



Bereavement Policy

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Bereavement Policy

Introduction

The death of a student, a close relative of a student, or a member of staff will be a distressing and sad time for staff and students alike. In some instances, the experience can even be traumatic. For some students this may be their first real contact with the death of someone known to them. For teachers, it can be the first time they have needed to respond professionally to the shock and sadness experienced by those in their care.

When bereavement occurs, it can affect a variety of people, not just the family concerned. We aim to ensure that the appropriate members of the school community are given sufficient support and advice at such times.

The management of a bereavement situation will be the collective responsibility of members of the Bereavement Support Team (BST) under the guidance of the SLT (Senior Leadership Team).

Members of the BST are:

- Mr Withers – Vice Principal
- Jo Hair – Pupil Welfare Officer
- Emily Miskimmin – Pupil Wellbeing Officer
- Mrs Hughes – Head of Music
- Mrs Reid – SEN

The Aim

The main aim of the policy is to ensure that all students and staff faced with bereavement are provided with a level of quality support, which is commensurate with their needs and wishes.

This support includes the opportunity for them to express their feelings in a safe environment, to be given space and time to come to terms with their loss and to access specialist support if necessary. Furthermore, the situation for the individual and the school community will be monitored over an appropriate period of time.

Death of a Close Relative of a Student

Depending on the closeness of the relationship between the student and the deceased the degree of support required may vary. In general, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Upon receiving news of the death of a close relative of a student, the school will give consideration to which member of the pastoral team or BST should be the lead liaison for the pupil and family in the immediate aftermath.
- This member of the pastoral team will discuss the proposed approach by school with appropriate family member. They will also inform VP and discuss action to be taken.
- Relevant staff will be informed of the situation and be given an indication of the length of absence (if appropriate) of the student.
- Advice may be given to staff, by pastoral team, on how to support the student on his/her return to school.
- It may also be appropriate to speak to classmates and/or school friends on how best they might help in supporting the student on his/her return to school.
- Consideration is also given as to whether or not the school should be represented at the funeral. VP should also carefully consider whether appropriate members of staff might visit or contact the family during their period of mourning. During this contact it should be established which member of staff the pupil wishes to liaise with upon their return.
- This member of staff will meet with student on his/her return to school and offer appropriate support where required.
- The SIMS profile of the pupil will be updated to add a 'quick note' that informs staff of the bereavement.
- BST to regularly monitor student over the next few months.

Where the pupil is in KS4 or above it may be appropriate to liaise with CCEA UCAS etc. Such actions will be determined jointly by the VP, PSO, Exam Officer/Senco

Death of a Student

- On hearing of the death of a student the Principal should meet immediately with the BST to plan the school's response.
- School will also contact EA and their critical incident management team.
- The Principal will inform the Chair of the Board of Governors.
- Decisions as to which group(s) of pupils should be informed will need to be made. E.g. classmates, close friends, year group, friends of brothers and sisters of the deceased.
- With great sensitivity, one of the above staff should be assigned to ascertain the circumstances of the death. Where possible he/she should discuss with a close family member how the school will be dealing with the bereavement.
- As soon as possible the Principal/VP should inform all staff about the student's death. Staff should also be given details as to which groups of students will be informed, and when and how this is to occur.
- They should be advised of the details that the students will be told.
- School will consider carefully what announcement might be made via social media/website to the wider community and local media. Staff and students should be advised not to speak to the media or post any comments on social media that could be misconstrued and cause further grief for the bereaved family.
- It should be strongly emphasised that normal school routine will be maintained as much as possible.
- Staff should also be asked to be vigilant and provide immediate information to BST about students who may be showing signs of distress and who may need support.
- Pastoral Care staff should be made available to offer support. Other professionals such as the school nurse, PSO, school counsellor or counsellors from EA may also be asked to assist.
- The Principal, in discussion with the BST, should decide as to whether appropriate members of staff (2 persons) should visit the family of the deceased.
- The Principal will also decide as to which members of staff and which pupils should attend the funeral. In this matter, the wishes of the family must be taken fully into account.
- Obviously it is essential that the school has adequate staff to supervise the students not attending the funeral. This may limit the number of staff who can attend.
- Should the death be of interest to the media then the Principal needs to formulate any response in conjunction with the EA.

Where appropriate the exams officer should inform relevant external groups such as UCAS, EA, CCEA of the death. It may be less traumatic for parents if results etc. were sent to the school, in the first instance. If time permits this should be discussed with the family.

Death of a Member of Staff

- On hearing of the death of a member of staff the Principal should meet with members of the SLT and BST to plan the school's response. At this meeting the method of informing other staff will be decided.
- Decisions as to how and when pupils will be informed will also need to be made.
- The school's EA Officer will also have to be informed and consulted as to how the school will deal with the bereavement.
- The Principal will inform the Chair of the Board of Governors.
- Adequate support for staff and pupils must be available. The expertise of the BST Pastoral Care staff, school counsellor, school nurse should be made available to provide support for pupils.
- In general staff members will be able to support each other but it may be appropriate to consult the EA's Staff Welfare Officer to provide more specialist resources.
- Attendance of staff and pupils at the funeral should, where possible, be discussed with the deceased's family.
- The Principal should ensure that as many staff as possible are able to attend the funeral. This may involve the school having to put special timetabling arrangements in place.

Death of a Close Relative of a Member of Staff

- The death of a partner, child or parent of a member of staff needs to be dealt with sensitively. It is essential that the member of staff is supported throughout the immediate period of mourning and on his/her return to school.
- In the event of the death of a partner or child, the Principal must meet with other members of the SLT and BST to decide how other members of staff are to be informed. (If e-mail is to be used to give any details, e.g. time of funeral, then it is essential that the staff member does not receive the e-mail.)
- The Principal should contact the staff member as soon as possible and convey his condolences and offer whatever support is appropriate.
- It is unlikely that many of the pupils will have to be informed but if so the Principal, in conjunction with the SLT will decide on the appropriate method(s) to be used.
- Attendance of Staff (and any pupils where appropriate) at the funeral should, where possible, be discussed with the staff member. If pupils are attending the funeral they should be closely supervised and supported by staff.
- The Principal should ensure that an appropriate number of staff who wish to attend the funeral are allowed to attend. This may involve putting special timetable arrangements into place. It is important however that the school should operate as normally as is possible.
- On his/her return to work the SLT and other close colleagues must ensure that the member of staff is given appropriate support. The nature and degree of this support will vary depending on the circumstances.

Pre-Bereavement Support

In some situations, it is known in advance that a death is going to occur.

- In cases where this is an adult within the school community, individual conversations will be held with the Principal in terms of support, information exchange and practical considerations.
- When the expected death is of a child or a member of a child's family we will give consideration to which member of the pastoral team or BST should be the lead liaison for the pupil and family in the immediate aftermath.
- This member of the pastoral team will discuss the proposed approach by school with appropriate family member. They will also inform VP and discuss action to be taken.
- Ensure that all relevant adults are clear about what information has and needs to be shared with the pupil.
- Explore the possibility of external support options and signposting to other organisations.
- If appropriate, consider and reflect on how to communicate with the wider school community, for example the pupil's peers.

Grief Education

- The role of school extends from helping children cope with loss to challenging negative views associated with death and normalising grief.
- School will aim to normalise grief through appropriate thematic units delivered proactively rather than reactively.
- Lessons on grief will be delivered in the KS3 RE curriculum. Wider school events will also take place throughout the school year.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

After a bereavement, the school will review what was done at each stage and will evaluate the actions taken to see what was effective and what might have been done better. This will enable the school to plan for the future.

It may also lead to additional supports being put in place.

APPENDICES

1. Parental Instructions
2. External Resources

APPENDIX 1

Dear Parent:

The death of a close relative of a student will be a distressing and sad time for students and their family. We will support your child during this difficult time in school.

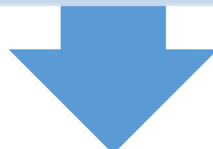
Please inform the school office

This will allow us to inform the relevant staff such as Form Tutor and Head of Year. It will also allow us to account for any period of absence from school.



A member of our pastoral team will be in touch

This team is dedicated to supporting the pupils through this difficult time. They will contact you and hope that some details can be shared regarding funeral arrangements as well as future planning for returning to school.



Ongoing support

The Bereavement Support Team will provide ongoing support for your child during their time at Bangor Academy. This may look different for each child depending on their own journey and our team will remain sensitive to this full range of needs. Where appropriate we will bring pupils together in school who have a shared experience of bereavement as a support to each other.



Types of Support

School can offer support through counselling, either through an external company who come into school each week, or with our trained staff such as School Nurse or Pupil Support Officer. School can also help you should you need assisting local agencies who support bereaved families.

APPENDIX 2

Useful resources

1. **Marie Curie:** <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/support-directory/bereavement-and-funerals>
2. **Winston's Wish:** www.winstonswish.org Support information and guidance for bereaved children, young people and for those caring for bereaved families.
3. **Cruse Bereavement Care:** www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk Support for anyone who has been bereaved.
4. **Hope Again:** <http://hopeagain.org.uk/> A website for young people who have been bereaved.
5. **Papyrus:** <https://papyrus-uk.org/> Support and advice for young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person.
6. **Samaritans:** <http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/supporting-schools> A range of guidance and support for schools.
7. **Young Minds:** <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
8. **Cancer Fund for Children:** <https://cancerfundforchildren.com/>

Inclusion and accessibility statement

This policy applies to all pupils in Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College. We at Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College are committed to inclusion and supplying all our school publications in an accessible format.

Should any pupil parent or carer require support in interpreting or understanding this policy school will provide guidance in partnership with the Inclusion and Diversity Service.

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact us on policies@bangoracademy.org.uk