

Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School

Bereavement policy

Introduction

Every year 24,000 children under the age of 16 will experience the bereavement of someone special in their life. The school often becomes a source of care and support during this difficult time. The school recognises the part it plays in supporting bereaved children.

The school also acknowledges that grief impacts on almost every aspects of a person's life and is committed to supporting staff in practical and reasonable ways should they suffer a bereavement.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the School Emergency Procedures document, Appendix D, which outlines how the school would deal with the death of a pupil or member of staff.

Aims

Bearing in mind that every bereavement and reaction is different, this policy sets out our procedures to support families and children should they be bereaved. The policy also aims to outline procedures in school should a member of staff be bereaved.

The school aims to counter any adverse effects of bereavement and to support pupil /staff emotional wellbeing.

Objectives

- To support pupils and staff before , during and after bereavement
- To ensure effective communication regarding support available
- To identify key members of staff within school to provide support
- To ensure regular training is available for bereavement counsellors in school
- To ensure regular training for all staff in supporting bereaved pupils and/or colleagues

School Responsibilities should a child be bereaved

Class teacher

The class teacher will listen carefully to information received regarding a family bereavement and make time to meet with the family should this be appropriate. The child will be closely monitored and given time to talk through their experience should they need to do so.

The class teacher will signpost support available to families both within school and outside agencies eg Counselling with trained TA, Say Goodbye Project.

When planning, the class teacher will be mindful and sensitive to discussion of certain topics which may trigger memories eg Mother's day, hospitals. A note will be made on the child's transition profile alerting the next teacher to the nature of the bereavement.

The class teacher will feedback to the family any ongoing concerns which have arisen due to the bereavement and alert the Inclusion manager that more support may be needed.

SLT

The SLT will ensure timetables are flexible to allow TA's trained in bereavement counselling time to meet with bereaved pupils.

The SLT will ensure training is available for those staff wishing to take on this responsibility. Training will be ongoing and refresher courses will also be organised.

The SLT will arrange whole school staff training on a regular basis to gain knowledge and understanding on how to support children who have been bereaved.

School Responsibilities should a member of staff be bereaved

The law

The law states that any employee who has been bereaved has a right to 'reasonable time' away from work. However 'reasonable' is not defined and will depend on the situation.

SLT

Grand Avenue School is very sympathetic towards staff experiencing bereavement and endeavours to support the member of staff as much as possible. Members of SLT will ensure confidentiality is maintained and that time is available to talk through a balance of well being and work commitments.

SLT acknowledge that bereavement impacts all individuals differently. Bereavement leave will be paid that allows a member of staff to deal with their personal stress and related practical arrangements when a member of their family passes away.

SLT understand that a full return to work after bereavement may not be possible. In these circumstances a phased return to work or alternative duties will be considered.

Individual

Staff are under no obligation to disclose a bereavement, this is a personal decision. Time off work to attend funeral may be requested, either verbally or in writing to the Headteacher. It is school policy to honour requests favourably.

Any religious, cultural practices or special arrangements regarding bereavement should be made known to the headteacher.

Any staff member who has concerns regarding their grieving process impacting on their work performance is asked to meet with the headteacher or Human Resources department. The member of staff will be signposted to appropriate professional help. eg bereavement counselling