

Upperby Primary School Bereavement Policy



School Details

Head teacher:	Mrs P Burns
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs J Chandler
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):	Mrs P Burns / Mrs J Chan
Link Governor for Safeguarding:	Mrs C Wilson
Chair of Governors:	Mr W Atkinson
Policy Date:	October 2023
Policy Status:	Statutory
Policy Review Cycle:	Every three years
Next Review Date:	October 2026

Rationale:

Every 22 minutes in the UK a parent of dependent children dies, leaving about 41,000 bereaved children each year. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, sibling, friend or other significant person, and, sadly, around 12,000 children die in the UK each year.

Within our school community there will almost always be some recently bereaved children who are struggling with their own situation – or sometimes the entire school community is impacted by the death of a member of staff or a pupil. We would hope to not encounter such circumstances, but the statistical inevitability of such an occurrence implies the necessity of having a Bereavement Policy in place in order that we might be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these sensitive situations. Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some children – or staff – require, though referral to more specialist support should be a consideration where the impact of grief is more complex. Additional information and resources can be accessed at www.childbereavement.org.uk.

Objectives:

The core intentions of the policy are:

- To support pupils and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after bereavement.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.
- To identify key staff within school and LA, and clarify the pathway of support.
- The Children Act 1989 aimed to ensure that the welfare of the child was paramount, working in partnership with parents to protect the child from harm. All intentions of this policy endorse that aim as we endeavour to counter any adverse effects of bereavement and maintain pupils' emotional well-being. (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/1>).

The role of the governing body:

- To approve policy and ensure its implementation, to be reviewed in three years.

The role of the head teacher/SENCo:

- To monitor progress and liaise with external agencies.
- To be first point of contact for family/child concerned.
- To keep the governing body fully informed.

The role of the LA:

- To advise and support staff. Consult on referral pathways and identification of complex grief.

The role of pastoral staff:

(For example - Senior Leadership Team, teaching staff, pastoral worker, support staff, school counsellors)

- To have bereavement support training and cascade learning to other staff.

Procedures:

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Head Teacher/member of the Senior Leadership Team, and their wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.
2. Staff should be informed before pupils and be prepared (through prior training) to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance.
3. Pupils who are affected should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them.
4. A letter to all school families affected should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed.
5. The school should be aware that the school timetable may need a degree of flexibility to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of children affected by the situation. However, minimal disruption to the timetable also offers a sense of security and familiarity.
6. Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate.
7. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial school closure in some circumstances.
8. Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Head Teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team.
9. School should be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a child throughout their school life so information should be recorded and shared with relevant people, particularly at transition points.

Bereavement support statement for parents/carers from our school website:

If you or your child have suffered the loss of a loved one, please come into school to let us know. It can often help your child if we are aware of the situation and we are better able to support them. You may prefer to speak to your child's class teacher or a member of our Senior Leadership Team.

For advice and information on how to support young children through bereavement please follow the link <https://childbereavementuk.org/> where you will find age appropriate materials and resources.

Some people require support straight away for others it can be months or even years later. Everyone, including children, grieve in their own way and at their own pace. If we can help in any way, at any point please come in and see us. If you would like further support, we are also able to signpost you to other organisations who are able to offer a more specialised service.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the head teacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request. The Policy is the governors' responsibility and they review its effectiveness every three years. They do this by discussion with the head teacher.

This policy was agreed by the governing body on 4th October 2023.

Date of next review October 2026.