ROOK'S NEST ACADEMY

Bereavement Policy

Approved by:	S. Brooks	**Date:**	September 26
Last reviewed on:	September 26		
Next review due by:	September 27		

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1. Aims

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how our school will respond to a death in our school community
- Set out a plan for communicating deaths in a timely manner that balances our school community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased
- Identify best practices for supporting pupils and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the governing board
- Provide a roadmap and framework for pupils or staff returning to school following bereavement

2. Roles and responsibilities

- Designated safeguarding lead: Mrs S Brooks
- Mental Health Lead: Ms K.Dawson
- SENCO: Mrs S Brooks
- E.P services, school E.P

2.1 The headteacher

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for delegating any responsibilities under this policy to other members of staff.

The headteacher will:

- Liaise with the family of the deceased
- Where appropriate, communicate details of a death to pupils and staff as set out in this policy, or activate communication teams
- Respond to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Participate in any multi-agency reviews as requested
- Lead reintegration meetings for pupils or staff returning to school after a bereavement
- Arrange for monitoring and support of the pastoral support team or any individual staff members who are supporting bereaved pupils or staff

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2.2 Pastoral support staff

The pastoral support team has responsibility for monitoring and supporting bereaved pupils and staff members (including before their bereavement, where relevant – for example, in the case of terminal illness).

The pastoral support team will:

- Provide direct support to bereaved pupils and staff
- Signpost to external support available to bereaved pupils and staff including E.P services
- Organise safe spaces for bereaved members of the school community to take a time out
- Organise memorials, such as temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages
- Arrange for the attendance and supervision of pupils at funerals (where permitted)
- Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved pupils or staff and ensure they're supported on those days
- Provide additional support during significant transitions – for example, when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school

2.3 Governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and supporting the headteacher.

The governing board will:

- Undertake regular monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them, have regular catch-ups with the headteacher or pastoral team.
- Monitor the headteacher's emotional wellbeing – through regular meetings between the headteacher and chair.
- Assist the headteacher, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Where necessary, arrange for another staff member to take the lead if the headteacher is not available to respond to a death immediately

3. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

Supporting pupils and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported.

- Staff will be supported by the E.P services and governors with mental health experience.
- The ELSA has received training on bereavement.

4. Immediate actions following a death

4.1 Clarifying information and the wishes of the family

- The head teacher or if absent a member of the SLT will contact the family to confirm news of a death and determine the wishes of the family in terms of what can be shared with the rest of the school community and how.
- News of the death will not be shared until the family has been contacted. Planned and respectful assemblies will be carried out with children in key stage 2.

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4.2 Sharing the news with staff

- The headteacher and or SLT will hold a meeting with all staff and then telephone any absent staff to share any news of a bereavement.

4.3 Sharing the news with pupils

- The head teacher and or member of SLT will hold an assembly or speak to specific classes to share the news of any bereavement . Pastoral support and the thrive room will be available for children requiring 1:1 support.

4.4 Informing parents/carers

- Parents will be informed by the school text messaging system and by letter. Any school closures will be shared as soon as possible through the head teacher vlog, school text messaging services and through a letter sent home to specific classes.

4.5 Responding to specific causes of death

Some deaths need to be handled more sensitively due to their potential to cause fear, anger or imitation.

- If the death is a result of a suicide the school will seek advice from outside agencies including E.P and Samaritans to support if this happens.
- If the death is due to homicide or family violence the school will seek advice from outside agencies including E.P and Child Bereavement UK (which you can find at the bottom of this page)
- If the death is due to contagious disease, we will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team

4.6 Responding to the media

In the event that a death that affects the school raises media interest, we will respond in the following manner:

- The headteacher will respond to requests from the media, other staff members will be made aware but not respond to media requests, and should instead refer enquiries to the head teacher.

5. Follow-up actions and support following a death

The pastoral team will continue to provide ongoing support to staff and children with signposts to outside agencies including STAR bereavement and Winston Wish if required.

5.1 Support for pupils and staff

Pupils and staff may require support to grieve in the initial days and weeks following a death.

The pastoral team and mental health lead will continue to provide ongoing support to staff and pupils.

5.2 Tributes and condolences

- A book/box of memorial and the children's suggestions will be considered, for example a colour day is held annually to celebrate the life of a past member of staff.
- Any religious/cultural considerations will be taken into account as appropriate and respected.

5.3 Funerals

We will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

- Whether members of staff and/or pupils are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service
- How condolences should be made and how staff and pupils can contribute

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If staff are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so staff will be covered and in the event of all staff attending, the authority and governors will be contacted with request for the Academy to close for the funeral day.

If pupils are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so parents will be encouraged to contact the academy and C (circumstance) will be recorded in the attendance register. Pupils will attend with parent/carer not school staff.

6. Support for pupils returning to school after bereavement

Whether a pupil has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

6.1 Reintegration meeting

The headteacher and or Inclusion Manager will meet with the bereaved pupil and their parents/carers to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the pupil is emotionally ready to return to the classroom either full time or with adjustments to the timetable to allow for a phased return
- Address any concerns the pupil and their parents/carers have about the return to school
- Consult with the pupil about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant)
- Open lines of communication between the pupil and relevant staff to ensure support should the pupil feel overwhelmed
- Open lines of communication between the school and the pupil's parents/carers to coordinate support
- Consider any additional support needed for a pupil who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability

6.2 Ongoing support

- We will maintain regular contact with the pupil's parents/carers to monitor how the pupil is coping
- We acknowledge significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult and will ensure additional support is available at these times.
- We know that grief may impact a pupil's progress and affect their behaviour. To manage this, we will provide pastoral support and link to our behavior policy.
- We will take care to manage changes for bereaved pupils by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions

7. Support for staff returning to school after bereavement

Whether a staff member has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

7.1 Reintegration meeting

The head teacher will meet with the bereaved staff member to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the staff member is ready to return to work and the best way to make that return (e.g., a phased return to work or a temporary change in duties)

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- Address any concerns the staff member may have about the return to school
- Consult with the staff member about how or even if they want their pupils and colleagues to know of the death (where relevant)
- Set guidelines for communication between the staff member and their line manager to monitor and support the staff member

7.2 Ongoing support

We acknowledge that grief can have an impact on a staff member's physical and mental health, which can then go on to impact their performance.

We also recognise that grieving is highly personal and that there can't be a one-size-fits-all solution for monitoring and supporting a bereaved person.

We will work with each individual to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed Sep 26

At every review, it will be approved by the governing body and head teacher

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Child protection/safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix: useful contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	• Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 • https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us
Winston's Wish	• Helpline: 08088 020 021 • https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/
Cruse Bereavement Care	• Helpline: 0808 808 1677 • https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us
Mind	• Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393 • Further contacts: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/

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