

GRIFFITHSTOWN



Bereavement Policy

2025 - 2026

Griffithstown Primary School

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BEREAVEMENT POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Griffithstown Primary School is committed to supporting pupils, staff and families who experience bereavement or significant loss. We recognise that bereavement is a deeply personal experience and that children and adults may respond in different ways and at different times. As a school, we aim to respond with compassion, sensitivity and understanding, within a **trauma-informed, whole-school approach** that prioritises emotional safety, inclusion and wellbeing.

This policy reflects Welsh Government statutory guidance on safeguarding and emotional and mental wellbeing, and aligns with the values of the Curriculum for Wales and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

2. Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

Provide a clear, consistent and compassionate approach to supporting bereaved pupils, staff and families.

Ensure that responses to bereavement are **trauma-informed** and avoid re-traumatisation.

Promote emotional wellbeing and inclusion so that all members of the school community feel safe, supported and valued.

Clarify roles and responsibilities for staff, governors and the wider school community. Strengthen partnership working with parents, carers and external support services where appropriate.

3. Legal and Statutory Context

This policy has been developed with regard to the following Welsh legislation and statutory guidance:

Education Act 2002 – duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners.

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – emphasis on wellbeing, early intervention and multi-agency working.

Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government, 2022) – statutory safeguarding guidance for schools.

Framework on Embedding a Whole-School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being – statutory guidance that schools must have regard to.

Curriculum for Wales – Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience.

*Appendix 1: Five Stages of Grief

4. Understanding Bereavement and Loss

Bereavement may include the death of:

A parent, carer or sibling

A wider family member or close friend

A member of staff or pupil within the school community

Loss may also include experiences such as separation, serious illness or other significant changes. We recognise bereavement as a potential **adverse childhood experience** that can affect learning, behaviour, attendance and emotional wellbeing.

5. A Trauma-Informed Approach

Griffithstown Primary School adopts a trauma-informed approach to bereavement support by:

Prioritising **emotional and physical safety**.

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Building trusting, consistent relationships with pupils and families.
Recognising that behaviour may be a communication of distress.
Offering choice, voice and flexibility where possible.
Avoiding assumptions and respecting individual and cultural differences in grief responses.

6. Supporting Bereaved Pupils

Support for pupils may include:

- Identifying a trusted adult or key contact within school.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to talk, if and when they wish.
- Offering flexibility with routines, learning tasks and expectations.
- Monitoring emotional wellbeing, behaviour, attendance and progress over time.
- Liaising with parents/carers to ensure consistent support.
- Making referrals to external services where concerns are significant or ongoing.

Support will be graduated and proportionate, recognising that grief may resurface at different stages of a child's development.

7. Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff may also experience bereavement and loss, or be affected by supporting others. The school will:

- Treat bereaved staff with compassion, respect and confidentiality.
- Provide flexibility where possible, including phased returns or adjustments to duties.
- Offer access to wellbeing support and signposting to external services if required.
- Encourage a supportive staff culture where seeking help is normalised.

8. Working with Parents and Carers

Griffithstown Primary School values strong partnerships with parents and carers. We will:

- Communicate sensitively and respectfully following a bereavement.
- Agree, where appropriate, how information will be shared within the school community.
- Involve parents/carers in planning support for their child.
- Provide information about external bereavement and wellbeing services.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and ensuring a compassionate, consistent response.

Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

Advises on safeguarding and wellbeing concerns linked to bereavement.

Liaises with external agencies where required.

Health and Wellbeing Lead

Advises on wellbeing support and guidance from TIS training.

All Staff

Be alert to signs of distress or change following bereavement.

Respond with empathy and follow agreed procedures.

Share concerns appropriately, in line with safeguarding guidance.

Governing Body

Ensures this policy is in place, reviewed regularly and aligned with statutory guidance.

10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information about bereavement will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis, in line with safeguarding guidance and data protection requirements.

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11. Training and Review

Staff will receive training and guidance on emotional wellbeing, safeguarding and trauma-informed practice.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required, to reflect changes in guidance or school needs.

12. Useful Support and Resources

Adult Mental Health Links: [66cf3598616abf67e384276a_Mental Health Support Resources.pdf](66cf3598616abf67e384276a_Mental%20Health%20Support%20Resources.pdf)

Pupil Mental Health Links: [67406ca52056e1259c22b3a5_In-school Wellbeing provisions- pupils.pdf](67406ca52056e1259c22b3a5_In-school%20Wellbeing%20provisions-%20pupils.pdf)

Occupational Health Referral (line manager): <https://forms.office.com/r/2ycLKJTUKr>

Occupational Health contact: Joyce Round – (contact school office or LA for her email details)

Trade unions: contact your specific representative or office

Appendix 1: Five Stages of Grief

What are the five stages of grief?

Denial

Feeling numb is common in the early days after a bereavement. Some people at first carry on as if nothing has happened. Even if we know with our heads that someone has died it can be hard to believe that someone important is not coming back. It's also very common to feel the presence of someone who has died, hear their voice or even see them.

Anger

Anger is a completely natural emotion, and very natural after someone dies. Death can seem cruel and unfair, especially when you feel someone has died before their time or you had plans for the future together. It's also common to feel angry towards the person who has died, or angry at ourselves for things we did or didn't do before their death.

Bargaining

When we are in pain, it's sometimes hard to accept that there's nothing we can do to change things. Bargaining is when we start to make deals with ourselves, or perhaps with God if we're religious. We want to believe that if we act in particular ways we will feel better. It's also common to find ourselves going over and over things that happened in the past and asking a lot of 'what if' questions, wishing we could go back and change things in the hope things could have turned out differently.

Depression

Sadness and longing are what we think of most often when we think about grief. This pain can be very intense and come in waves over many months or years. Life can feel like it no longer holds any meaning which can be very scary.

Acceptance

Grief comes in waves and it can feel like nothing will ever be right again. But gradually most people find that the pain eases, and it is possible to accept what has happened. We may never 'get over' the death of someone precious, but we can learn to live again, while keeping the memories of those we have lost close to us.