

Copleston High School - Bereavement Policy Summary

Aim: To provide a framework for pastoral care of pupil(s) and school community in event of loss through bereavement.

A) For bereavement experienced by one pupil, or a small family group

Information should be passed to child's Head of Year, who will co-ordinate support, including

- Checking of information
- Informing staff, who work with pupil, so that hurtful comments are avoided
- Consideration of need to tell (or not tell) peers
- Agreeing who will take responsibility for follow-up with pupil and, if appropriate, family.
- Consideration of need to involve an outside agency &/or use additional resources

B) For bereavement experienced by a larger group within school, as in case of death of a pupil or staff member.

Headteacher will designate a senior member of staff (with a deputy) to co-ordinate support systems. This is likely to include

- Checking of information
- Informing staff
- Consideration of what to tell (or not tell) pupils and when/how to tell them
- Agreeing who will take responsibility for follow-up with pupils and, if appropriate, families.
- Consideration of need to involve an outside agency
- Consideration of need to modify timetables temporarily
- Consideration of use of additional resources
- Handling of Press, after a traumatic death/accident

C) For Staff at any point - What to Say

- Take your lead from what pupil knows and says.
- Express your sadness about what has happened.
- NEVER say 'I know how you feel' - It is not possible to put yourself in another's shoes, even though you have empathy for pupil.
- Allow child to express feelings of anger, guilt, sadness.
- Listen - repeatedly - even if it is same story each time.
- Talk about dead person.
- Be factual. Use word 'dead', rather than any euphemism.
- Be prepared to respond to questions about 'death', 'cremation', 'burial', 'funeral', 'life after death' and be honest that different people believe different things.
- Let pupil grieve in his/her own way.

D) Long-Term Support of the Bereaved

If any behaviour apparently related to bereavement continues for several months, professional evaluation will be required. All staff *must* alert Head of Year to any concerns.

E) Exploring Loss through the Curriculum

Nearly every subject area will study issues, which will require sensitive handling and provide opportunities to explore aspects of loss. Care should be taken to allow for discussion appropriate to age and personal expressions of concern.

F) Caring for Staff who support the Bereaved

Any staff member, who supports a bereaved person, should share their feelings with a colleague, while preserving confidentiality, as appropriate. All colleagues need to be particularly sensitive to needs of those performing supportive role.

Resources to Support the Bereaved

<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/PDFs/SupportChildGrief.pdf> is very helpful.

Appendices 1 & 2 offer advice on Long-Term Support of the Bereaved and Exploring Loss through the Curriculum