seen to be closely linked with the Trust's Leave of Absence Policy – Schools Policy and individual school Safeguarding Policies and procedures. The following is for guidance only and all actions are at the discretion of the Chief Executive/Head Teacher/Head of School.

### 2. Objectives

- 2.1 To provide pupils and their families with effective, non-intrusive support at a time of great personal stress.
- 2.2 To provide all staff and those adults who work with our pupils, with a clear framework to enable effective handling of bereavement issues.
- 2.3 This policy does not apply to staff employed at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

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

- 3.1 When a close family member or close friend of a student dies the Head Teacher/Head of School and Assistant Head Teachers will ensure that all staff are informed.
- 3.2 An appropriate member of the Leadership Team will pass on this information to staff.
- 3.3 A member of staff will contact the family and identify any help from the school that may be needed.
- 3.4 The pupil may choose to confide in a member of staff they know well. This member of staff should inform a member of the Leadership Team and record on CPOMS that the pupil has chosen to discuss the bereavement.

- 3.5 Subject staff will be understanding of problems with concentration, homework etc. but will endeavour to provide a normal working environment for the pupil.
- 3.6 Office staff will make the necessary adjustments to the pupil's personal details, address form etc. if applicable.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Pupils 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.
- 3.9 The Head Teacher/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.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 If the pupil's reaction causes long-term concern, we will seek to work with families and support services and any other external agencies under the umbrella of Early Help e.g. Counselling and personal wellbeing services, Educational Psychologist, to assist in providing help and guidance.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 The Examinations Officer will inform the relevant Examination Board if necessary.

#### **4. Guidelines: Death of a member of staff**

- 4.1 Should we receive the news of the death of a member of staff; the Head Teacher/Head of School and Assistant Head Teachers will meet.
- 4.2 We will use the guidance notes below: -
  - An appropriate member of the Leadership Team will pass on this information to staff.
  - A member of staff will contact the family and identify any help from the school that may be needed.
  - Allow time for collective grieving amongst the staff.
  - Allow the staff to share how they feel about what has happened.
  - Inform the teachers that they may need to address what has happened in their classes.

- Impress on the staff what facts are to be announced to the pupils/students. To avoid rumours, exaggerations and development of the event, the agreed facts should be stated simply.
  - Communicate to the staff how the announcement will be made. Should it be a full school assembly, year groups, or a class/form group?
  - Under such circumstances some staff may have difficulty coping with the loss themselves. Colleagues will need to be aware of those staff who seem particularly affected by the death.
- 4.3 If a member of staff requires additional support, please refer to the Staff Wellbeing Policy – Schools Policy also which outlines additional means of external support available i.e Counselling.

## **5. Guidelines: Death of a member of staff's family member or close friend**

- 5.1 When a close family member or close friend of a member of staff dies the Head Teacher/Head of School will be informed.
- 5.2 The Head Teacher/Head of School will then decide if this information should be passed on and to whom.
- 5.3 The Head Teacher/Head of School/appropriate member of the school's Leadership Team will meet with the member of staff upon their return to school and offer support.

## **6. Guidelines: Death of a pupil**

- 6.1 When a pupil dies the Head Teacher/Head of School will ensure that the whole staff are informed.
- 6.2 The Chairs of the Board of Directors & LGB should be informed by the Head Teacher/Head of School.
- 6.3 A school assembly with the relevant year group may be delivered by the Head Teacher/Head of School or a senior member of staff.
- 6.4 Pupils who were close friends of the pupil who has died should be permitted to attend the funeral.

## **7. Training and Teaching**

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

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 As a Trust, we accept the responsibility of recognising and dealing with a pupil's or member of staff's experience of bereavement.

- 8.2 We will act in a supportive and sympathetic way aiming to ease the pupil's or member of staff's transition back into school.
- 8.3 We will act in a supportive and sympathetic way to all pupils and members of staff when a pupil, currently attending this school, dies.