



Cabot
Learning
Federation

Herons' Moor
Academy
Bereavement
and Loss Policy

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Hérons' moor Academy Bereavement and Loss Policy

Death is a subject that nobody ever wants to address. It is almost inevitable though, that at some point the school community will be affected by a death in some way or another. This might include the death of a pupil, the death of a staff member, the death of a pupil's family member, or the death of someone connected with the school.

Through providing a curriculum that acknowledges and addresses loss, death, pupil bereavement and grief we can improve the skills of pupils to deal with and emerge positively from them. Our school is well-placed to help pupils to explore and develop an awareness and understanding of death as well as to support those personally affected by it. An important part of this is the ability to support pupils, families and staff at times of loss and bereavement, as well as helping pupils to support their peers, decreasing the sense of isolation that can be part of it.

Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and this policy has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively, and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances.

Hérons' Moor Academy is committed to the emotional health and well-being of its staff and pupils. We are dedicated to the continual development of a 'healthy school'. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that support and prepare pupils for coping with separation or loss of a loved one, either through death or divorce.

This policy is for all staff, pupils, parents/carers, academy councillors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school.

This policy encompasses all areas of bereavement including loss of a child, parent, family member or staff member.

AIMS

- To support all those affected by loss and death in a supportive and caring environment in which everyone can respond appropriately to individual circumstances. To offer understanding of the impact of loss and grief on children and young people's physical and emotional health;
- To gain insight into pupils'/staff reactions to loss and grief and how
- Herons' Moor Academy responds to meet the needs of grieving pupils, parents, and staff;
- To give pastoral support for all pupils, parents, and staff;
- To provide effective support for all members of the school community and access to all relevant support materials.

This policy outlines practical measures to be taken when people are in shock, or upset, especially with sudden or multiple deaths or traumatic circumstances.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal will have overall responsibility for support and liaison in the event of a death or traumatic loss. If this person is absent a member of the senior leadership team (SLT) will take responsibility.

These responsibilities are:

- Implementing the policy and reflecting on its effectiveness in practice;
- Using the expertise within the school and sharing the responsibilities;
- Co-ordinating the planned action to manage school related incidents in and beyond the school in line with the Critical Incident Policy;
- Deciding who will be responsible for communicating with the family directly involved;
- Deciding who gives news to the school community and if necessary who will communicate with the

Media Communications (this should always be the Principal with support from the SLT, with parental permission to inform pupils);

- Establishing and co-ordinating links with external agencies;
- Implementing cross-phase liaison within the school – Principal & SLT informing staff teams who then inform pupils;
- Accessing and co-ordinating training and support for staff – the Wellbeing team and also support from an outside psychologist.

The person responsible will take into consideration the following short term support:

- Who should break the news about a death;
- What exactly the children will be told;
- How they will be told (e.g. whole school, class, individually);
- When they will be told;
- How the information will be communicated to parents and staff;
- What questions might be asked by pupils, staff and parents;
- What links will be made with the family;
- Whether it is appropriate for staff to show their emotions to the pupils;
- Celebration of life will be offered to families and the opportunity to plant something small in the Baytree star garden.

STAFF SUPPORT AND TRAINING

It is important that all staff feel confident in delivering support for pupils and mutual support for each other. Bereavement awareness training will be provided for identified staff and the school will ensure members of staff are kept up to date with developments.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our teaching will be based on an understanding of the principles stated above and a variety of approaches should be used to meet the needs of our pupils, showing sensitivity to their age and experience.

Teaching methods adopted in the classroom will include:

- A range of teaching and learning styles including individual and group discussions, role play and drama;
- Introducing supporting resources – photographs, mementoes, stories and music;
- Giving clear, truthful and accurate information, not trying to soften the blow with ambiguous language which does not tell the truth;
- Practising the collaborative social skills necessary to help cope with the feelings of loss;
- Giving relevant and appropriate advice and support;
- Providing continuity and progression by visiting and revisiting issues as pupils develop and their needs and understanding change;
- Considering the attitudes and values of pupils and a range of other significant groups in their community;

PROCEDURES

Hérons' Moor Academy will:

- Speak to the family, if possible, offer them condolences and support before ascertaining what they would like to happen;
- Give them a direct telephone number for someone they can contact in school;
- Obtain factual information to avoid unnecessary speculation;
- Inform staff straight away;
- Decide where pupils will be told if this is necessary. The school will identify the most vulnerable pupils and give the support they might need;
- Tell the pupils as soon as possible about the death via the Wellbeing team and for them to support class teams.
- Send a letter to families, on the same day if possible;
- Give guidance to parents on supporting bereaved children – a social story to be created where necessary

THE FUNERAL

Hérons' Moor Academy will:

- Find out the families' wishes and how far they wish the school community to be involved;
- Identify which staff and pupils may want to attend and the practicalities of issues such as staff cover and transport.
- Send flowers if acceptable;
- Consider the cultural and religious implications;
- Enable the person(s) who had the closest relationship with the child to attend the hospital and/or funeral whilst maintaining the safety of those remaining in school. - this would usually be the current class team but may be a staff member who had worked closely with the child in a previous class and may be able to have leave of absence to attend.

LONG TERM ILLNESS

Hérons' Moor Academy will:

- Designate one person to make contact with the child/staff family to find out their wishes about staff visiting;
- Ensure they keep abreast of any developments without causing distress to the family;
- Advise staff of the family's wishes;
- Enable, wherever possible staff to visit with permission from the family;
- Support the school community with accurate information and assistance.

SUPPORT FOR BEREAVED CHILDREN

Not all children will need the support of specialist practitioners; they need familiar people who care.

Heron's' Moor Academy will offer:

- A routine, providing a sense of normality;
- Some space, away from an emotional intense atmosphere;
- Neutral space and people to share their feelings without the worry of upsetting a loved one;
- Time to be themselves without feeling guilty (being with friends, time to play in a safe space outside the home environment);
- Regular correspondence with home, providing reassurance about behaviour and general wellbeing, to ensure the child or young person is managing their grief;
- Access to appropriate resources via class teacher with support from SLT;
- Preparation time for pupils to discuss what to say and how to behave when the bereaved child returns to school; supported by SLT and the Wellbeing team
- Time for staff to be aware of changes in behaviour that may be related to the death;
- An individual link person to support the pupils when necessary;
- A suitable place in the Academy for pupils who need some space if too upset to stay in the classroom and people to whom they can go for support.

SUPPORT FOR PUPILS GENERALLY

Heron's' Moor Academy will:

- Identify pupils who may be particularly vulnerable or likely to experience symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;
- Remember and commemorate the person who has passed if a member of the school community.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF

Heron's' Moor Academy will:

- Support bereaved staff and acknowledge they may be struggling with their own reactions and emotions while supporting pupils;
- Plan for informal mutual support to give staff an opportunity to share feelings and reactions;



- Give people time to attend the funeral, if appropriate and within the operational capacity of the Academy;
- Offer general training for all staff;
- Be aware of resources available and give time to staff to become familiar with what is available.

SUPPORT FOR PARENTCARERS

Hérons' Moor Academy will:

- Communicate with the family straight away and offer support;
- Send a letter of condolence;
- Give out information to appropriate people depending on the families' wishes;
- Give parents and family the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who has died;
- Send a representative to the funeral if appropriate;
- Send flowers as appropriate;
- Invite parents/carers to any commemorative events held by the school at the right time guided by parents/carers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hérons' Moor Academy will give the following opportunities to commemorate loss for parents/carers, staff and pupils:

- Give parents/carers/pupils/staff the opportunity to visit the "Star Garden" ;
- Offer support to individuals who wish to talk about their experiences;
- Offer support to pupils who need to explore and learn to understand their emotions;
- Create a memory box if appropriate;
- Give pupils opportunities to talk within a group about their experiences.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Although it is important to maintain confidentiality throughout the handling of any incident or disclosure, pupils will be made aware that complete confidentiality in some circumstances cannot be totally guaranteed. This will help in retaining the trust of pupils and parents/carers and will ensure that the sharing of appropriate information is kept to a minimum. Sensitive information is only disclosed internally or externally with careful attention to the rights and needs of individuals.

After the loss of a parent or family member, when the pupil returns to school it is important to discuss with them whether they want certain people with whom they come into contact to be informed, such as professionals who would usually attend B Herons' Moor Academy.

INCLUSION AND EQUALITY

Heron's Moor Academy recognises that there is a range of cultural and religious customs and procedures concerning death and that there may be different expectations of the bereaved child and family. Some of these may affect matters of the school organisation.

Heron's Moor Academy will try to present a balance of different approaches to death and loss. Pupils and staff will be made aware that there is a range of different responses to bereavement and that we need to value and respect each one of these.

RESPONDING TO THE MEDIA

Some deaths may attract media attention. All members of staff will be advised not to respond to journalists and to refer all enquiries to the Principal, who will make a considered response after seeking assistance from Cabot Learning Federation.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal or his/her representative to consider any Statutory Guidance. Any changes made will be shared with the staff and the Academy Council.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

- www.winstonswish.org.uk – information for schools, downloadable lesson plans, message board for young people, general information about grief and bereavement
- www.teachers.tv – School Matters – Coping with bereavement – video about two schools managing a death
- www.childbereavement.org.uk – information for schools, general information about grief and bereavement
- www.rd4u.org.uk - designed by young people to help other young people through bereavement (Cruse)
- helpful resources-sudden – help people flowing the first 10 weeks of a sudden bereavement.