

Chelmsford County High School for Girls



Bereavement Policy

Approved by the Governing Body: ~~3rd December 2020~~

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Bereavement Policy

Points of advice and protocol are itemised with bullet points

Suggested actions are numbered

Additions for school closure during COVID-19 are in red.

Area	Protocol	Responsibility	Timeline
Aims and ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The aim of this policy is to support the School to deal with the death of a member of its community, with sensitivity, compassion and in an appropriate and timely fashion.This advice also acknowledges the essential need to follow the wishes of the family.This advice should also be used in conjunction with the critical incident response advice from Essex, for dealing with the sudden death of a child or member of staff and taking into account the need to inform the LA - key contact numbers (please have precise details of the incident before informing Essex LA via the numbers listed below)Schools Communication Team 0333 013 9880 / 07894 963922 office hours (9am - 4pm)Press Office – for urgent media enquiries only 07717 867525 - out of hoursThe ethos of this policy fits in with the ethos of the school and the close-knit community that CCHS is. We acknowledge that, as a diverse school with students from every corner of the globe, we will, as ever, be sensitive to the traditions and beliefs of different world religions and those of no faith.We offer empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of our School with a strong pastoral team.Where the impact of the grief is more complex, referral to more specialist support may need to be considered. We also acknowledge our long-standing support from Renew counselling and will seek their advice and support as our main counselling providers.Extra resources can be found here: Child Bereavement UK	SLT Staff and Student Matters Committee	Reviewed Summer Term 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselling or support with educational psychologists from Essex critical response team. Essential crisis support. 		
Area	Protocol	Responsibility	Timeline
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer a framework for all staff Provide guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately with bereavement. To support pupils and/or members of staff before (where applicable), during and after bereavement. To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between members of staff, students, the family/carers and the community. To identify key staff within school and the governing body/Local Authority/ academy trust. To have clear expectations about the way school will respond to a death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all. Acknowledging the support of Child Bereavement UK in drawing up this policy 2020 61 Helpline 0800 02 888 40 		
	ACTIONS AND TIMELINE TO FOLLOW		
1. Communications and actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> School informed of the death of a member of its community. <i>(Some families may want to share information with the school community while others may not) during COVID-19 this may be via email or a phone call out of hours.</i> A simple confirmation of the death may be required until more details are available, and/or the family consulted. <i>It may be necessary for the HT to confirm this with the family.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HT DH if HT not available AH if DH not available Business Manager 	Immediately
2. Communications and actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HT will take overall charge, call SLT meeting. <i>During COVID-19 this will be a meeting via MS teams and or phone calls.</i> HT prepares a Script* SLT all proof-read script 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HT supported by SLT. If necessary, inform SENCO in case of adverse effect 	

	<i>(Advice - It helps to feel prepared when delivering sad news, so a script will be particularly useful. Do not be afraid or surprised to show emotion, this is a human reaction.)</i>	of hearing the news.	
Area	Protocol - advice	Responsibility	Timeline
*Notes re the script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start by acknowledging you have some sad news to give. <i>(this may need to be done via email)</i> • Be honest. • Give the news stating simple facts use the words dead/died. • If known, and with the family's permission, explain briefly where and when the death occurred. • If not known, say so, and that you will endeavour to find out. • If rumours are rife, say which of these are definitely not correct, if known. • Where appropriate, remind pupils of their responsibilities and the impact when posting on social media. • Talk briefly and positively about the person who died without eulogising them. • Mention any arrangements already in place, including for those needing support. • Acknowledge that not everyone will be feeling sad and that is OK. • Allow a break in the timetable for pupils to process the news and take a little time-out. • Signpost to AH Pastoral/ Year Leaders as the following areas of support (not exhaustive) <i>via MS Teams or individual phone calls of support from most appropriate member of the Pastoral Team.</i> • (A template letter to parents/carers is provided (in the appendices). • Child Bereavement UK website provides information for parents to help them discuss a death with their children. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They may also be directed to guided support from Child Bereavement UK's Helpline on 0800 02 888 40 or Live Chat on the website, available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday/ Renew Counselling or support with educational psychologists from Essex critical response team. 		
Area	Protocol - advice	Responsibility	Timeline
3. Communications to staff, governors, students and parents	<p>Decide when and how the news will be shared with the school community.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff meeting am. script used by HT. or email. Their team should be told first before a DG- email. Governors - phone chair of governors - email governing body - HT Essex LA- phone call - HT Students – in person - HT or email. If a child- their class and year group should be told first with tutor and YL. Parents – letter school post - HT 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HT DH AH BM 	Immediately
4. Communications to students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Year group assemblies to release information quickly to avoid rumour. or email Sixth form with Year Leaders -HT with script or email Years 9-11 with Year Leaders – HT with script or email Years 7-8 with Year Leaders HT with script. or email 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HT DH AH BM 	Day 1
Press	If the press is involved, HT liaise. Use script.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HT DH AH BM 	Day 1
Sudden/ traumatic death	In the case of sudden or traumatic death of a pupil, the school may be called upon to be a part of a multi-agency review. If this were to be the case, DSL liaise.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> DSL DDSL 	In time
Note re family liaison	The best person to liaise with the family may depend on the specific situation, relationship with the pupil/family and experience of the member of staff. The policy can reflect this and cite Headteacher/Deputy/DSL/Class Teacher/SENCO/Head of Year/Pastoral Support depending on circumstances.	HT decides	Day 1
Social media note	<p>The indiscriminate spread of news via social media may mean that some members of the school community hear the news before others.</p> <p>Consider impact of hearing the news via email/ ext. some staff will need to be telephoned.</p>		

School social media	With the family's permission - share news on school website. Agree if/ which photograph should be used (one off SIMS)	HT's PA	
Area	Protocol - advice	Responsibility	Timeline
Safe space to grieve in school set up.	<p>12. Designate a safe place and time to grieve for those who need time out. This could be done virtually through YL/Pastoral Team and MS teams (The Pastoral Hub)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be separate for adults and children. • Pastoral support available. Pastoral Team will signpost all sources of available and most age appropriate support • Tissues and water. • Pastoral Team 	AH Pastoral and F/O to arrange.	Day 1
If suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a pupil dies by suicide, Samaritans provide a Step-by-Step programme to support schools. They can be contacted on 0808 168 2528. • Essex critical response team - support. They need to be contacted and support arranged. • Papyrus. 	AH Pastoral to liaise with support of YLs.	Day 1
Temporary tribute/ book of condolence	<p>13. Bereaved young people may need time to grieve and manage overwhelming feelings, being able to leave a classroom and take time out in a safe space can be very welcome. The location for a temporary tribute/book of condolence needs to be safe, accessible and ideally where pupils can be supervised. Offer the family the opportunity to visit, if they wish to, or take photographs to share with them later.</p> <p>14. Consult with staff and pupils before removing any temporary tribute, giving notice to prepare them beforehand.</p>	HT's PA and F/O	
Funeral arrangements	<p>15. Consult the family to find out whether members of staff and/or students are welcome to attend.</p> <p>16. Will students/ staff be involved in choosing flowers or organising a collection?</p> <p>17. Identify the practicalities of issues such as staff cover to allow all those wishing to attend the funeral to do so. (For some circumstances, it may be appropriate to close the school, for others, it may not).</p> <p>18. Consider any arrangements for students attending the funeral, and how they will be supported/supervised.</p>		
Supervision for staff leading on this in school	19. Supporting bereaved students/ staff can be very stressful for staff who may already be struggling with their own reactions and emotions. At certain points in time, some members of staff may be more vulnerable due to circumstances in their own lives.		

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	20. Seek advice from the team in support (Ed Psychs at ESSEX critical response team available for supervisions) remote support available		
Area	Protocol - advice	Responsibility	Timeline
Memorial/ permanent tribute	21. Consult the family of the person who died about any plans for a memorial, assembly or other tribute. A more permanent memorial (a tree, a special garden, a piece of artwork, a bench) may be appropriate, but in future the removal, relocation or replacement will need to be managed sensitively.		
Return to school/work	22. Most grieving pupils do not need a 'bereavement expert', they need the support of familiar and trusted adults. School, with its familiar environment and routines, can be a place of comfort for a bereaved young person. 23. It can be helpful to meet with the pupil and their family/carers to establish what has happened and to discuss their return to school. This could be a familiar adult, such as the Assistant Headteacher , Class Teacher , Form Tutor , SENCO, a member of the pastoral team or it could be the Year Leader. 24. Consider a 'time-out' card, a non-verbal signal or message. 25. How will this be communicated to all staff?		

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Last Amended: March 2022	Committee Responsible for Review: Staff & Student Matters	
Last Approved: December 2020	Date of Next Review: March 2024	Model: Child Bereavement UK and CCHS

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