



# North Essex Multi Academy Trust

## Bereavement Policy

### Trust Board

<b>Last reviewed:</b>	May 2020
<b>Next review due:</b>	May 2022
<b>Ratified Trust Board:</b>	21 May 2020
<b>Designated Postholder:</b>	Chief Finance Officer

## **Introduction**

Within our Trust community there will almost always be some recently bereaved children who are struggling with their loss, or sometimes the death of a member of staff or a pupil may have an impact on the whole school community. Whilst we would hope to not encounter such circumstances, we have this Bereavement Policy in place so we can be proactive, rather than reactive, in these very sensitive situations.

Usually, support and understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of our school, along with that provided by their family and friends, may be all the bereavement support most children or staff require. However, we recognise that referral to more specialist support may be necessary where the impact of grief is more complex.

## **Aims and ethos**

As we recognise that most children and adults can be effectively supported through bereavement and loss by those with whom they already have relationships, we want to equip school staff and others to respond effectively and confidently to a death in the school community. It is important too that we recognise that everyone experiences bereavement and grief differently and that there is no right or wrong way to do it. Therefore, it is our aim:

- to provide appropriate support to pupils and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after a bereavement
- to provide a safe and calm environment for pupils and staff
- to ensure there is effective communication between home and school and to provide parents with information on how to access other support (if it is required)
- to work with the local authority and other partners as appropriate

## **The role of the Trust Board**

- To approve policy and ensure its implementation and regular reviews
- To ensure there is a whole school approach to supporting emotional wellbeing

## **The role of the Headteacher/Head of School**

- To have oversight of support required and provided, liaising with external agencies as appropriate
- To be the first point of contact for the family/child concerned
- To respond to media enquiries if required
- To keep the governing body fully informed
- To ensure staff are appropriately trained around bereavement and undertake actions set out in this policy (such as how to share sad news with pupils), including a deputy for the role of the Headteacher/Head of School should the event mean the head is unable to complete this role. Bereavement training is offered by a number of providers such as the charity Winston's Wish, which can

be accessed [here](https://www.educare.co.uk/courses/dealing-with-bereavement-and-loss) (<https://www.educare.co.uk/courses/dealing-with-bereavement-and-loss>). Headteachers/Heads of School may consider it appropriate for some staff to complete the training and to share key points with other staff as necessary.

### **The role of the Trust**

- To advise and support school staff as required
- To signpost to referral pathways and other means of support

### **The role of the Local Authority**

- Essex Local Authority provides information, guidance and support for all schools on bereavement on its critical incident webpage ([https://schools.essex.gov.uk/admin/Critical Incidents/Pages/Critical%20Incidents%20and%20School%20Closures.aspx](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/admin/Critical%20Incidents/Pages/Critical%20Incidents%20and%20School%20Closures.aspx))

### **The role of staff**

- To provide a safe and calm environment for all
- To act as a 'trusted adult' to support pupils and proactively enable them to have the time and space to talk
- To monitor the wellbeing of their pupils and colleagues, identify concerns and escalate where additional support may be required
- To ensure any safeguarding concerns are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead

### **Procedures following a bereavement**

1. Wherever possible (and if deemed appropriate), the Headteacher/Head of School will attempt contact with the bereaved family before taking **any** other action. This is to ensure any communications to the wider school community (and the media) are factual, avoid rumour or confusion and are aligned with the family's wishes. Where it has not been possible to establish contact with the family, and news of the death is already in the public arena, the Headteacher/Head of School will need to manage this and will do so, taking advice from the local authority and/or Chief Executive Officer
2. The Headteacher/Head of School will inform staff of any death and agree how information will be shared with pupils and the wider school community
3. The Headteacher/Head of School and staff will agree how to share information with pupils in a supportive and age-appropriate way
4. The Headteacher/Head of School will prepare a communication to all parents/carers to inform them of the death and give advice about how to support their child, should they be affected

5. The Headteacher/Head of School will agree a statement for the media with the Chief Executive Officer,
6. The Headteacher/Head of School will adapt the school day and timetable if necessary, to enable appropriate support to be provided to pupils. This support may be from school staff and/or from the local authority Education Psychology Service or other appropriate agencies such as the Yo-Yo Project.
7. Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate
8. The Headteacher/Head of School will make arrangements in school for a book of condolence and/or an area where flowers may be placed
9. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance will be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial school closure in some circumstances
10. The Headteacher/Head of School and staff will monitor the wellbeing of all pupils and staff identifying any concerns and escalating where additional support may be required. The Trust subscribes to the Education Support Partnership's Employee Assistance Programme which offers mental health and wellbeing support to school staff.
11. The school will record any concerns about a child's wellbeing on their file to ensure any future school is aware that additional support may be required