



Leigham Primary School Bereavement Policy

Supporting Our School Community Through Loss and Grief

1. Policy Statement

At Leigham Primary School, we recognise that bereavement, including anticipatory grief, affects every individual differently and can have a significant impact on emotional wellbeing, learning, behaviour, and performance. We are committed to supporting staff, students, and families through loss with sensitivity, compassion, and flexibility. We are also committed to respecting and honouring the diverse cultural, religious, and spiritual beliefs of all members of our school community during times of loss.

2. Aims and Objectives

- To provide a safe and supportive environment for the school community to express and manage grief.
- To ensure that bereavement and anticipatory grief are acknowledged appropriately and sensitively.
- To outline roles, responsibilities, and procedures for managing grief-related situations.
- To promote effective communication and coordination among staff, families, and external support services.

3. Definitions

- Bereavement: The period of mourning and adjustment following the death of a loved one.
- Anticipatory Grief: The emotional and psychological process experienced before a loss occurs, such as during terminal illness.
- Critical Incident: A sudden or unexpected death or event that impacts the wider school community.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Lead the school's response to bereavement and anticipatory grief.
- Coordinate support and resources for affected individuals.
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g., bereavement charities, CAMHS, counselling services).
- Maintains records of support and referrals

Compassionate Champions

- Act as a point of contact for bereavement-related concerns.
- Develops individual support plans as needed.

Compassionate Friends

- Trained staff who offer a listening ear and emotional support to pupils and colleagues experiencing grief.

Compassionate Buddies

- Selected and trained older pupils who support peers through empathy and active listening.
- Assist in safe spaces like the Starfish Club under staff supervision.

All Staff

- Show empathy and understanding.
- Report concerns appropriately.
- Use compassionate, age-appropriate language.

5. Support for Students

Anticipatory Support

- Regular check-ins with a trusted adult.
- Liaison with families for consistency.
- Access to emotional support (e.g., ELSA, nurture groups, Compassionate Friends, Buddies).

Following a Death

- Acknowledge loss appropriately.
- Offer individual or group support.
- Adapt academic expectations.
- Provide grief resources.
- Close contact and communication between adults at home and in school.

Starfish Club

- Lunchtime drop-in offering emotional support and quiet activities.
- Supervised by trained staff and Compassionate Buddies.

Remembrance Activities

- With family consent: memory books, messages, safe candle lighting.
- The school maintains a Memory Tree for reflection and remembrance.
- All remembrance activities will be planned with cultural sensitivity and in consultation with families.

6. Support for Families

- Maintain open, empathetic communication.
- Offer resources and information.
- Involve families in how loss is acknowledged.

- Provide flexibility in attendance and engagement.
- Respect and accommodate the cultural, religious, and spiritual beliefs of each family when responding to a bereavement or planning memorials.

7. Support for Staff

- Offer regular check-ins and compassionate leave.
- Refer to wellbeing or counselling support.
- Adjust duties where needed.
- Compassionate Friends also support colleagues.
- Provide bereavement awareness training.

8. Responding to a Critical Incident

- Activate the Critical Incident Plan.
- Ensure accurate, sensitive communication.
- Notify parents/carers appropriately.
- Offer grief support with full respect for cultural, religious, and spiritual practices.

9. Curriculum Considerations

- Address grief sensitively in PSHE- through the use of the Jigsaw Scheme - and pastoral care.
- Consider triggers and anniversaries.
- Plan curriculum with empathy.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed every two years in consultation with staff and governors, and updated based on community feedback.

11. Key Contacts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headteacher and Bereavement Lead: Samantha Barker - Pastoral Support: Cathy Dowsett - SENDCO: Suzanne Perkin - Compassionate Friends Coordinators and Buddies Leads: Gemma Tucker and Shana Marsh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External Support Agencies: St Luke's Hospice, Jeremiah's Journey, Winston's Wish, Child Bereavement UK, Cruse Bereavement Support
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Leigham Primary School works in partnership with local organisations such as St Luke's Hospice and Jeremiah's Journey to seek advice and support for staff, pupils and families experiencing grief. These trusted partners provide specialist guidance and are part of our extended network of care.

12. Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion

Leigham Primary School celebrates diversity and recognises that grief and bereavement are experienced differently across cultures and faiths. Staff will approach all situations with openness and sensitivity, avoiding assumptions and always engaging with families to understand how best to support their needs. We aim to create a school environment where everyone feels seen, respected, and cared for during times of loss.