

Enderby Road Infant School

Bereavement Statement



PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:	Head Teacher
APPROVED: GOVERNING BODY	DATE: 1-5-24
SIGNED: <i>S Walmsley</i>	ROLE: Chair of Safeguarding Committee
TO BE REVIEWED:	Summer 2027

Introduction

This statement has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances. It seeks to reflect the values and philosophy of Enderby Road Infant and Nursery School.

Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and it is not possible to write a policy which covers every possible contingency. The school will always use its discretion when dealing with parents, families and requests they may have.

Staff will always endeavour to act professionally, sensitively and compassionately. Attendance at appropriate training at the local hospice or other locations and access to material relating to bereavement on paper and online.

At Enderby Road Infant and Nursery School we seek to meet the needs of all our children/students/pupils and staff in all situations. When home circumstances change because of a death in the family, we understand how 'different' everything becomes. School needs to be a place where support is given to both child and family and where all staff are sensitive to all needs.

If the death occurs of one of our pupils or of a member of staff, everyone will work together, with outside agencies as appropriate, to support each other.

Staff who have undertaken Bereavement training will be consulted and where appropriate, lead any supporting initiative.

We always work in partnership with parents or carers. We always listen. We sensitively support and encourage parents, carers or family to tell us of any happenings in their child's life that may affect their child's emotional state, but we recognise we will never be told everything.

Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different. Sometimes school staff are part of the process of a long illness or poor prognosis and will be involved in emotional support before death occurs. Sometimes a change in a pupil's emotional state through evidence of altered behaviour or attitude, will be the only evidence that someone important to one of our pupils has died. Sometimes a child will confide in a member of staff or a fellow pupil. Sometimes a member or friend of the family will tell us. Sometimes it will be a friend of the child.

If there has been a bereavement or significant loss in a family, we will seek their help and advice to help us avoid saying anything that could confuse or upset the child or add further to the distress of those family members most affected.

The fact that the child is bereaved should be recorded prominently on the child's profile on CPOMS with raised awareness for all staff with whom the child has contact. Recording predominantly on a child's profile on CPOMS will ensure that other professionals are aware should the child change school

In the event of a death of a close member of a pupil's family
the following procedures should be followed.

The head teacher or the most senior available member of staff or an available senior member of staff designated by the head teacher will be informed immediately a member of staff is informed of a bereavement or loss.

All staff should then be informed as quickly, quietly and sensitively as possible.

A named member of staff designated by the head teacher will make contact with the family. This member of staff will explain the desire to be supportive and to avoid saying or doing anything that would add further distress.

For this purpose s/he will endeavour to ascertain information about the situation and how much the child knows in as unobtrusive a way as possible.

The same member of staff will act as a link to the family to ensure good communication and facilitate implementation of the bereavement policy.

Advice will be obtained about any cultural and religious issues if necessary.

The family should be asked if they want the school community to be told formally and if so the sort of arrangements that might be made to let other families know the circumstances. This might be necessary in order to alleviate any risk of rumour circulating which may not be factual and could be upsetting for the family. In some circumstances, it will not be appropriate to do this, for example if the death occurred in circumstances likely to encourage gossip.

If information is to be given to other parents formally this is best done by letter home to the children's parents in envelopes. For young children it would be preferable for this to be given to the parents at the end of the school day when they collect their children.

If a child has not attended school for a period following a bereavement plans for the child to return to school should be agreed and reassurance given that the family will be contacted if the child is distressed. It may be desirable to include a visit to the child at home by the child's class teacher or Pastoral Lead prior to the return.

Outside agencies should be contacted if appropriate or if in doubt.

A suitable place in school will be identified for pupils who need some space if too upset to stay in the classroom and people to whom they can go for support.

Good communication between school and home is extremely important.

In the event of the death of a pupil or member of staff.

This is likely to cause considerable distress to everyone in the organisation and the following additional actions should be undertaken:

Discussions should take place with the family and their wishes taken into account on how and what to tell the school community.

Arrangements should be made for counselling to be available if necessary. This is more likely in cases of unexpected or violent death. Appropriate agencies outside school will need to be contacted.

In some circumstances it may be desirable for the school to be closed so that as many people as possible can be released to attend the funeral or memorial service if they so wish.

Should there be any interest from the media, this will be directed through the local authority.

Staff and children will be supported throughout the grieving period. There should be systematic observation and monitoring with any signs of complex grieving, brought to the attention of the appropriate professional agencies.

It is hoped that when the time comes and it is possible or so wished, the school community will come together to celebrate the life of the individual pupil or staff member.