

# Bereavement policy

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## SECTION 1: Introduction and aims

### Introduction

We understand that bereavement is faced by members of our school community at different times and that when the loss is of a member of our school community, such as a pupil or staff member, it can be particularly difficult. Both pupils and staff will need to be supported in the event of a bereavement or other significant losses in the course of their lives while they are at school. It will be important therefore, where appropriate, to keep school open as normal to allow pupils and staff to access the support they require.

This policy will provide guidelines to be followed after a bereavement. The aim is to be supportive to both pupils and adults, and for staff to have greater confidence and be better equipped to cope when bereavement happens. Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and this policy has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances.

Kettlethorpe High School is committed to the emotional health and well-being of its staff and pupils. We are dedicated to the continual development of a 'healthy school'. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that support and prepare pupils for coping with separation or loss of a loved one, either through death or divorce.

The policy is based on practice that has grown over time as the school has previously experienced bereavements, and provides a resource as a working document to support our community.

### **The main objectives of the policy will be to:**

- create a framework for all staff to give guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately with the bereavement,
- support pupils and/or members of staff before (where applicable), during and after bereavement,
- enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between members of staff, pupils, the family/carers and the community,
- minimise the disruption to school,
- to identify key staff within school and the Governing Body/Local Authority,
- to have clear expectations about the way school will respond to a death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all.

## SECTION 2: Death of a pupil or member of staff

### **Following a Bereavement:**

We believe that children and adults alike have the right to:

- be given space and time to grieve,
- be given support from whichever source is deemed the most appropriate – if possible, of their own choice,
- encounter a caring environment in which they feel safe to demonstrate grief without fear of judgement.

We recognise that:

- grief may not always be apparent to the onlooker, but its invisibility makes it no less real,
- differing religions/cultures view death and bereavement from different perspectives and all viewpoints should be taken into consideration and given equal value in the school environment,
- the death of a child has huge repercussions beyond the immediate teaching/pastoral team of that child and every effort should be taken to inform and deal sensitively with the far reaching contacts.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The designated person within the school who has overall responsibility for support and liaison in event of a death or traumatic loss is the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

His/her responsibilities are:

- policy development and review, involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies,
- implementing the policy and reflecting on its effectiveness in practice,
- using the expertise within the school and sharing the responsibilities,
- establishing and co-ordinating links with external agencies,
- cross-phase liaison with other primary or secondary school,
- accessing and co-ordinating training and support for staff.

Their responsibilities are:

- to contribute to generating and updating the policy,
- to support the Headteacher in overseeing the way in which bereavement is managed,
- to support the Headteacher in overseeing the way in which bereavement is tackled in the curriculum.

### **Notification of a Bereavement**

The school may be notified of a bereavement in a number of ways. Upon notification of the death of a pupil past experience has shown that if death occurs parents usually let the school know directly. Any call of this nature should put them through to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. Where death occurs in the holidays or at weekends the parents will obviously contact whoever they can. In that instance, the member of staff who takes the call will immediately contact the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, that person will then assume responsibility for the dissemination of the information

See Appendix B: Checklist of Things to Consider

### **Informing Staff**

It is important to agree, with the parents, before the school can take on the role of informing concerned parties within, or outside, the school community. Evidence from schools has shown that parents are often happy to have this burden taken away from them, as they have many people unconnected with the school to contact. There can be no definitive list of people to contact and, therefore, it will be different for each pupil. The school should ensure that all people who are close to the pupil are told in a sensitive and supportive manner rather than risk them hearing it 'on the grapevine'. The school needs to ensure it does not add to the sorrow by leaving people feeling marginalised.

The following should be considered:

- arrange a staff meeting as soon as practicable and identify absent staff.
- if a death has occurred in a holiday period make sure that all staff are informed. Use of the Emergency and Business Continuity Plan to contact all staff.
- tell the story of what happened leading up to the death.
- give a factual explanation of how the death occurred.

- be prepared for obvious upset and feelings of anger/guilt. People may connect the incident to their own personal experience of bereavement, so feelings about past bereavements may need to be discussed. This is perfectly natural.
- to enable absent staff to feel part of a caring team, arrangements should be made to inform them over the telephone if a personal visit is impractical. Consider the relationship between the absent colleague and deceased.
- write and post message/statement on social media platforms.
- for a death that may attract media coverage (e.g. if the member of staff was a well-known personality or died tragically), identify a nominated spokesperson (e.g. Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher) to provide a 'press statement' at an agreed time, as a way of dealing with media intrusion. Liaison with the individual's family is essential, prior to reporting information to the media, in order to respect their privacy and wishes.
- establish good lines of communication with all relevant parties, this will always include family and staff, in other cases it may involve communication with emergency services, health, CAMHS, the Educational Psychology service, Social Care, and other support services.
- provide details of someone who can be available to talk things through with a member of staff, parent or child if they are finding the situation particularly hard. This person could advise the family of support services available if required.
- send a letter to parents and carers (see Appendix B, C and D).
- provide staff with a script about what has happened so that consistent information is given to all of the pupils. Include where possible some answers to difficult questions that staff may be asked by the children, to prevent them needing to think of appropriate responses on the spot.
- encourage everyone to consider how to meet their own support needs and take care of themselves, this may be from friends, family, support services and/or buddying up with other members of staff. Provide contact details for support in your local area.
- trained and experienced practitioners are available on the Winston's Wish Freephone National Helpline (08088 020 021) should you want to check out ideas throughout the day.

## Informing Pupils

The process for telling the other pupils will be decided by the Headteacher, following consultation with the teaching staff. Although the finality of death cannot be diminished. Children must be allowed to ask questions at this time or at any point in the following days or weeks. Staff must answer honestly and to the best of their knowledge. (See Appendix E)

- identify those children who had a long-term and/or close relationship with the deceased to be told together as a separate group. Where possible inform all the pupils in the smallest group practicable. Class or tutor groups are ideal.
- take account of pupils with specific needs including: pupils with past history of loss; pupils with a learning disability and pupils who have difficulty managing their emotions or behaviour. Liaise with the SENCO to go through this.
- experience has shown that it is more beneficial if all pupils are informed.
- it is always a shock when a death occurs in a school even if it may have been anticipated. In the eyes of the pupils, teachers are part of the fittings and fixtures in school and are not expected to die. Children expect to live forever, and so a fellow pupil dying whilst still young enough to attend school can also feel quite shocking. Provide staff with guidelines/script if they are going to inform children (see Appendix F).
- children and young people will appreciate time to verbalise their feelings and fears. Allow space for "If only..." to be acknowledged.
- allow discussions for pupils to share their own experiences of death, e.g. "When my pet/my gran died" etc.
- be honest about your own feelings and experiences, and talk openly about the relationship that you had with the person.
- answer pupil's questions factually. Avoid using euphemisms like 'passed away', or 'lost' etc.

Use the words dead, died and death to avoid confusion for pupils.

- be prepared for pupils to say or do the unexpected, experience has shown some responses or apparent lack of response may be upsetting for adults. No apparent response does not mean that a child does not care.
- plan and arrange how the school will collectively acknowledge the loss and remember the person, for instance with an assembly, memory book, and maybe in time a permanent memorial (garden, tree, bench, award...).

- it is natural that children may be upset and/or need time to process information, make sure there is a quiet space for them to go to, support available for them both immediately afterwards and in the days that follow.

### **Informing Parents/Carers**

If appropriate it may be necessary to inform all parents and carers in school, this will hopefully stop rumours or misinformation. It is important to agree, with the parents, before the school can take on the role of informing concerned parties within, or outside, the school community. (See Appendix D)

### **The Funeral**

It is essential to sound out the family's wishes. The family may well welcome involvement of members of the school community but equally, may wish to keep things private. The Headteacher and/or the Deputy Headteacher will make arrangements for the school to be represented at the funeral, and identify which staff and pupils may want to attend, together with the practicalities of issues such as staff cover and transport. For some schools it is appropriate to close, for others it is not, consequently difficult decisions will sometimes have to be made concerning attendance.

Involve staff and pupils in the decision.

Cultural and religious implications need consideration. If the parents wish to visit the school at any time after the funeral, this will be agreed with the Headteacher. Past experience has shown that this can be helpful in their grieving.

### **Responding to the Media**

Some deaths, particularly those in sudden or traumatic circumstances, attract media attention. All members of staff are advised not to respond to journalists and to refer all enquiries to the Headteacher, who will make a considered response after seeking assistance from the Local Authority Press Office. A statement will also be written to post on all social media platforms.



## Support

### **For Pupils:**

Following bereavement, it is only to be expected that some pupils will be emotionally affected and would benefit from the provision of some time for reflection. The PSHE co-ordinator will ensure that we have suitable books and other materials to help children discuss death and come to terms with loss. The following support may also be helpful

- a specific room could be allocated- for the duration of the day to enable pupils to meet staff/councillors
- access to one to one time with a member of staff who is trained in bereavement support
- signposting about accessing bereavement support outside of school (See Appendix A)

### **For Staff:**

It is important to remember that staff will be emotionally affected. The following support may also be helpful:

- A specific room could be allocated- e.g. the Meeting Room - for the duration of a lunchtime to enable staff to meet and share their thoughts over a coffee or tea. It should be emphasised that anything shared on such occasions should be held as confidential and not for public airing.
- external agencies offer of counselling support
- signposting about accessing bereavement support outside of school (See Appendix A)

### **For the family:**

- Communicate with the family straight away and offer support. Send a letter of condolence from the school.
- Give parents and family the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who has died.
- Send a representative to the funeral.
- Hold a collection /flowers to be sent as appropriate.

- Invite parents/family to any commemorative events held by the school, both at the time and in subsequent years.
- If memorial work has been completed, for example a remembrance wall or book, then this should be returned to the parents at an appropriate time, and pupils informed where it has gone.
- If the parents wish to visit the school at any time after the funeral, this will be agreed.

Parents will be told that they are welcome in the school and will be encouraged to come and visit. Past experience has shown that this can be helpful in their grieving. The first visit to the school is often difficult and will be arranged sensitively in accordance with the parents' wishes. It will then be for the parents to decide if they wish to maintain on going links. Each family will be different, with differing needs. Therefore, the school will always be there to act as a source of support and information.

### **The Death of a Member of Staff**

All of the principles and procedures listed above apply to the death of a staff member. For a letter template see Appendix C.

In addition to the above, the school will notify the LA as employer. Where appropriate to the wishes of the staff member's family, the Headteacher may seek permission from the Chair of Governors to close the school so that all members of staff are able to attend the funeral.

## SECTION 3: Supporting a bereaved pupil

### Returning to School following a Bereavement

Most grieving pupils do not need a 'bereavement expert', they need the support of familiar and trusted adults. School, with its familiar environment and routines, can be a place of comfort for a bereaved young person.

It can be helpful to meet with the pupil and their family/carers to establish what has happened and to discuss their return to school. This could be a familiar adult in school, such as the form tutor, Year Manager or SENCO. The purpose of this meeting should be to:

- acknowledge the death
- find out how the pupil would like to share their news
- organise a safe space for the bereaved pupil to go if they feel overwhelmed by their grief and need a 'time-out'. E mail to be sent to all staff and pupil issued with a 'time-out' card
- consider whether to provide 'time-out' activities – journals, art and craft, books, screen time, memory boxes etc.
- set guidelines for communication: Tutor/Year Manager to communicate with the pupil, between members of staff and between home and school
- consider providing support for peers when they have a bereaved friend

A short film is available on the Child Bereavement UK website:

[www.childbereavementuk.org/for-teachers-when-a-pupil-returns-to-school-after-being-bereaved](http://www.childbereavementuk.org/for-teachers-when-a-pupil-returns-to-school-after-being-bereaved)

### Longer Term Support

The pupil will continue to grieve for the rest of their life and may require ongoing support. Significant dates or anniversaries, Mother's/Father's Day, etc. may be particularly difficult. Regular contact with the family/carers and reviews with the pupil will help to build up an overall picture of how the pupil is coping. The grief may impact the pupil's progress. Some pupils work really hard and may put themselves under extra pressure to succeed, while others may find it difficult to focus in class and on their work. There may also be changes in their behaviour, bereaved young people can find change difficult, so preparing them in advance (where possible) may help them to voice their worries and ease the process.

Consider vulnerable pupils as they may need additional support, particularly on transition or during exams.

### **Death, Grief and Bereavement in the Curriculum**

Teaching the topic of death, grief and bereavement will help pupils to understand feelings of grief and prepare them for the future. Informing parents and carers in advance will help to gather information about previous bereavements so that vulnerable pupils can be prepared for the lesson. Recently bereaved pupils may find it helpful if they are given the option to work elsewhere or step outside, if they think it would be too painful to attend.

- See Elephant's Tea Party resource on Child Bereavement UK's website

### **Support for Staff**

Being alongside anyone experiencing a loss can be emotionally draining, and supporting a bereaved pupil particularly so. At certain points in time, some members of staff may be more vulnerable due to circumstances in their own lives. Staff will be supported by other staff in school and also be signposted support agencies for staff. (See Appendix A).

## Appendix A- List of bereavement services

Name	Contact Details	Referral Process	Details
<b>STAR</b>	STAR Bereavement  Upper York St, Wakefield WF13LQ.	Referrals can be made by professionals from any agency, or by bereaved family members	<b>STAR provides a 1:1 counseling service to children who have experienced bereavement or loss. They are aiming to develop support for the whole family in the future.</b>  <b>Commissioned by the PCT to deliver bereavement services.</b>
<b>National Child Death Helpline</b>	Free phone 0800 282 986	Helpline only	<b>Provided by Great Ormond Street Hospital for anybody affected by the death of a child. All volunteers are bereaved parents</b>
<b>CRUSE Bereavement</b>	crusebereavementcare.org.uk <a href="mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk">helpline@cruse.org.uk</a>  0808 808 1677	Various methods of accessing the service including helpline, website for young people etc.	<b>Provide 1:1 counseling for children and adults, as well as a variety of resources for children and young people as well as adults</b>
<b>Child Bereavement Trust</b>	childbereavement.org.uk 0800 02 88840  Email: <a href="mailto:Support@childbereavementuk.org">Support@childbereavementuk.org</a>	Direct access by bereaved adults and children only	<b>Provides a confidential helpline and resources for adults and children. Does not provide direct counseling</b>
<b>Winston's Wish</b>	Enquiries 01242 515157  Helpline 08088 020021 winstonswish.org.uk	Direct access by bereaved adults and children	<b>Individual work and group work with bereaved children. Telephone helpline for bereaved children</b>

### **Support for children and young people in Wakefield:**

- **Samaritans:** any time, free from any phone on 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or Text: 07725 909 090. Samaritans have a drop in at the local Wakefield branch (see website)
- **Young Minds Parents helpline:** Tel: 0808 802 5544 (free for mobiles and landlines) open Monday to Friday (offers advice and support to any adult who is concerned about a child/young person's mental

health up to the age of 25). [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) website has resources for children and young people, parents and professionals

- The Papyrus Hopeline: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org) Offer support if you are worried about someone and need to talk or find out how best to support them. Call 080 068 41 41 or Text: 07786 209 697. - Kooth: [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) Free, safe and anonymous online support for 11-19 year olds
- The Mix: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk) Free, safe online and telephone counselling support for under 25s. includes a 24/7 crisis text messaging service
- Childline: [www.childline.org](http://www.childline.org) Phone anytime 0800 1111
- CALM: Campaign Against Living Miserably: [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net) Offers help via the website and a helpline for men aged 15 – 35
- Connecting with People: [www.connectingwithpeople.org/ucancope](http://www.connectingwithpeople.org/ucancope) 'U Can Cope' film is to help develop ways for young people to cope with difficulties
- Heads Above the Waves: [www.hatw.co.uk](http://www.hatw.co.uk) Online advice, support and coping strategies for young people suffering from depression and self-harm
- Big White Wall: [www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com) an online service for people over the aged of 16
- Doc Ready: [www.docready.org](http://www.docready.org) helps to prepare people to talk about mental health to the GP

Wakefield Council has produced leaflets for young people and those who support them, which are available in hard copy and online and contain references to these resources. Please contact the public health team if you would like copies or need more supplies. The leaflets are also available here: [www.wakefield.gov.uk/childrensmentalhealth](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/childrensmentalhealth)

## Appendix B: Managing critical incidents checklist

The following checklist is suggested as a supportive document to schools in response to a CI. These are grouped into immediate and medium / long term actions. These tasks are broad and cover a range of possible scenarios that may be considered a CI, therefore not all may be required. These actions should be considered alongside guidance dealing managing the feelings of pupils, staff and parents.

### **Immediate actions – first 24 hours**

- Lead taken by senior member of staff.
- Establish the facts re: what has happened, where and when, names of people directly involved.
- Contact the appropriate agencies, i.e. school trust/Chair of Governors and ask to cascade to appropriate members of the trust and governors.
- Organise a meeting of the management team to agree on actions and priorities – immediate (day 1), medium term (next few days/week) and longer term (month/half term).
- Where there is a high profile case, nominate a member of Senior Leadership Team to deal directly with the media following the protocol from School Trust/ Local Authority.
- Determine what information is to be shared (consider family views).
- Provide a script for office staff.
- Brief staff as soon as possible regarding the available facts – call a staff meeting (before the start of the school day/lunchtime/end of school day - depending when the news breaks).
- Inform staff who are absent.
- Be aware of the staff who will be affected most (e.g. those recently bereaved/ relationship to the individual(s)).
- Set up a clear communication route/times with outside services/professionals, e.g. EP, Local Authority.
- Record of all incoming and outgoing calls/advice, names of contact people.
- Maintain the normality of the school day. Keep to the normal timetable as far as possible (with flexibility for a specific year group/cohort where needed).

- Identify a places and times where individuals and groups can talk during and at the close of the day.
- Consider arrangements for the most vulnerable children/young people and which staff will be there to listen to them.
- Agree with staff how to inform pupils starting with the class/tutor/year group most affected.
- Provide advice to staff on handling their own and children's feelings.
- Be alert to staff who are struggling and need support.
- Inform pupils and provide them with an opportunity in class to ask questions and discuss what has happened.
- Inform parents if necessary, reassure them that pupils will be supported, and advise them on how to listen and support their children. Draft a letter where appropriate.
- Gather staff involved for a short de-briefing at the end of the day. Be aware of then staff who will be returning to an empty home.

#### **Medium / Longer term actions –24 – 72+ hours**

- Review events of the previous day.
- Arrange a briefing for the start of the day.
- Facilitate support for high risk pupils.
- Ask staff to monitor the effects on adults and children over time and plan for staff peer support.
- Make initial contact with the family and arrange for a named contact within school.
- Plan the return to school of pupil(s) and/or staff.
- Ensure staff/pupils belongings are collected and placed in a safe place.
- Consider condolences and expressions of sympathy
- Consider family wishes when thinking though funeral arrangements, assemblies and memorials as appropriate and in line with family wishes.
- Consider anniversaries and significant dates.



### **Environment checklist**

1. Drinks, food, provisions – tea, coffee, milk, sugar, fruit, snacks, tissues, arrangements for food for staff etc. (Note: some adults may find involvement in these arrangements provides a purpose).
2. Quiet room/space for small group/individuals to meet and talk.
3. Area with activities, games, creative materials for youngsters who want to be together but need a focus.

## Appendix C: Template letter to parents and carers

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is with great regret and sadness that I am writing to inform you of the death of (name(s) of child(ren) /teacher (s)) as a result of (details of incident where appropriate).

We as a school are very shocked and saddened by this tragic incident and our thoughts are with (name's) family and friends at this very sad time (perhaps some positive remembrances of the person(s) lost, caring, funny, highly respected etc.)

Our main aim in school today has been to provide support to the staff and pupils by ensuring that the usual routines are in place and by maintaining a calm atmosphere. The expression of feelings resulting from bereavement is an essential part of the grieving process and support is in place to assist the pupils with this. Pupils affected by the bereavement have been/will be given the opportunity to discuss events, ask questions and come to terms with their thoughts and emotions.

A special assembly will be/has been held for pupils and staff to celebrate (name's) life and contribution to the school community.

During this difficult time we have been supported by the Educational Psychology Service and this help will continue as necessary during the next few days.

With sympathy,

Headteacher

## Appendix D: Template letter to parents and carers- death of a pupil

Dear parents and carers,

Your child's class teacher/form tutor/head teacher/head of year had the sad task of informing the pupils of the death of <Name>, a pupil in <Year>.

<Name> died suddenly/in hospital/after a short illness yesterday/last week/over the weekend/during half term.

He/she was a <valued/cherished/highly-regarded/well-liked/popular/friendly> member of the class/school community and will be missed by everyone who knew him/her.

When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal.

We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, visit the Child Bereavement UK website [childbereavementuk.org](http://childbereavementuk.org)

Our thoughts are with <Name's> family and friends at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate/remember <Name's> life.

Yours Faithfully,

Headteacher

## Appendix E: Supporting Pupils

Children and young people's understanding of death will depend on their developmental stage, experience of death, loss and / or bereavement, cognition and emotional development. Children and young people experience similar feelings to adults following death but may express these differently depending on these factors. The information in the following table highlights the differences in understanding of death using a developmental perspective and provides useful ways in which school staff and significant adults (parents/carers) can help a child or young person who may be affected by death, should they need it:

Developmental perspective	School staff and caregivers can help by...
<b>Birth to two years</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not understand the finality of death</li> <li>Able to miss presence of primary caregiver</li> <li>Reacts to loss by crying, change in eating/sleeping habits</li> <li>May appear detached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing a clear routine</li> <li>Being a responsive, consistent, comforting and loving caregiver</li> <li>Being sensitive to child's fear of separation</li> </ul>
<b>Two to five years</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not understand the finality of death, believes it is reversible</li> <li>Limited vocabulary to express grief and so may display feelings through behaviour and play</li> <li>May show increased interest in things that are dead</li> <li>Repetitive questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing reassurance</li> <li>Establishing a clear, consistent routine</li> <li>Providing short, honest explanations of death and answers to questions. Use words 'dead' and 'died' and avoid euphemisms like 'passed away'.</li> <li>Providing physical and emotional nurturance.</li> <li>Increase flexibility whilst maintaining boundaries</li> <li>Opportunities for play</li> <li>Give choices wherever possible</li> </ul>
<b>Six to nine years</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting to understand finality of death</li> <li>Believes death can only happen to other people</li> <li>May personify death as ghosts or monsters and engage in magical thinking</li> <li>May feel that they caused the death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain death honestly using concrete language 'death' 'died', avoiding euphemisms like 'passed away'.</li> <li>Opportunities for creative play</li> <li>Allow children to talk about experience and ask questions</li> <li>Providing physical and emotional nurturance.</li> <li>Give choices wherever possible</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have strong feelings of loss</li> <li>• Limited vocabulary to express feelings</li> <li>• May need permission to grieve (boys in particular)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing consistency and routine, including clear boundaries but with some flexibility</li> <li>• Maintaining connection between school and home</li> <li>• Acknowledging feelings, listening to their fears and providing reassurance</li> </ul>
<p>Nine to twelve years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the finality of death</li> <li>• Be curious about the physicality of death</li> <li>• Have more developed vocabulary but may not be willing to express feelings</li> <li>• May mimic mannerisms of the deceased to identify with them</li> <li>• Short attention spans</li> <li>• Realisation that death can happen to them begins to develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer questions clearly and accurately using concrete language 'death' 'died', avoiding euphemisms like 'passed away'.</li> <li>• Providing variety of activities for expression.</li> <li>• Providing consistency and routine, including clear boundaries but with some flexibility</li> <li>• Give choices where possible</li> <li>• Model expressing emotions and self-care</li> <li>• 'Normalise' pupil's experience through reassurance of natural feelings and suggestion of books with characters who have experienced loss.</li> <li>• School staff providing extra support and flexibility around work</li> <li>• Respect child's need for solitude, whilst monitoring in case becomes isolation</li> <li>• Seek professional help for concerns around self-harm and/or suicidal thoughts</li> </ul>
<p>Thirteen to eighteen years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands death</li> <li>• Can express feelings but may choose not to</li> <li>• May philosophise and search for the meaning of life and death</li> <li>• Death can affect both school and home relationships</li> <li>• May appear to be coping</li> <li>• May take the role of 'comforter'</li> <li>• Raised risks of engaging in dangerous/risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol misuse and sexual promiscuity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain routines and set clear expectations with some flexibility</li> <li>• Allow expressions of emotions without trying to change/fix them</li> <li>• Honest answers to questions</li> <li>• Provide choices where possible</li> <li>• Adjust expectations for concentration/task completion where necessary</li> <li>• Support with connecting with groups</li> <li>• Model appropriate expression of grief and self-care</li> <li>• Ask open ended questions and actively listen</li> <li>• Seek professional help for any concerns around self-harm and/or suicidal thoughts</li> </ul>

## Appendix F: Guidance/Script for Staff

The following are examples of how you would break the news of a bereavement and can be adapted:

- “I’ve got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. I know most of you will have heard of cancer, and know that sometimes people with cancer get better, but other times people die from it. Mrs Smith, the Geography teacher and Year 11 tutor, has been ill with cancer for a long time. I have to tell you that Mrs Smith died yesterday in hospital”.
- “Sometimes people have accidents at work, at home, at school or on the road. People may be hurt or injured in the accident and they may have to go to hospital for treatment. Sadly, there are some accidents that cause people to die. I have some really sad news to tell you that might upset you. Yesterday Stephen, who is in Year 4, was in an accident and he was so badly injured that he died”.
- Refer to the person’s name naturally, “Mrs Smith died from cancer”.

## Appendix G: Charter for Bereaved Children (Winston's Wish)

# THE CHARTER FOR BEREAVED CHILDREN

Winston's Wish supports children, young people and their families after the death of a parent or sibling. This charter is based on our conversations with thousands of children and their families, who have told us what gave them hope after bereavement.

**B**

### **Bereavement support**

Bereaved children need to receive support from their family, from their school and from important people around them.

**E**

### **Express feelings and thoughts**

Bereaved children should be helped to find appropriate ways to express all their feelings and thoughts associated with grief – such as sadness, anxiety, confusion, anger and guilt.

**R**

### **Remember the person who has died**

Bereaved children have the right to remember the person who has died for the rest of their lives; sharing special as well as difficult memories.

**E**

### **Education and information**

Bereaved children need and are entitled to receive answers to their questions and information that clearly explains what has happened, why it has happened and what will be happening.

**A**

### **Appropriate response from schools and colleges**

Bereaved children need understanding and support from their teachers and fellow students without having to ask for it.

**V**

### **Voice in important decisions**

Bereaved children should be given the choice about their involvement in important decisions that have an impact on their lives, such as planning the funeral and remembering anniversaries.

**E**

### **Everyone involved**

Bereaved children should receive support which includes their parents or carers, and wider family.

**M**

### **Meet others**

Bereaved children benefit from the opportunity to meet other children who have had similar experiences.

**E**

### **Established routines**

Bereaved children should, whenever possible, be able to continue activities and interests so that parts of their lives can still feel 'normal'.

**N**

### **Not to blame**

Bereaved children should be helped to understand that they are not responsible, and not to blame, for the death.

**T**

### **Tell the story**

Bereaved children are helped by being encouraged to tell the story of what has happened in a variety of ways. These stories need to be heard by those important people in their lives.

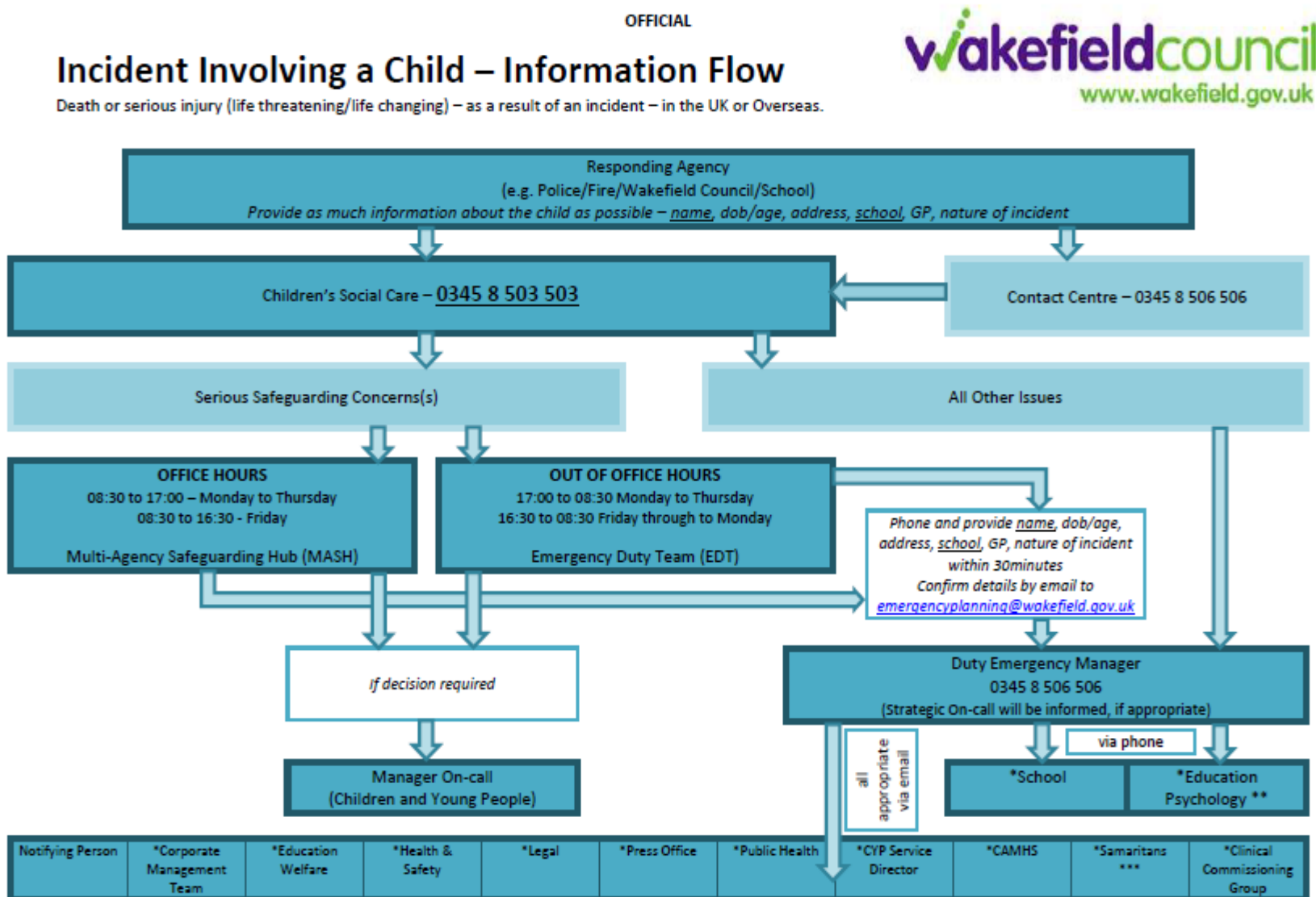
**Helpline: 08088 020 021**  
**winstonswish.org**

Winston's Wish is a Registered Charity (England and Wales 1061305; (Scotland) SC040219)

**WINSTON'S  
WISH WW**

Giving hope to grieving children

## Appendix H: Incident involving a child – information flow with emergency contacts within Wakefield LA



\*Out of Hours contact details available from Duty Emergency Manager via the Contact Centre – 0345 8 506506

\*\*Education Psychology will provide the initial response to the school.

\*\*\* Suspected suicide and suspected attempted suicide only.