



**Park Brow  
Primary School**



Happy - Respect - Pride - Caring - Potential

## Bereavement and Loss Policy



*'Together we can make a difference'*

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the school Child Protection Policy.

## **Introduction/context**

When something significant happens in a family, the entire family is affected. Even though death, divorce, criminality or other loss issues appear to be grown-up problems, they have an enormous effect on the children who are touched by such experiences. If a parent dies, a divorce happens or a painful loss occurs, not only do the parents grieve but also children too.

Park Brow Community School believes that adapting a holistic approach to the support and care of its pupils. Death is not seen as an illness – it is normal and an inevitable part of human existence. When bereavement occurs, it can affect a variety of people not just the family concerned. It is inevitable that at some point Park Brow Community School will have to deal with the death of a member of its community.

To this end, we recognise that work needs to be carried out to ensure that families, children and young people are given:

- the opportunities to develop skills to cope with loss and grief and
- have access to appropriate information and support when needed.

There is no single recipe for provision and services will always need to be organized in the light of needs, priorities and resources.

Various Government legislative and guidance documentation provide a framework to support schools covering death and bereavement. The Education Act (1996) emphasizes the importance of promoting the personal, social and spiritual development of children and young people as part of their education. It also stresses the need for schools to address bereavement as well as other losses such as divorce and separation.

We recognise that, in order to fulfil our responsibilities in delivering the five outcomes outlines in the Children Act 2004, as a school we need to be proactive in preparing children for loss and grief and be reactive in supporting them too.

The management of a bereavement situation will be a central role for the members of the Senior Management Team/Inclusion Team.

## **The Aims**

*The main aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils and all members of staff faced with bereavement are provided with support.*

This safeguarding bereavement policy is intended to reflect our positive ethos and contribute to the caring community we wish to nurture. It is hoped it will contribute considerably to the emotional health and wellbeing of our school community. This support includes the opportunity for them to:

- Express their feelings in a safe environment,
- Be given space and time to come to terms with their loss
- Have access to specialist advice if necessary.

It is recognised that the situation for the child, young person and/or family will be monitored over time. It is our hope that anyone faced with bereavement will regard our community as a place where children and young people can grow and face the challenges that lie around. This, in turn, will contribute to our learning community.

## **Procedures**

Once the situation occurs concerning a bereavement or loss due to separation or criminality the following steps will be taken:

- Contact will be made with the family to ascertain the facts and offer support.
- Use will be made of the Knowsley 'Positive Responses to Supporting Bereaved Children' Pack.
- Staff will be informed and decisions taken concerning the best way to inform pupils and for internal mechanisms for support to be organised and employed.
- Pupils will be informed in the agreed manner
- The Local Authority and other agencies will be informed and involved as appropriate
- If appropriate, a press statement will be prepared and a strategy for dealing with the media agreed with the family
- Discussions will take place concerning attendance at the funeral and any memorial service agreed with the family.
- Basic information will be recorded
- The mechanism for reviewing the situation should be agreed with the appropriate staff.

## **Criminality**

As each situation is unique, it is important to be open to using a variety of approaches and to recognise that no single response will fit all circumstances.

The following have been identified as useful guiding principles by Barnardos:

- See the child as an individual and recognise that imprisonment may have impact the child in different ways.
- Understand that the child is entitled to privacy and it is important not to put the child in a situation where they have to tell their friends about their parent/relative if they do not want to.
- Be sensitive to the child's needs, views and choices.

Addressing the needs of children affected by the imprisonment of a parent or family member involves action at different levels and at Park Brow we ensure to liaise with staff and parents/carers in order to fulfil this.

## **Responsibilities**

The management of bereavement is a whole school issue but there need to be clear lines of accountability to ensure our aims are fulfilled.

The following summarise the main areas of responsibility.

### **The Governors**

- To ensure the policy is implemented

### **Head Teacher/Senior Management Team**

- To monitor progress and deal with external agencies when appropriate
- To coordinate an media inquiries
- To be the first point of contact for the individual concerned and their family
- To identify appropriate support within the school community for the individual concerned.
- To offer support as appropriate to pupils in the wider school community

### **Inclusion Team and Bereavement Support Staff**

- To gather appropriate information of children suffering a death, separation or criminality
- To provide appropriate support for children to express their feelings and build self-esteem
- Update the bereavement and loss register

### **The School's religious contact member**

- To advise the senior management and to offer support as required.

### **Training**

The training and development of staff is a fundamental aspect of our human resource management and as such staff will have the opportunity to undertake relevant training in the management of bereavement. This will involve general awareness-raising for all staff and more specialised training for those with specific responsibility.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Senior Management Team and reported to the Governors on an annual basis during Inclusion Governor Meetings.

This will include the following methods:

- Feedback from pupils and parents affected by bereavement and loss
- Focus groups of staff and pupils
- Feedback from class teachers involved in supporting a bereavement situation
- Discussion with relevant Local Authority personnel (when appropriate)
- Discussions with external agencies involved (when appropriate)

### **Policy Review**

Consultation concerning the development of this policy was vital in ensuring all parties understand their role and responsibilities. The process itself also reflects the positive and caring ethos of the school.

The following people were consulted in the preparation of this policy:

- staff
- pupils
- parents
- governors
- The Local Authority

**Copies of this policy are available for all staff.**

Reviewed by J. Connell September 2019

Next Review date: September 2021