



# Coronavirus and Bereavement

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Support for Schools / Settings and Parents / Carers



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## 1. Rationale/Introduction

### Coronavirus

In the coming months, more children and young people are likely to have experienced bereavement through the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19). This document aims to offer support to schools or settings and parents or carers on how best to support children and young people who have experienced loss during this uncertain time. The document outlines some key practical advice as well as signposting further expertise and resource.

### Grieving and isolation

Being bereaved can be an extremely lonely time and talking with those we rely on and trust most is one of the most helpful ways to cope. Grief at this time is further impacted by the current national health context and self isolation/social distancing; this could make the feelings more intense. If children and teenagers are isolated, it could be difficult for carers to keep them occupied and deal with their own emotions and fears. The impact of dealing with a bereavement, compounded with feelings of worry about external situations, can mean that feelings of grief aren't fully expressed.

Isolation can make it harder to process grief. At times like this when there is a constant stream of new and distressing information, people can find themselves distracted from dealing with their grief. They could be worrying about the situation as a whole or worrying about themselves or others.

## 2. Information for Schools/Settings

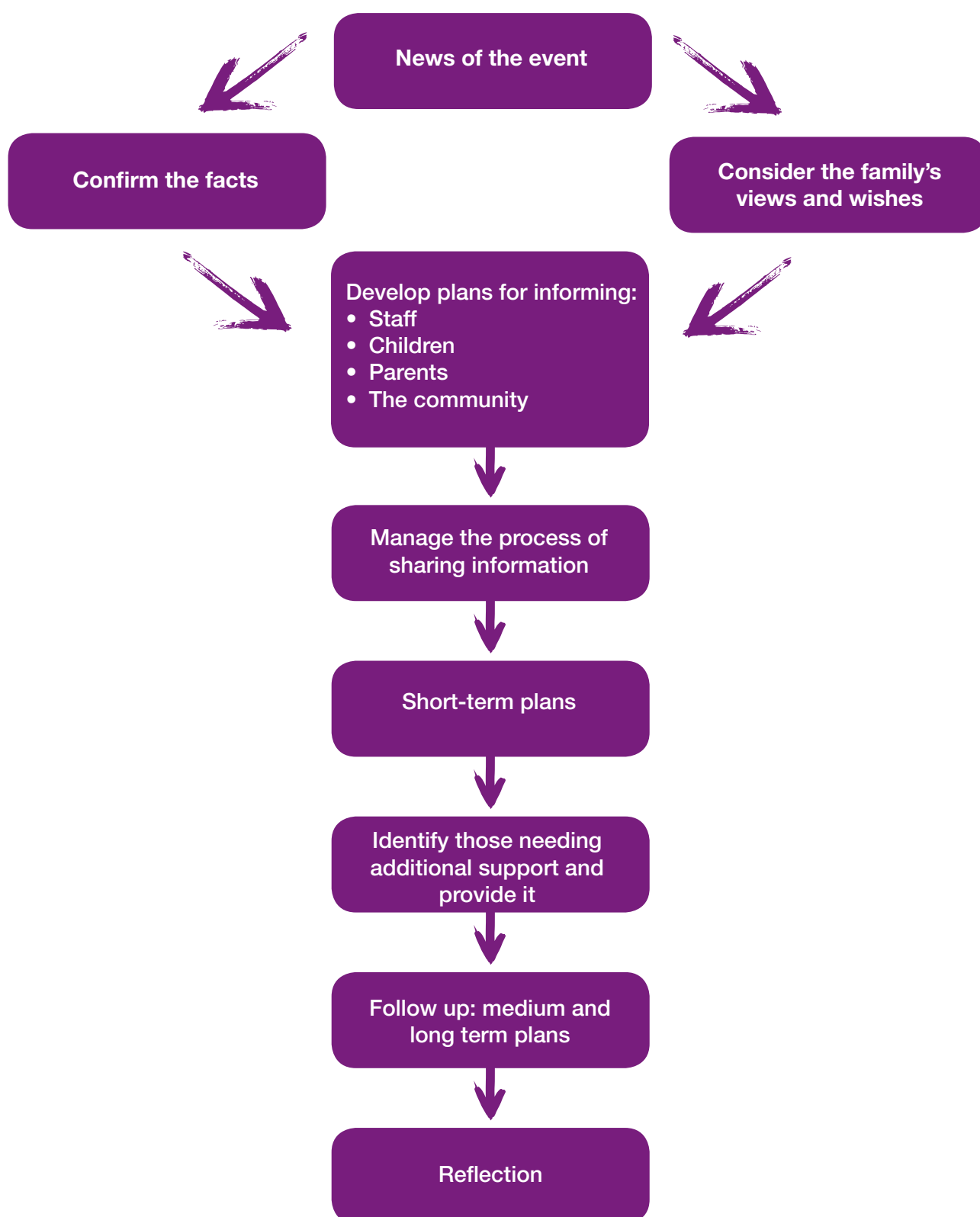
### The purpose of this section

Whilst the educational psychology service (EPS) has previously published guidance on managing loss and bereavement, the current climate means that school communities are drastically altered, with many students largely being kept at home, there are inevitable changes to staffing within schools, and support services are primarily working remotely. This guidance is therefore designed to support schools facing bereavement during the period of 'government lockdown' and addresses some of the challenges that may arise.

### A sequence of response

The following flowchart provides a possible sequence of events following the death of a child, adult or member of the school community. When such events occur, there is an immediate impact on the school community. When you personally feel the loss, your thinking may be impacted. This document cannot provide all you with all the information that you require but it may prompt you, put an order to your thinking and actions and help you to identify where you can find further support.

**Fig 1.1. Bereavement and Critical Incidents: A sequence of response for schools / settings**



Appendix 1.2 (pages 11-19) provides schools / settings with information relating to each stage of the sequence of events included in fig 1.1. We have attempted to make this information concise and practical as not to overwhelm the reader. Please refer to appendix 1.2 for detailed information regarding each step.



### 3. Supporting Children and Young People affected by death

Dealing with loss can be a distressing and traumatic experience and in the current situation, some of these effects can be heightened. In a time where we are experiencing significant change and are social distancing, support outside the family, such as friends and schools, are not able to offer comfort in the same way. Children may already be experiencing anxiety because of what they are hearing on the news and, as a result, may show stronger reactions to a death and may worry that they or others close to them may die.

#### How children and young people react to death

Many children and young people can show outward distress when reacting to a death, whilst some will hardly react at all. There may be cases where they do not know how to react, as they do not fully understand what has happened.

- The way in which children and young people respond to a death is related to their age and developmental stage. For children with special educational needs, it will be their functional level of understanding rather than their chronological age which will be most helpful in thinking about how they may understand the death and how to support them.
- It is also affected by the nature and emotional quality of the relationship they had with the individual who has died and the particular circumstances.

- It is also influenced by the behaviour and attitude of those around them when dealing with the death.

Below are some broad guidelines and generalisations about how children may respond to death at different ages and stages. However, it is important to remember that all children will develop at their own pace and in different ways.

- **0-2 years:** Infants are not able to understand about death but will experience the loss as a separation; they may become withdrawn with increased crying. The emotional state of people around them can impact, so normality and routine are very important at this stage.
- **2-5 years:** Death is seen as reversible by children of this age and they may also think that something they said or did caused the person to die. At this stage, children are greatly affected by the sadness of family members; this can cause nightmares, sleeping and/or eating disturbances and violent play.
- **6-12 years:** Children want to see death as reversible but are beginning to understand it as final. They may not understand their own involuntary emotional response to the loss, which might include disturbing feelings of fear and guilt. Behaviour may include immature reactions or outwardly difficult behaviour. Physical manifestations of emotional pain may also develop e.g. headaches or stomach aches.
- **13-18 years:** Young people at this age usually have an adult concept of death but their response and emotions may be heightened and very powerful. Reactions may include anger, depression and non-compliance. The loss may cause them to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life, or they may not want to reflect, and hide their feelings.

## What can help?

While every child and young person will respond slightly differently, there are things which you can do to help them to understand what has happened, process their own feelings and emotions and, in time, move through the grieving process.

- Be honest and open; explain why the person died at an age-appropriate level. Answer questions as truthfully as you can in a way the child can understand. It's okay not to have all the answers and to say that you don't know.
- Use clear language such as "dead" and "death" rather than what we may perceive as more comforting language such as "gone to sleep" or "loss". These phrases can be confusing for children and may cause them to believe that if someone is lost then they can be found, for example.
- Don't force your child to talk about what has happened but create an atmosphere where they know they can talk about their experience of the death and that you will listen to what they have to say. Reassure them if they blame themselves in any way, which can be common.
- Talk about the person who has died and share happy memories of them.
- Don't be afraid to express your own emotions and explain to your child that this is a normal part of the process when someone dies. However, don't expect them to look after you as much as you look after them.
- Reassure your child that it is okay for them to be upset too and help them to find ways of expressing difficult feelings which are not disruptive or destructive. Help them to understand that their behaviours may be as a result of feeling angry because they miss the person who has died and don't understand why it happened. Talking this through will help them to better understand their own emotions.
- Continue with established routines as much as possible, encouraging children to engage with their usual activities and interests so that some there is a sense of familiarity.
- Don't expect your child to grieve in exactly the same way that you do or that a sibling does.
- Reassure your child that it is still okay to laugh and have fun.
- As the death of a loved one can hugely impact a family routine and structure, you should prepare your child in advance for changes they may face.
- Help your child to say goodbye; include them in discussions about the funeral and allow them to make some choices in how they would like to take part. At the moment, when funerals are likely to be much more restricted, find alternative ways to help them say goodbye such as gathering photos, making a memory box, letting off balloons or planting some seeds.
- Allow yourself time to grieve so that you are best able to support your child.
- On the child's return to school, share information with their teacher so that they are aware of what they have experienced and how they have dealt with it. Returning to a different situation may trigger some feelings and emotions which you felt they had dealt with.





## 4. Sources of Support

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy at the time of the creation of this document (6th April 2020), changes may be made by the individual organisations in the future.

There is a wealth of resources and expertise that can be accessed by schools or settings and parents or carers. Some examples are listed here:

- **Coronavirus: How schools can support children and young people (Winston's Wish)**
- **Coronavirus: How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible (Winston's Wish)**
- **Bereavement: Advice and information for parents (Young Minds)**
- **Coronavirus: Grief and Trauma (Cruse)**
- **Resources for children and young people (Child Bereavement UK)**

Below are the details of a variety of organisations that provide support and resources:

### National Support

#### Childline

**Telephone: 0800 1111**

**Website: [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)**

A free and confidential, 24-hour helpline for children and young people in distress or danger. Trained volunteer counsellors comfort, advise and protect children and young people who may feel they have nowhere else to turn.

#### Child Death Helpline

**Telephone: 0800 282 986**

**Website: [childdeathhelpline.org.uk](https://www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk)**

A free and confidential helpline available Monday to Friday 10am-1pm; Tuesday and Wednesday 1pm-4pm; every evening 7pm-10pm. The helpline provides support to anyone affected by the death of a child of any age from pre-birth to adult, and to promote understanding of the needs of bereaved families.

#### Cruse Bereavement Care

**Telephone: 0808 808 1677**

**Website: [cruse.org.uk](https://www.cruse.org.uk)**

A free helpline supporting anyone who has been bereaved by death, open Monday to Friday 9.30-5pm (excluding bank holidays), and 8pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. This service is confidential, offering a 1-1 service to clients in their own homes and promotes the wellbeing of bereaved people.

#### Hope Again

**Telephone: 0808 808 1677**

**Website: [hopeagain.org.uk](https://www.hopeagain.org.uk)**

This youth bereavement service, run by Cruse, is free and confidential. It is available Monday to Friday, 9:30am - 5pm and is just for children and young people who have been affected by death. Support includes a helpline, website and peer support.

#### Winston's Wish

**Telephone: 08088 020 02**

**Website: [winstonswish.org](https://www.winstonswish.org)**

A national helpline for anyone caring for a child coping with the serious illness or death of a family member. They are a leading childhood bereavement charity and the largest provider of services to bereaved children, young people and their families in the UK.

**Kooth****Website:** [kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)

Free, safe and anonymous online counselling support for young people aged between 10 and 25. Available Monday to Friday 12pm-10pm and Saturday to Sunday 6pm-10pm.

**Childhood Bereavement Network****Website:** [childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/covid-19.aspx](https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/covid-19.aspx)

Childhood Bereavement Network supports professionals working with bereaved children and young people with information updates, key resources and networking opportunities.

**Grief Encounter****Telephone:** 0808 802 0111**Website:** [griefencounter.org.uk](https://griefencounter.org.uk)**Email:** [griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk](mailto:griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk)

Support for children and families who have been bereaved via phone, online chat and email. You can also take part in group activities with likeminded families at their fundays, grief groups and remembrance days. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 9am-9pm.

**Samaritans****Telephone:** 116 123**Website:** [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)**Email:** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)**Post:** Chris, Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK,  
PO Box 9090, STIRLING FK8 2SA

A registered charity aimed at providing support to anyone in emotional distress, who is struggling to cope or at risk of suicide. They operate across the United Kingdom and Ireland and are available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year by telephone, email or post.

**Young Minds Crisis Messenger****Text:** Text YM to 85258

24-hour text support for young people experiencing a mental health crisis; texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

**Anna Freud Centre Youth Wellbeing Directory****Website:** [annafreud.org/on-my-mind/youth-wellbeing/](https://annafreud.org/on-my-mind/youth-wellbeing/)

A list of local services for young people's mental health and wellbeing.

**Local Support****Harmony Counselling Service****Telephone:** 01252 712281**Website:** [health.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mental-wellbeing-young-people/](https://health.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mental-wellbeing-young-people/)**Email:** [bfbc.harmony@btinternet.com](mailto:bfbc.harmony@btinternet.com)

A confidential, independent counselling service for employees of Bracknell Forest Council.



# GRIEF

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix 1.1

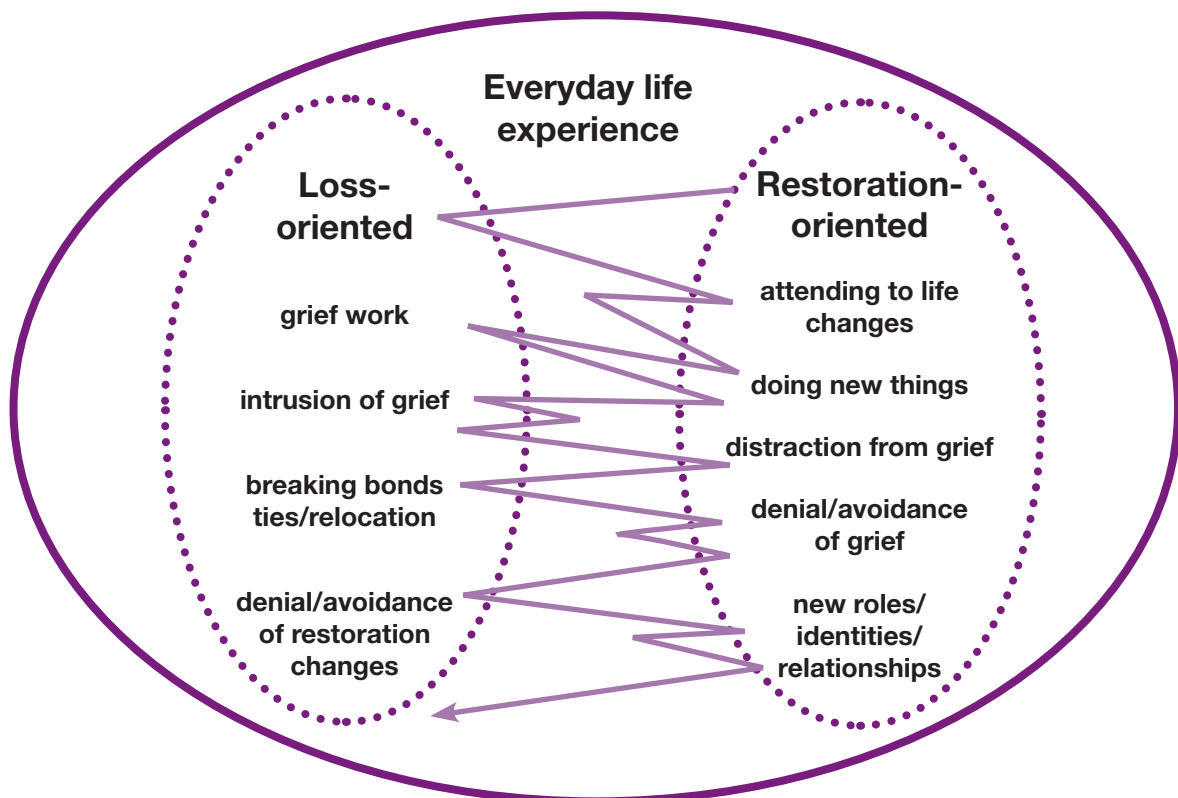
#### Psychological Models - Understanding Grief

##### The process of grief

There is no set pattern or time limit to the complex emotions and processes of grief. It is something which everyone will experience in slightly different ways. However, understanding some of the suggested processes can be helpful in understanding your own grief and, in turn, that of your child. While there have been suggestions of linear models, most try to depict the complexity of the process.

Strobe and Schut's (1995) Dual Process Model is dynamic and shows the bereaved person alternating between "loss-orientation", which focuses on the loss of the person who has died, and "restoration-orientation", which avoids focusing on the loss. Both of these are needed for future adjustment and it is normal to move between the two modes.

This is represented visually below:



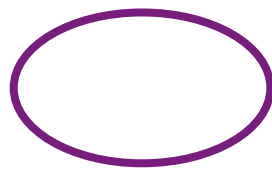
Another model is described by Worden (2008) where he sets out the tasks of mourning. These are not linear stages but rather part of an active process where bereaved people need to:

- Accept the reality of their loss
- Feel and process the pain of their grief
- Adjust to a world without the person who has died
- Maintain an enduring connection with the person who has died, even when moving forward with their life

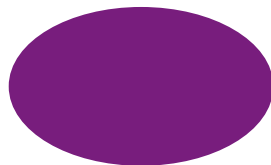
Tonkin's (1996) model of Growing Around Grief suggests that grief does not lessen over time or become smaller. Instead the person adjusts their lives to accommodate the pain. This in turn leads to the grief being less dominant and all-encompassing in their lives; other people and new experiences help the person to live with the grief, although it is not forgotten. Making new friends, having new experiences are all examples of "growing around grief".

## Expectation

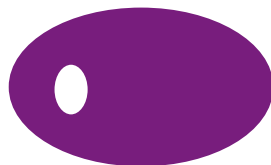
**Before loss**



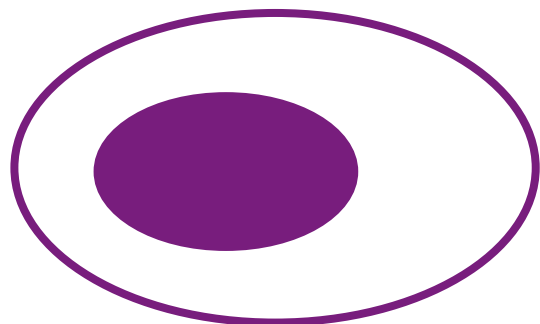
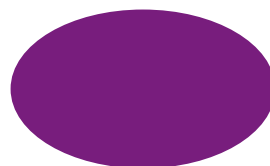
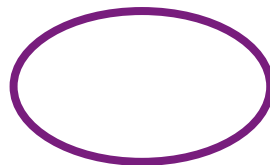
**Loss**



**Eventuality**



## Reality



None of these models fully explain the process of grief but may be helpful in recognising that for children there may be multiple times when they experience the recurrence of feelings of loss. Moving between grief and getting on with life is normal and daily ups and downs for a period of weeks or months after a significant loss can be expected.



## **Appendix 1.2 Bereavement and Critical Incidents: A sequence of response for schools / settings**

Appendix 1.2. provides schools or settings with information relating to each stage of the sequence of events included in fig 1.1. (page 4 of this document). We have attempted to make this information concise and practical.

### **Confirm the facts**

- It is important to establish the cause of death. Rumour and speculation can be created when there is a lack of hard evidence. Since the advent of social media and mobile phones, misinformation can spread quickly and add unnecessarily distress to family members affected. Accurate information shared appropriately may help to counteract such rumour.
- To ascertain accurate information, direct contact with the family is essential. In some circumstances clarification may need to be sought from other sources, such as the police.
- Being able to answer the following questions is likely to provide you with enough information to pass on to the school community:
  - What has happened?
  - Was this expected or unexpected?
  - When did it happen?
  - Who was involved?
  - Are there additional fatalities, casualties or injuries?
  - Are there implications of this death for other members of the local community (e.g. someone may have contributed to the death in some way)?
  - Siblings may be affected, implicated or assumed to have some connection.
  - Have all the family/families been notified?

## **Consider the families views and wishes**

Direct contact with the family will be difficult but an essential early action in establishing what has taken place, allowing you to accurately communicate with the school community. This requires great sensitivity and can include further complications (for example, contacting a staff member's wider family who have not previously been contacted by the school).

At such a distressing time, it is important to identify how much information the family wish to become widely known; this enables you to respect their wishes when addressing the child's questions. The family may need time to consider the various options, particularly as they may be distraught, in shock, numb or even in denial.

If you are considering any memorial or celebration to channel positivity or provide staff and students with the opportunity to share their grief, this will need to be discussed with the family first. The cultural heritage of the family, traditions and adherence to faith may influence how they would like things to be handled. School staff will need to be particularly sensitive to these matters.

Further information on funerals, memorials and remembrance can be found under the 'short-term plans' section.



# Develop plans for information staff, children, parents, the community

## Initial response

Depending on how the news of death was timed, you may have been able to confidentially establish detailed facts about the circumstances before it becomes necessary to issue a bulletin to avoid inaccurate rumours starting or spreading.

## Using the communications team

The local authorities Media Officer should be consulted over communications with the media. In some instances, the school may receive a barrage of telephone, email and other communications from media sources; here all enquiries should be referred to the media officer. We would strongly advise that if you are publishing information (e.g. on the school's website), the communications team first be consulted.

**Contact details for Bracknell Forest communications team:**  
**Communications.Marketing@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk**

## Informing staff

Ideally staff members should be informed directly (e.g. by telephone, or word-of-mouth to those on-site if the school is open). A meeting or conference call should be arranged to outline plans for informing children and determine strategies for managing their reactions.

In the current situation, extra consideration should be given when making parents aware of the reactions that children may display and strategies for support. Support from the educational psychology service, school advisors (STEP) and other professionals may be useful at this point and is available on request. Local support groups outside of the local authority, such as bereavement charities,

may also be contacted for support. Please see pages 7-8 of this document for contact details.

Unexpected news of a death can trigger recollections and experiences of personal loss and bereavement amongst staff. For professional staff members, this may interfere with their accustomed day-to-day confidence in handling exchanges with children and parents, even where a well-established relationship exists. Staff are all individuals with their own history and experiences and senior staff need to be aware that responses will vary; sensitivity and support will be necessary for colleagues, as well as pupils and parents/carers.

## Informing children

Children and young people's awareness and understanding of the issues around death need to be taken into account when information is relayed to them. Information about common levels of understanding relating to a child's age/developmental stage can be found on page 5 of this document.

Some of the children may be informed on-site if still attending your provision (e.g. children whose parents are critical workers). In these cases, you need to be aware of the staff's own feelings of competence regarding discussing the issues with children.

## Informing parents

When an agreed message or script has been chosen for communicating the information, it is important that this information is made available to parents. Parents whose children are in attendance at the school will need to know exactly what their children have been told.

For the vast majority of students in your school, they will not currently be in attendance. Therefore parents may be the first people to explore the bereavement with their child(ren). They will need assistance on how to explain death and how to support the reactions and behaviours that may result. They will need information on professionals, charities and other support structures to access if need be.



You should also be aware of the circumstances of individual families (such as EAL families) and make accommodations where necessary.

### **Additional support from the EPS**

The EPS has provided information for parents that can be found on the local offer, including supporting children through bereavement, as well as basic information on helping children understand the coronavirus, and strategies at home.

For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EPS will be running parental phone consultations which can be booked up to 2 weeks in advance through this period. Further details will be shared with all schools / settings and you may wish to make parents aware of this support.

## Managing the process of sharing information

In previous recommendations, we have noted that children are probably best informed of very sad events in their own natural (class or tutor) groups, ideally with the person (class teacher/tutor) they have the closest understanding and relationship with. Clearly this will not be possible in the current circumstances as very few children will be in attendance at school.

### For those children who are continuing to attend school.

The principles of previous advice still apply. It would be beneficial for them to be told in small groups, preferably alongside other children that they know or have a connection with, and by adults that they feel safe with.

Large gatherings as a means of explaining the news is generally discouraged. In some situations, children who are unsure of how to feel once given the news may take their lead from those that are visibly and audibly expressing their feelings and distress; this can lead to difficult escalations.

In smaller settings, children may be encouraged to adapt their expected routine behaviour according to the closeness of their relationships with the child/young person, or adult who has died. Being alongside them in their shock and distress, validating their feelings, listening and supporting is vitally important.

Time may be needed to accommodate this depending on the severity of the loss and age of the students. The monitoring of a flexible departure from normal routine can incorporate opportunities for staff and students to identify themselves, or request the chance to talk to someone individually/in small groups, about the issues which have arisen or been stimulated. The school should be aware of differing belief systems and practices adopted by different cultures and religions with regard to death.

### For those children who are not currently attending school.

It is essential that the bulletin or information sent out by the school surrounding the circumstances of death, family expectations and/or future memorials is clear, concise and without ambiguity. Where information is shared within school settings, there are additional opportunities to clarify messages that appear less clear to students or parents; this will be much harder to achieve in current circumstances.

The EPS have provided a separate document for parents to help them explain sad events to children available on our local offer. However, for particularly vulnerable groups, you may wish to contact parents directly to discuss the information further. Parents, or the young people/young adults themselves, should be made aware of the support available to them and how they can access it.





## Short-term plans

### In relation to school-work

Staff and parents need to be aware that it will take time to return to any sense of normality. Normal work may need to be put on the backburner. Students will experience periods where they cannot focus and their memory or retention is poor. Some students may feel grief for a considerable time, especially if they are vulnerable in some way. Parents will need to know this at a time that they are expected to home-school/take the lead on supporting their child's learning. Students should be reassured that their feelings and behaviours are normal; being upset is a healthy reaction.

### Funerals

After sharing the news of the death, focus often centres around the anticipated funeral arrangements. Family's wishes are of significant importance and need for the school's participation will often fall to the headteacher. However, Government guidelines during the pandemic will have an impact upon traditional ceremonies and representation.

#### **This may include:**

- The funeral being limited to members of the deceased's household or family members.
- Adhering to social distancing guidelines during the funeral.
- Some who have shown a desire to attend may not be able to due to isolation.
- In some cases, there have been alternative means of viewing ceremonies (e.g. through live streaming).
- Social and cultural practices are being altered to match Government guidelines which may cause further distress for the family, or those who knew the individual well.

- This is challenging for all involved, those affected, and the ways in which people are able to show their support.

### Remembrance and memorials

Similarly, ceremonies that may normally be held at school, such as memorials lead by a religious leader affiliated by the school, are unlikely to be possible in the normal way. Physical reminders that have traditionally been used within some settings, such as special places or books of remembrance, may equally be compromised by the current situation, and may seem untimely when schools reopen. This presents the school with a challenge, as channelling students through positive activities of remembrance like writing or sharing photographs, thoughts and feelings in a remembrance book is often recognised as a healing activity.

In some instances where remembrance activities have not been available, community members have started leaving flowers at the school gate, for example, which has caused further challenges like knowing when it is appropriate to move/remove these items. The visual analogy of the flowers dying themselves can also be distressing for some if left there for significant periods.

Some schools, authorities and workplaces responding to both a need to remember and the challenges of social gatherings have responded by providing an online space for positive comments and messages of goodwill. This may provide an opportunity to bring the community together, whilst being mindful of social distancing and isolation. This does, however, need careful planning and thought including:

- How long will access to this site/virtual space be offered?
- Who will have access and how can data be protected?

- Can individuals change/amend their comments?
- What happens to the information gathered when comments are closed (e.g. made into a remembrance book/passed onto the family)?
- Who will moderate comments sent to ensure that they are appropriate?

Most importantly, any memorial or remembrance will need to be in accordance with the wishes of the family, and respectful of religious and cultural beliefs, and traditions of the family.

### **Identify individuals requiring additional support and provide it**

In the circumstances of a bereavement, all parties may need additional, specialised support, such as the children bereaved, those have been bereaved previously and whose needs are sparked by the more recent event or those for whom loss has been a significant part of their lives (but not necessarily identified).

Although school staff may not feel comfortable exploring ideas and feelings amongst pupils, they have an important role to play. A list of services, agencies and charities that may be able to support individuals or groups further can be found in the 'Sources of Support' section of this document.

In normal times we would recommend the affected not to become isolated and maintain contact with a support network but currently many households are being asked to isolate and only brief visits to the community are conducted whilst observing social distancing. Such situations could lead to an intensification of feelings of loneliness and grief and there could be family tensions that arise from household isolations.

### **Cruse advise those bereaved to:**

- Keep in regular contact with friends by phone, text, email and video calls.
- Get fresh air or sunlight if you are permitted to do so or open a window if you are not.
- Exercise in the house if you are not able to leave the premises.
- Try to keep to a regular routine or schedule.
- Get as much sleep/rest as you can.
- Find jobs to do around the house at times when you have more energy.
- Don't feel guilty if you are struggling – reach out to others who might be finding it difficult too, and seek practical help from friends, family or neighbours.

### **They advise others of ways to help:**

- Try and stay in contact with bereaved friends even if you cannot visit.
- Find out if they can talk on the phone or over the internet.
- Let them talk about the how they are feeling and the person who has died.
- If you know that someone is likely to struggle practically, you can still drop off supplies and gifts, staying 2 metres from them.



## Follow up: develop medium and long-term plans

The shock to the individual in experiencing trauma may be physical, emotional and cognitive, immediate or delayed. A school system, rather like an individual, may “carry on as normal” in an effort to cope, but the effects may be experienced long afterwards.

Having made arrangements to manage the immediate aftermath, identified children who may need additional support and commissioned this, the school staff (and particularly the headteacher) may find that they have their own issues which require them to seek counselling or other support. Monitoring the “emotional health” of the organisation, and affording space for individuals, or whole groups, to take restorative actions will be very important.

You may consider making permanent curricular changes to proactively address issues around death and loss for future cohorts of children, allowing the school to use its experience in its own development plan. At this relatively new period of social distancing and isolation, we do not know when schools are likely to re-open or we can return to normal. Depending on the feeling within the school community when this occurs, it may be appropriate to consider establishing permanent memorials or physical tokens of celebration, marking anniversaries or dedicating particular events/occasions/creations to the memory of a loved one.

## Reflection

Learning from an event can be a positive developmental process, and the collected thoughts and feelings of people who have shared a painful experience can be a very useful source of direction and reassurance to others who may tread that difficult path, or one close to it, in the future.

As an SLT or wider staff team, you may wish to ensure a period of reflection to learn from this experience.



## Checklists of information

The following questions and information may help you to plan actions when planning, disseminating information and supporting children and their families:

### When gathering information as an initial response, do you have clear information on:

- What has happened?
- Was this expected or unexpected?
- When did it happen?
- Who was involved?
- Are there additional fatalities, casualties or injuries?
- Are there implications of this death for other members of the local community (e.g. someone may have been involved in contributing to the death in some way)?
- Are there any siblings that may be affected, implicated or assumed to have some connection?
- Have all the family/families been notified?
- What are the family's wishes for sharing of information?

### When informing children:

#### Who's the best person to tell the child?

##### Is the adult:

- ☐ Known and trusted by the child?
- ☐ Someone who can maintain contact in the future?
- ☐ Someone who allows children to express their feelings?
- ☐ Someone who understands children's expressions of grief?

#### Where should a child be told?

- ☐ Is the place familiar to the child?
- ☐ Does the child feel safe there?
- ☐ Should the child be told individually?
- ☐ Should they be told in a small group with other children that they relate to?

#### When thinking about giving the news?

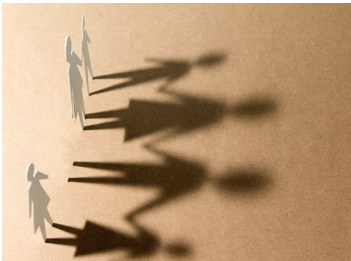
- ☐ What language is most easily understood by the child?
- ☐ Is the language used factual and consistent?
- ☐ Does the child have the opportunity to ask questions?
- ☐ Does the child have the opportunity to show an emotional response?
- ☐ How will you know if the child has understood the information?
- ☐ Are their cultural or religious factors to consider?

#### When sending out information (e.g. in a bulletin)

- ☐ Is the language clear, factual and unambiguous?
- ☐ Can any of the information be misinterpreted?
- ☐ Does this information take into consideration the views of the family?
- ☐ Does the bulletin explain where students/parents/others can go for additional support and arrangements that the school has made for coming to terms with this sort of experience?
- ☐ Have you removed all euphemisms? (use words like dead or died instead)
- ☐ Do you need to run any of the information by other professionals who support you, or the Communications Team?

**Some questions that may help you identify vulnerable individuals...**

- ☐ Were any individuals directly involved?
- ☐ Did anyone witness the event?
- ☐ Are there any siblings or members of the household?
- ☐ Which children were closest to the deceased?
- ☐ Which children are displaying emotional distress?
- ☐ Have any of the children experienced significant relational losses in the past or experienced trauma?
- ☐ Children with pre-existing mental health of SEMH needs?
- ☐ Children with learning difficulties?
- ☐ Children who are currently experiencing difficulties at home?
- ☐ Are any children being blamed?
- ☐ Any students who may be vulnerable due to culture or language issues?



## Coronavirus and Bereavement

Support for schools / Settings and Parents / Carers

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