



Saint Edmund's Catholic Primary School
'Together we learn and grow through worship and celebration'

Bereavement and Loss

Committee responsible for policy	Community Committee
Approved by Committee /FGB	January 2017
Statutory/Non-statutory	Non-STATUTORY
Frequency of Review	Free to determine - 4 YEARS
Date of last review	February 2017
Date of next review	February 2021
Purpose of policy	To enable staff to support children and colleagues at times of loss and/or bereavement in the context of a Catholic school community.
Consultation	Partner Catholic schools School Community – parent governors and staff.
Links to other policies	PSHE RE Safeguarding Science

St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School

'Together we learn and grow through worship and celebration'

Bereavement and Loss Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Catholic School exists to provide an education that is God centred. It is based on the belief that everything of worth comes from God and builds on the faith already established by the family through Baptism.

Together we grow through worship and celebration.

We encourage our children to develop their spiritual and academic potential and individual talents. We nurture qualities of honesty, tolerance, forgiveness, caring and patience. All are made welcome and the worth of every individual is recognised, valued and celebrated.

Underlying Principles in Addressing Bereavement and Loss

At St Edmund's Catholic Primary School we

- Believe that loss is a natural part of life and is experienced in many different ways from birth to death.
- Need to allow ourselves the freedom to grieve and opportunities to talk freely about our feelings without fear or ridicule.
- Recognise loss experienced by others, care about their loss and seeks to support them in their grief.
- We seek to create a Christian understanding of hope and celebration where all members are valued.
- Aim to develop strategies to enable children to cope with crises or imminent need before they occur.

Our policy is intended to reflect the ethos of our school and contribute positively to the emotional health and well-being of our school community.

Aims of the policy

- For all staff to have a clear and informed understanding of the underlying principles of bereavement.
- To ensure that all staff and pupils faced with a bereavement or loss are provided with appropriate support.
- Where bereavement is complex we will sign post families to relevant agencies/ professionals.
- To ensure that all staff can respond appropriately when pupils of the school experience bereavement/loss.
- To recognise the wider impact bereavement may have on the school community.

In the event of a sudden or unexpected bereavement within our school community staff should

- Refer/talk to the Head Teacher as soon as is practicable.
- In the absence of the HT refer to the Deputy Head/ Inclusion Manager /member of leadership team.

- The school should also inform the Parish Priest at the soonest appropriate time.

The Head Teacher should then advise the leadership team of the situation and outline the circumstances and support that is available for the individual staff/pupil as appropriate.

Immediate School Response

- A phone call to express sympathy and offer support.
- A home visit if appropriate.

Continuing communication/ support for the family will be vital and can be expressed by:

- Passing on verbal support through family and friends.
- Where the bereavement is complex the Head Teacher may contact the family providing addresses and telephone numbers of support agencies.
- Links can also be made between parents with similar experiences.
- Cards from the school/ prayers/ Mass cards/memory boxes.
- Supplying books and prayers for the family to use as a resource.

By addressing bereavement and loss in our school it is intended

- To give individual children strategies for coping with loss.
- To help each child recognise and appreciate loss as experienced by others.
- To create a caring environment where loss is recognised and supported.
- To ensure all children affected by the loss are supported appropriately – where a friend loses a parent they may feel vulnerable that this could happen to their parent.
- To understand that God is there to comfort them.

Strategies for Dealing with Loss that may help

Talk

- Offer reassurance and comfort.
- Recognise that loss hurts and allow children to cry.
- Encourage talk about feelings without imposing any feelings.
- Make children feel valued.
- Involve parents in discussions.
- Talk in concrete terms.
- Be honest and answer questions directly.
- Be patient and understanding.
- Listen sensitively.
- Pray with children.

Support

- Appoint an active listener to provide continuing support.
- Discuss how whole community can help.
- Identify people we can turn to for help internally and through external agencies.
- Keep personal journals, scrap books of photos, records.
- Use games and drama as a means to cope with the loss.

Celebrate

- Celebrate life of people we have lost.
- Celebrate animals or pets that have died (often a child's first experience of grief).
- Recognise strong emotions – write about them, bring in things which remind us of them.
- Collate an anthology of poems, stories, artifacts connected with the losses.

- Use drama, music, dance to explore feelings and celebrate memories.

Areas for consideration

What information...

- Is confidential to the Head Teacher?
- Can be shared with staff?
- Can be shared with the rest of the school?

Permission to divulge any information regarding the bereavement should be sought from the family in consultation with the procedures arranged and agreed by the head teacher.

What follow up support could be considered?

- Home visits.
- Notification of all parents/classes of parents.
- The appropriate use of school assemblies.
- Provision of personal time for any staff member when necessary to give them space to reflect on their own losses.

Any of the above actions concerning the family involved must be discussed and agreed sensitively with the family first.

Working with pupils

The Head Teacher will monitor the needs of all relevant pupils through class teachers and other key personnel.

Where necessary s/he will delegate responsibility as appropriate.

Monitoring/supporting these pupils can involve a number of strategies:

- A confidential record which is accessible by all relevant staff may be used to record any relevant information which will enable good communication between any external agencies.
- Opportunities can be provided for pupils to include the name of their deceased loved one within Mass, liturgies and prayers (whole school and class).
- An Individual plan to incorporate strategies such as a memory box and 1-1 support time with a trained counsellor.
- A memorial service (particularly for a pupil/staff member who has died) to mark and anniversary.
- A number of appropriate books have been purchased by the school which can be read with the class, a group or an individual child.

Where a parent has a terminal illness and the children are aware of the imminence of the situation, the school will seek to work with the family to support the children through the process and what will happen next

Where appropriate the school will work with outside agencies to ensure the family and children are well supported whilst trying to bring some kind of routine back to their lives.

As previously stated any actions concerning the family involved must be discussed and agreed sensitively with the family first, particularly with regard to confidentiality and adhering to the family's wishes.

Supporting staff who have experienced a bereavement

The Head Teacher will remain the main the point of contact for any member of staff. The Head Teacher will put strategies into place to provide support which may include,

- Provision of time to be absent from work
- Removal of burden of routine work where appropriate.
- Counselling service – see Staff Handbook for details and numbers to call

Curriculum provision

Within the Science, PSHE and Religious Education schemes of work the children will be taught at an age appropriate level about bereavement and loss.

In addition to the above curriculum provision, on a daily basis all classes have opportunity for circle time, reflection, prayer and meditation.

Suggested Resources

Answers	John Foster (Collins Ed)
Badgers Parting Gift	Susan Varley
Emma Says Goodbye	Carolyn Nystrom
Mog says Goodbye	Judith Kerr
Dragonflies and Butterflies	

We have a counsellor and three Emotional Literacy Support Assistants who can all support children as they come to terms with their loss. We also have access to the Education Psychology service through the Local Authority who can counsel and support class teachers in how to support children who may need their specialist help.

The intent of this policy is to provide guidelines to support the children and adults in the school but any individuals who need help, please ask and know that we are here as a community to share support with each other. Everyone deals with bereavement differently and we want to make sure that people feel they can ask and will receive assistance.