



Aspire Believe Achieve
Ready Respect Safe

Bereavement Policy

Policy Reviewed (Date): January 2025

Signed: _____ (Chair of Governors) Date:

Signed: _____ (Head Teacher) Date:

Next Review Due (Date): January 2027

1. Aims

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how Arnold View Primary School will respond to a death in our school community
- Set out a plan for communicating deaths in a timely manner that balances our school community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased
- Identify best practices for supporting pupils and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the governing board
- Provide a roadmap and framework for pupils or staff returning to school following bereavement

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the governing body, parents/carers, the Local Authority and other relevant outside agencies. The Headteacher will:

- Monitor progress and liaise with external agencies.
- Respond to media enquiries.
- Keep the governing body fully informed.
- Be first point of contact for family/child concerned.
- Advise and support staff, consult on referral pathways and help with the identification of more complex grief.
 - Organized memorials, temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages

The SENCO and Senior Leadership Team will:

- liaise with external agencies
- support the family and be available to advise if necessary
- advise and support staff
- to have bereavement support training and cascade to other staff
- signpost to external support available to bereaved pupils and staff
- organize safe spaces for bereaved members of the school community to take a time out
- Arrange additional support for transition for bereaved pupils

2.1 The staff

The school team has responsibility for monitoring and supporting bereaved pupils and staff members (including before their bereavement, where relevant – for example, in the case of terminal illness).

The whole school team will:

- Provide direct support to bereaved pupils and staff- TETC Team; MHST; Verve Counselling
- Signpost to external support available to bereaved pupils and staff (See below)
- Organise safe spaces for bereaved members of the school community to take a time out (staff room)
- Organise memorials, such as temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages
- Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved pupils or staff and ensure they're supported on those days
- Provide additional support during significant transitions – for example, when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school

2.3 Governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and supporting the headteacher.

The governing board will:

- Undertake regular monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them – for example, through updates from staff at committees
- Monitor the headteacher's emotional wellbeing – for example, through regular meetings between the headteacher and chair
- Assist the headteacher, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- All media conversations or any information released to the media must be checked with the Nottingham County Council communications team prior to taking place
- Where necessary, arrange for another staff member to take the lead if the headteacher is not available to respond to a death immediately

3. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

Supporting pupils and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported. Regular check ins with Senior Leadership

4. Immediate actions following a death

4.1 Clarifying information and the wishes of the family

- The Head teacher (in the absence of the Head Teacher the Deputy Head) will be responsible for contacting the family to confirm news of a death and determine the wishes of the family in terms of what can be shared with the rest of the school community and how news of a death will be confirmed if the family can't be immediately contacted
- The Head Teacher decides what will be communicated to the school community if news of a death is spreading via social media before confirmation can be made
- The Head Teacher will contact the family and discuss specifically what information they would like to be shared and how it will be shared

4.2 Sharing the news with staff

- The Head Teacher (or in the absence of the Head Teacher the Deputy Head) is responsible for sharing the news with staff and explaining what support will be available to those who need it
- The Head Teacher, will call a staff meeting, will use the Emergency plan to call the staff, beginning with the SLT who will be asked to call certain staff members. If the school is closed then an email will be sent with a Teams meeting and staff will be asked to join so that the information could be shared.

4.3 Sharing the news with pupils

- The Head Teacher will be responsible for sharing the news with pupils and explaining what support will be available to those who need it, during a whole school assembly
- All staff will be in the assembly to support the children

4.4 Informing parents/carers

- A letter will be sent home to parents informing them of the death and the steps take during the day to inform pupils of the death. The letter will also include the additional support which has been made available and where to go for more help and information.

4.5 Responding to specific causes of death

Some deaths need to be handled more sensitively due to their potential to cause fear, anger or imitation.

- If the death is the result of suicide additional support will be put in place including the Samaritans provides a [step-by-step programme](#) to support schools if this happens; additional Verve counselling will be sought and support from the Educational Psychology service
- If the death is due to homicide or family violence additional support will be sought including additional Verve Counselling, support from the Educational Psychology service, police support and Child Bereavement UK which has a guide to 'Supporting children and young people bereaved by murder or manslaughter', which you can find at the bottom of [this page](#)
- If the death is due to contagious disease, we will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team

4.6 Responding to the media

In the event that a death that affects the school raises media interest, we will respond in the following manner:

- Explain that the Head Teacher is responsible for dealing with requests from the media and she will be advised by the Nottingham County Council Communication Team and will work closing in conjunction with them
- Staff will be reminded not to respond to media requests and should refer any requests to the Head Teacher

5. Follow-up actions and support following a death

If the death affects the whole school community (such as that of a pupil or a staff member)

- Support from verve counselling will be sought
- Support from the Educational Psychology will be sought
- Support from the Mental Health Support Team will be sought
- Whole class support will be encouraged

5.1 Support for pupils and staff

Pupils and staff may require support to grieve in the initial days and weeks following a death.

- Support in school will be taken from the TETC (ESHAW Team) team to support the school school,
- Support from verve counselling will be sought
- Support from the Educational Psychology will be sought
- Support from the Mental Health Support Team will be sought
- Staff peer on peer support will be encouraged
- Counselling will be offered to staff
- Barnardo's Rainbows support will be sought
- Staff and Pupils will be signposted to Nottshelphyourself

5.2 Timetables

- Timetables may be keep on track to provide a sense of normality for the children but will be altered depending on the emotional needs of pupils in the class.

5.3 Tributes and condolences

- A Memorial service will be organised in school and parents will be informed when and where it will take place
- If a particular class is affected then the parents of that class may be invited into school to attend the memorial
- Physical memorials will be created such as a book of condolences which will be in available for parents in the foyer or outside on a table under the awning

- A book of messages, if appropriate, will be available for the children to sign

5.4 Funerals

We will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

- Whether members of staff and/or pupils are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service
- How condolences should be made and how staff and pupils can contribute

If staff are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:

- Staff will be asked to contact the Head Teacher if they wish to attend the funeral and this will depend on the availability of cover for the classes involved

If pupils are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:

- Parents must put the request in writing to the Head Teacher or complete a leave of absence/holiday form
- Parents will take their child to the funeral and be responsible for them whilst the funeral and any other ceremonies take place

6. Support for pupils returning to school after bereavement

Whether a pupil has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

6.1 Reintegration meeting

The Head or Deputy Head and where necessary the SENDCO or Class teacher will meet with the bereaved pupil and their parents/carers to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the pupil is emotionally ready to return to the classroom either full time or with adjustments to the timetable to allow for a phased return
- Address any concerns the pupil and their parents/carers have about the return to school
- Consult with the pupil about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant)
- Open lines of communication between the pupil and relevant staff to ensure support should the pupil feel overwhelmed
- Open lines of communication between the school and the pupil's parents/carers to coordinate support
- Consider any additional support needed for a pupil who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability

6.2 Ongoing support

- We will maintain regular contact with the pupil's parents/carers to monitor how the pupil is coping

- We acknowledge significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult and will endeavour to provide support during the anniversaries of this date
- We know that grief may impact a pupil's progress and affect their behaviour. To manage this, we will provide additional support through check ins and refer for additional support if necessary. A clear line of contact will be kept at all times between the parents and the Head Teacher/Deputy Head
- We will take care to manage changes for bereaved pupils by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions

7. Support for staff returning to school after bereavement

Whether a staff member has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

7.1 Reintegration meeting

The Head Teacher will meet with the bereaved staff member to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the staff member is ready to return to work and the best way to make that return (e.g. a phased return to work or a temporary change in duties)
- Address any concerns the staff member may have about the return to school
- Consult with the staff member about how or even if they want their pupils and colleagues to know of the death (where relevant)
- Set guidelines for communication between the staff member and their line manager to monitor and support the staff member

7.2 Ongoing support

We acknowledge that grief can have an impact on a staff member's physical and mental health, which can then go on to impact their performance.

We also recognise that grieving is highly personal and that there can't be a one-size-fits-all solution for monitoring and supporting a bereaved person.

We will work with each individual to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person. This may include:

- Making an Occupational Health referral to ensure specific support is given and adaptations can be made, under guidance, such as provision for flexible working or reduced timetables
- To signpost to staff counselling
- To refer to specific support e.g. Maggie's at Nottingham City Hospital

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed in January 2027. At every review, it will be approved by the Financial and Personnel Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Child protection policy
- Critical incident policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix: useful contacts

| ORGANISATION | CONTACT DETAILS |
|------------------------|---|
| Child Bereavement UK | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helpline: 0800 02 888 40• https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us |
| Winston's Wish | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helpline: 08088 020 021• https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/ |
| Cruse Bereavement Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helpline: 0808 808 1677• https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us |
| Mind | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393• Further contacts: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/ |