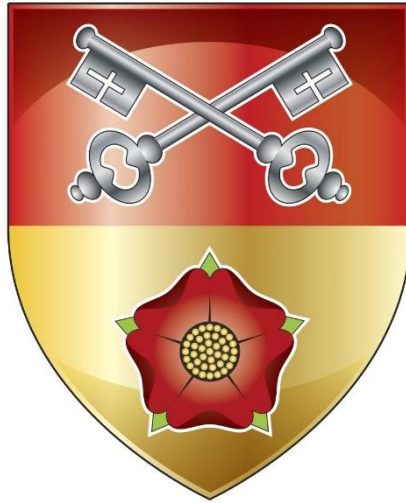


THE
DIOCESE
OF
BLACKBURN



Serve Christ, Share the Gospel, Support, Equip and Educate

“live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that...I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit”

Philippians 1:27

Bereavement Pack

A whole school approach to supporting loss and bereavement.

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Section 1

Introduction

Church of England Schools are recognised for their distinctive Christian vision which is firmly underpinned by Christian values. In these caring Christian communities, it is almost inevitable that, at some time, bereavement, be it of a member of staff, child or family member, will be experienced and will affect many if not the whole school community.

This resource has been developed to support staff wishing to increase their knowledge and understanding about bereavement, loss and change. It is also intended to help schools to be prepared and help them to respond to a loss in a way which reflects the school's distinct Christian ethos. This publication contains practical information, suggestions for further reading and signposting to organisations which can offer further support.

Isaiah 41:10 'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'



Section 2

Practical Guidance & Advice

A Model Bereavement Policy for Schools¹

A practical guide of what to do if a member of the school community dies.

This guidance is based on the policy developed by East Riding of Yorkshire Council, available on the "A Child of Mine" website

Contents

- Introduction
- Objectives
- Writing a Bereavement Policy
- The school's Bereavement Team
- The role of the school's Bereavement Team

¹ Southwark Diocese: Model Bereavement Policy for Schools www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)

- The first few days
- Breaking sad news to staff, pupils and families
- Medium Term actions
- The funeral
- Support for Staff
- Support for Pupils
- Remembering
- Children's Understanding of Death
- Information Sharing Pathways:
 - ❖ following the death of the head teacher
 - ❖ following the death of a staff member
 - ❖ following the death of a pupil
 - ❖ following the death of a pupil in school
 - ❖ following the death of a close family member of a school pupil
 - ❖ following major incidents

Letter Templates:

- ❖ informing parents of the death of a member of staff
- ❖ informing parents of the death of a pupil

- Guidelines for breaking the news about a death to staff and governors
- Guidelines for breaking news of the death to the children/young people
- Things to consider in the days following the news of the death
- Guidance for parents
- Guidance for supporting bereaved children and young people when they return to school.
- General Advice

Introduction²

The purpose of this Bereavement Policy is to help everyone involved at a time when there may be shock, upset and confusion, ensuring that there is as little disruption as possible, effective communication takes place and that each member of the school community is supported to help them through a very difficult time.

Every year 20,000 children under the age of 16 years will be bereaved of a parent and many more will experience the death of someone else special in their life. In addition to these individual pupils, schools may also experience the death of a child at the school or a staff member.

² Southwark Diocese: Model Bereavement Policy for Schools www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)

It is almost inevitable, therefore, that at some time all schools will have to deal with a death that affects the school community.

As children spend the vast majority of their time at school, teachers and staff members will be the primary source of care and support. Bereaved children will see school as a safe haven away from the turmoil of emotions at home and will look to trusted staff members for help.

Death is something that most people choose not to think about, so when faced with it we often find ourselves ill prepared. Faith may provide a way of living hopefully and finding the things which give life a new sense.

During the process of bereavement, faith can help to acknowledge the reality of the loss experienced and to reconstruct life, valuing the things of the past and reaching out for new meaning in the future.

Belief in the afterlife and in eventual reunion with those who have gone before can bring comfort and the view that death has a purpose and is not a random, meaningless event can be reassuring.

Why write a Bereavement Policy?³

A school which takes time to formalise a response before a critical incident or tragedy occurs, will be much better placed to cope should it ever have to be put into practice. Therefore, all schools should have a Bereavement policy. However, as every school is different and every situation unique, this policy will be dependent on each school's history and context. What is deemed appropriate will vary. The Bereavement Policy should be viewed more as a framework to work around rather than something prescriptive.

The aims of a Bereavement Policy are to:

- ❖ Provide support when people are in shock or upset, especially with sudden or multiple deaths or traumatic circumstances 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 wider agencies and clarify the pathway of support.
- ❖ To endeavour to counter any adverse effects of bereavement and maintain pupils' emotional well-being. (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.)
- ❖ Identify key people within your Diocese and Local Education Authority.
- ❖ Provide outlines of documents e.g. letter to parents, in advance.
- ❖ Provide suggestions of resources for supporting pupils.

³ Southwark Diocese: Model Bereavement Policy for Schools www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)

- ❖ Identify a Bereavement Team with clear roles and responsibilities

In addition, Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN), must have regard to:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
- the importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood

The school's Bereavement Team

Who will be in the school's Bereavement Team and what will they do?

- Use any expertise within the school and share the responsibilities.
- Decide who will take overall charge and designate substitutes should they be absent.
- Who will be responsible for communicating with the families directly involved?
- Who will give the news to the rest of the school community?
- If the press is involved, who will liaise with journalists?
- Organise training for all involved if necessary.

The role of the school's Bereavement Team⁴

In the event of a death, the school will delegate the following tasks to the Bereavement Team:

- Identify a suitable contact for the bereaved family;
- Keep a log of all actions and contacts made during the day and subsequently
- Establish a rota for answering the school phone and agree the message to be given to enquiries;
- Get a letter out to all parents expressing sympathy;
- Bring staff together for briefing (this can be difficult in larger settings such as a secondary school); ensure all staff in school are made aware of the sad news and offered support if required;
- Dependent on time of day, make appropriate arrangements to inform other pupils - either on day the death occurred or the following day)
- Call together the support team as soon as possible, identify those thought to be most affected and vulnerable (sibling, close friends, class colleagues) and allocate responsibilities for breaking the news to them and supporting them

⁴ Southwark Diocese: Model Bereavement Policy for Schools www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)

- Prepare scripts for staff involved in informing the pupils what has happened. Remember smaller groups are better than whole school assemblies or even year group gatherings;
- Make arrangements to have extra adults in school to support the most vulnerable groups of pupils and staff; □ inform the Local Authority (Emergency Contact Officers);
- Seek advice / support from the local authority, for example the Critical Incident Support team CIST (Lancashire Educational Psychology Service);
- If appropriate, contact the local authority's Communications Team for support and advice on handling the media;
- Identify the most vulnerable (pupils and adults) and develop a support programme arrange a follow-up briefing for staff to report back on any concerns / issues (personal or pupil related);
- With family permission, provide a condolence book in school and / or on the website;
- Check if any absent staff or pupils need to be contacted – Year 11 on study leave, other trips etc...
- Make time during the school day for expressing thoughts and feelings (staff and pupils)
- Keep poems, drawings, cards created by the pupils to present to the bereaved family later, but make sure all the material is reviewed first;
- Ensure staff who are supporting others can access support themselves;
- Identify which members of the Bereavement Team will communicate with the family regarding the funeral. This person will be responsible for liaising with the bereaved family, ascertain their wishes about the school's involvement in the funeral, if any.

The first few days⁵

In your policy, map out the first few days after an incident. It is usually best to have minimum disruption to the timetable, but some flexibility may be required. Consider what the school approach will be if pupils are too upset to attend lessons. If it is a teacher who has died, what will happen to his/her class?

Breaking sad news to staff, pupils and families

- Obtaining factual information should be made a priority. Think through how this might be done, remembering that contacting those directly involved may be difficult. State in your policy the importance of not making assumptions or repeating what has been heard through rumour.
- It is essential that all staff are informed straight away, ideally before pupils. Identify ways of doing this sensitively. Don't forget part-time and peripatetic staff.
- If a pupil dies by suicide, Samaritans provide a step-by step programme to support schools. They can be contacted on 0808 168 2528
- Pupils should be told as soon as possible. This is best done in familiar groups by someone they know. Staff may need guidance on words to use and the approach to take. Have something pre-prepared.

⁵ Southwark Diocese: Model Bereavement Policy for Schools www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)

- A letter should go to families the same day if possible. A pre-prepared script will be very helpful. It is difficult to find the right words when emotional and in shock.
- Consider including guidelines for parents on supporting bereaved children with the letter.

Medium term actions

Maintain contact with the bereaved family, grieving or injured pupils and staff members – by visiting if this is appropriate

- Obtain the family's views on attendance at the funeral
- Remind parents that children and young people should only go to funerals with family support
- Maintain as normal a school environment as possible in the circumstances
- Discuss with staff and pupils what is to happen in terms of the class or form room – the deceased pupil's seat, books etc... Note that all belongings should be retained till later when they should pass on to the family when they are ready for that.
- Later, encourage discussion regarding suitable memorials – always involving the bereaved family in the discussion and planning. If this is started too soon, it may seem like an inappropriate attempt to “move on” too quickly
- Let parents know they can approach school for advice regarding their children's responses. Communicate any concerns you may have regarding individual children with their family
- Ensure staff are aware of the process of grieving and how it manifests itself across the age ranges (see Children's understanding of Death below). Empower adults in school so that they feel confident in listening to pupils' stories; protecting vulnerable pupils; having regular contact with pupils they are concerned about; providing a good adult role model in respect of responding to bereavement and supporting others.

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 prefer to keep it private.

- Identify which staff and pupils may want to attend and the practicalities of issues such as staff cover and transport. For some schools, it may be appropriate to close the school, for others, it may not be. Clear guidance on this in the policy will be helpful.
- Will flowers be sent and/or a collection made? Say if staff and pupils should be involved in the decision.
- Cultural and religious implications need consideration. (See section on Different Cultures & Beliefs)

Support for staff

Supporting bereaved pupils will be very stressful for staff who may already be struggling with their own reactions and emotions. Include a list of outside agencies, and people at your Local Education Authority, whom may be able to offer help, both short and long-term.

Plan for some sort of informal mutual support, for example, in the staffroom at the end of the school day, to give staff an opportunity to share feelings and reactions.

Support for pupils

State in your policy the importance of identifying pupils who may be particularly vulnerable or likely to experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). For example, anyone who witnessed the death.

- Compile (and keep updated) a list of outside professionals and agencies who can come into the school in the event of a traumatic death to counsel pupils. (See section on support Organisations)
- Make sure that help offered from outside is appropriate before accepting. Pupils may find it difficult to receive support or counselling from families of fellow pupils.
- Identify a suitable place in school for pupils who need some space if too upset to stay in the classroom and people to whom they can go for support.

Remembering

- This is difficult to plan in advance, but careful thought is required. State that ideally the family of the person who has died should be consulted about plans for any memorials. Schools often find that an act of collective worship which takes the form of a celebration of life is appropriate.

Children's understanding of death⁶

Children and young people mature at different rates and their understanding and responses to bereavement are likely to be based as much on their experience of life as on their chronological age. The age categories given are guidelines only.

2-5 Years

Young children may be beginning to understand the concept of death, but do not appreciate its finality. Some may not appreciate the permanence of death: 'Shall we dig granny up now?' They think in literal and concrete terms and so will be confused by euphemisms for death such as 'gone away' or 'gone to sleep'. Children of this age may well require repeated explanations of what has happened. As their thinking is very much centred on themselves, they may consider that something they did or said caused the death. They are prone to fantasise at this age and if not told what is happening may dream up something scarier than reality.

5-8 Years

At about five years of age most children are beginning to realise that dead people are different from those who are alive, that they do not feel, they cannot hear, see, smell or speak and they do not

⁶ Child Bereavement UK: Children's understanding of death

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/schools-informationpack-primary-schools> (accessed January 2019)

need to eat or drink. At around seven years of age the majority of children accept that death is permanent and that it can happen to anyone. This can result in separation anxiety. They are better able to express their thoughts and feelings but may conceal them and outwardly appear unaffected. They need to be given an opportunity to ask questions and to be given as much information as possible to allow them to adjust. They are likely to be very interested in the rituals surrounding death.

8-12 Years

At this age children's understanding of death almost matches that of an adult, although they find it difficult to grasp abstract concepts. An important factor is their deepening realisation of the inevitability of death and an increasing awareness of their own mortality. This can result in fear and insecurity. Their need to know details continues, and they will seek answers to very specific questions.

Adolescence

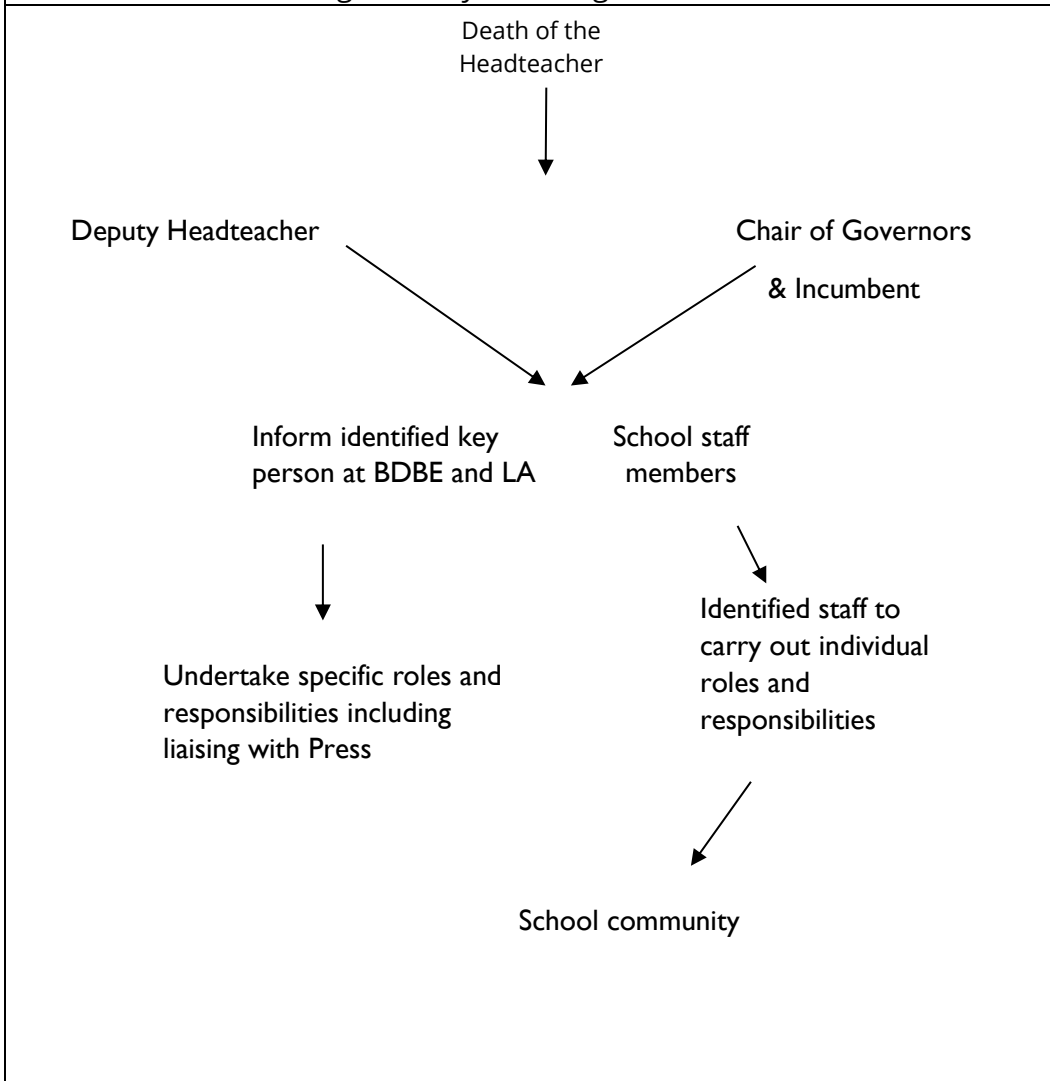
The struggle for independence at this age may cause bereaved teenagers to challenge the beliefs and expectations of others as to how they should be feeling or behaving. Death increases anxieties about the future, and they may question the meaning of life and experience depression. Teenagers may find it easier to discuss their feelings with a sympathetic friend or adult than with a close family member. They may be having difficulty coming to terms with their own mortality and that of those close to them; they may cope with this by refusing to contemplate the possibility of death by taking part in risk-taking behaviour. Anger makes up a large part of their grief, often compounded by a sense of injustice.

Information Sharing Pathways⁷

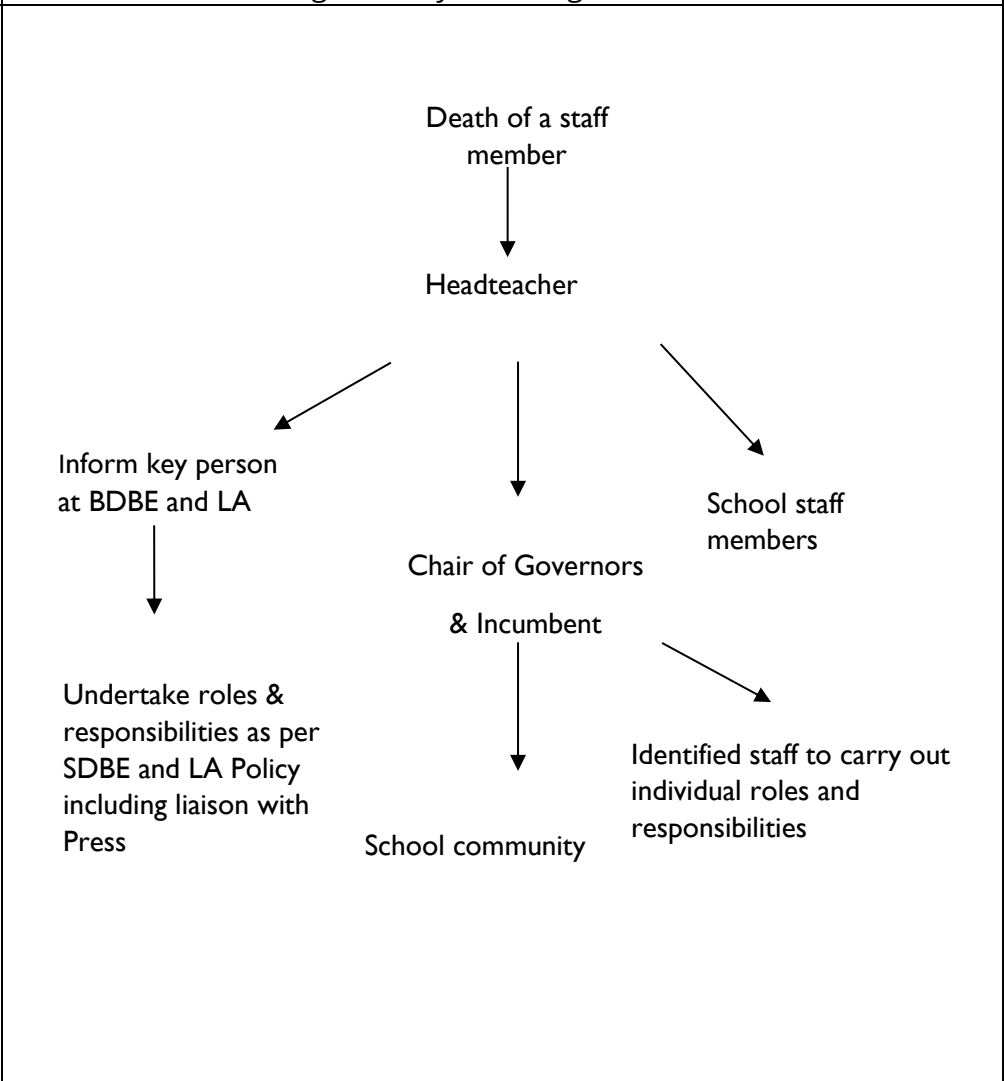
The following diagrams identify the various information sharing pathways that schools can adopt depending on the circumstances of the bereavement.

⁷ Southwark Diocese: Information Sharing Pathways

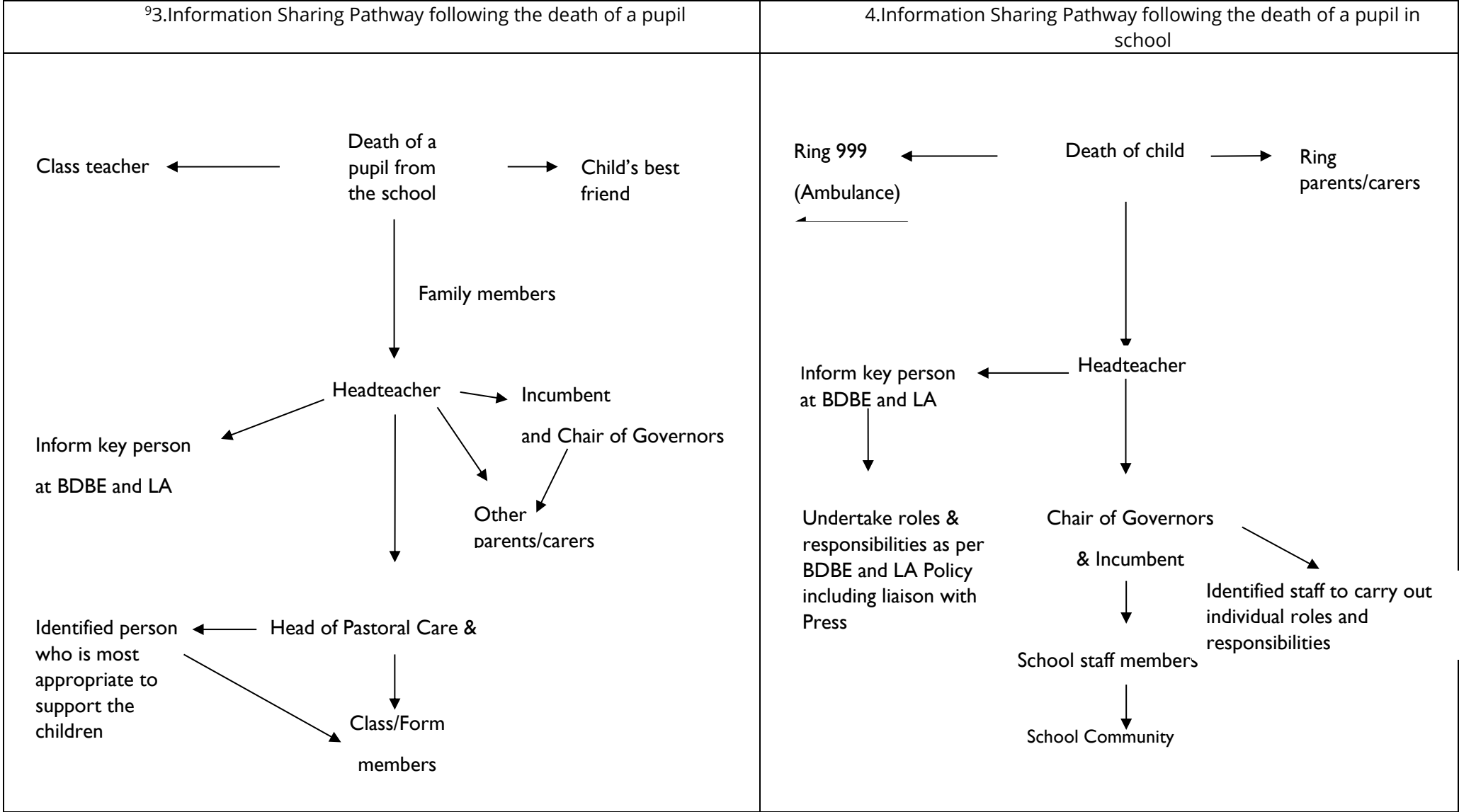
⁸1. Information Sharing Pathway following the death of the Headteacher



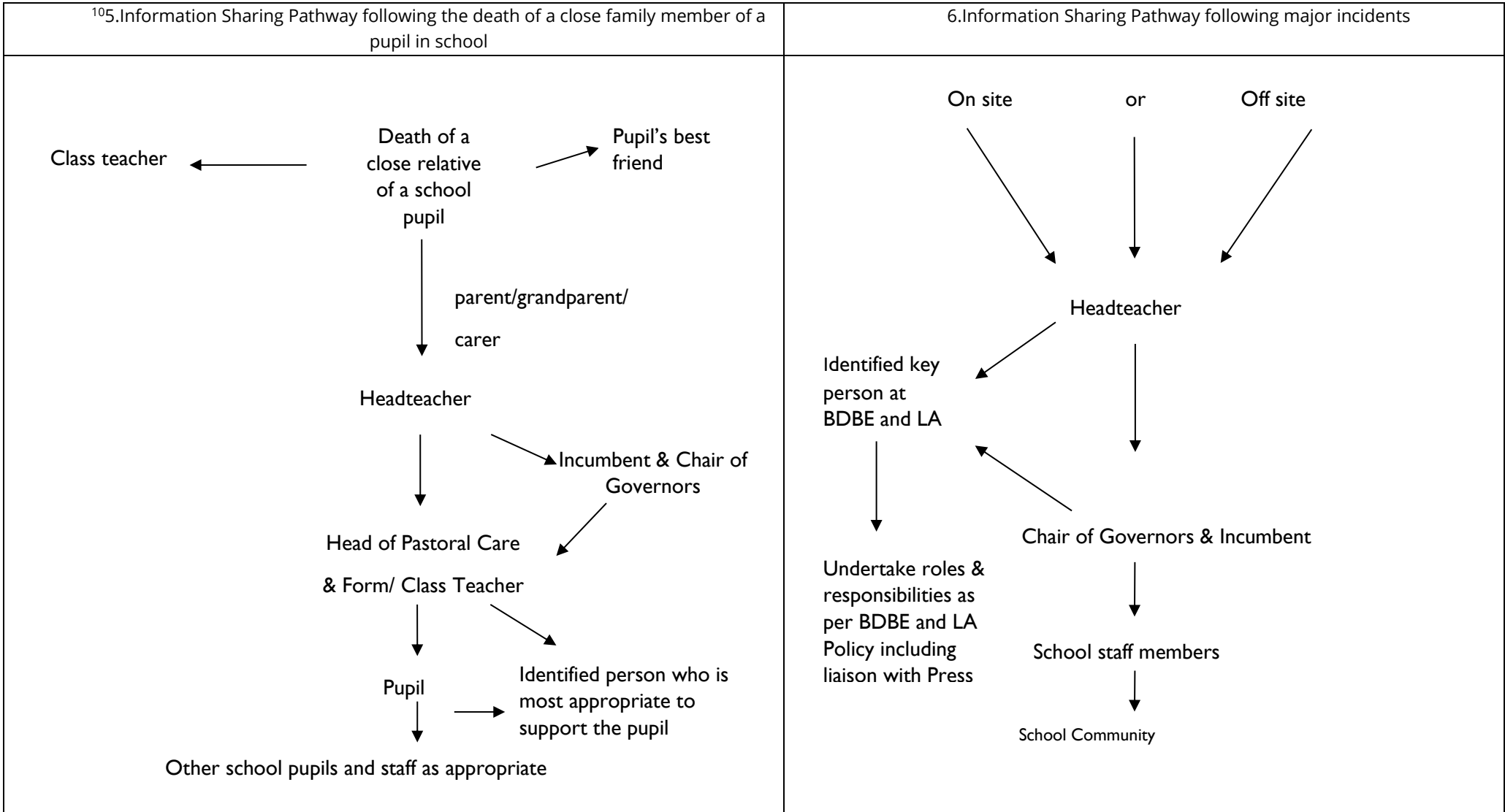
2. Information Sharing Pathway following the death of a staff member



⁸ Southwark Diocese: Information Sharing Pathways www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)



⁹ Southwark Diocese: Information Sharing Pathways www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)



¹⁰ Southwark Diocese: Information Sharing Pathways www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)

Letter Templates¹¹

The following letters can be used by the school depending on the circumstances of the bereavement.

Template of a Letter Informing Parents of the Death of a Member of Staff

<Address>

<Date>

Dear Parents and Carers

Your child's class teacher/form tutor/head of year had the sad task of informing the children of the tragic death of <Name> who has been a teacher at this school for a number of years.

Our thoughts and prayers are with <Name>'s family at this time and in an effort to try to respond to his/her death in a positive way, all the children have been informed.

When someone dies, it is normal for family and friends to experience many different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion and children are likely to ask questions about the death which need to be answered honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.

The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try and answer their questions at school, but if there is anything else you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to contact us.

<Clergy Name> has been in school and will continue to offer spiritual support to children, families and staff. We remember <Name> and all the bereaved in our thoughts and prayers.

Yours sincerely

<Name>

Headteacher

Template of a Letter Informing Parents of the Death of a Pupil

Before sending a letter home to parents about the death of a pupil, permission must be gained from that pupil's parents.

¹¹ Southwark Diocese: Information Sharing Pathways www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)

The contents of the letter and the distribution list need to be agreed by the parents and school.

<Address>

<Date>

Dear Parents

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

<Name> died from an illness called <name of illness.> As you may be aware, many children who have <name of illness> get better, but sadly <Name> had been ill for a long time and died peacefully at home yesterday.

He/She was a very popular member of the class and will be missed by everyone who knew him/her.

When someone dies, it is normal for their friends and family to experience lots of different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion. The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try to answer their questions at school but if there is anything more that you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We will be arranging a memorial service in the school in the next few months as a means of celebrating <Name...s> life.

<Clergy Name> has been in school and will continue to offer spiritual support to children, families and staff. We remember <Name> and all the bereaved in our thoughts and prayers.

Yours sincerely

<Name>

Headteacher

Template of a Letter Informing Parents of the Sudden Death of a Pupil

<Address>

<Date>

Dear Parents

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

He/She was a very popular member of the class and will be missed by everyone who knew him/her.

When someone dies, it is normal for their friends and family to experience lots of different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion. The children have been told that their teachers

are willing to try to answer their questions at school but if there is anything more that you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We will be arranging a memorial service in the school in the next few months as a means of celebrating <Name...>'s life.

<Clergy Name> has been in school and will continue to offer spiritual support to children, families and staff. We remember <Name> and all the bereaved in our thoughts and prayers.

Yours sincerely

<Name>

Headteacher

Guidelines for Breaking the News about a Death to Staff and Governors¹²

- Arrange a staff meeting, which should take place as soon as possible.
- Discuss this with the clergy and invite them to be present when the news is broken.
- Choose a prayer to say together – see Section 4 - Resources.
- Impart factual information. Never make assumptions or repeat what has been said by rumour.
- Give news sensitively and empathetically, being aware that people may react in different ways.
- Be cognisant of the relationships staff may have had with the person who has died.
- Ensure that there is someone responsible for telling people who are unable to attend the staff meeting ie part time staff, peripatetic staff and lunch time supervisors. Consider the best way of imparting the information to those absent i.e. by making a home visit, by telephone, text or email, etc. Consider providing a 'quiet time', a short time of prayer or refectation at the end of any meetings.

Identify individual members of staff who feel able to:

- a) support other members of staff;
- b) support groups of pupils.

The most appropriate person to support the pupils should be well known to them and trusted.

- Identify a member of staff who will liaise with the individual's family, to deal with staff condolences and any funeral arrangements (if necessary).

¹² Southwark Diocese: Information Sharing Pathways www.education.southwark.anglican.org (accessed January 2019)

- Identify an appropriate member of staff who will take phone calls and/or direct them as appropriate. Try to establish a “protected” telephone line to ensure free flow of accurate information.
- Telephone line providers may provide an additional line if the situation requires one.
- Identify a member of staff who will provide a letter for parents (see examples of letter templates) which should be sent the same day.
- Arrange a staff meeting at the end of the day to ensure staff are coping with the situation.
- Identify any unresolved problems or ongoing issues.
- Ensure that those staff who live alone have contact numbers of friends in case of need.
- Identify sources of advice and support to access for help in coming to terms with the bereavement (see Section 4 -Resources).

Guidelines for Breaking News of the Death to the Pupils

- Inform the pupils as soon as possible about the death.
- Discuss this with the clergy and invite them to be present when the news is broken.
- Where possible, the pupils should be informed in small groups ie class or tutor groups.
- Identify those pupils who had a long term and/or close relationship with the person who has died, so they can be told separately.
- If appropriate, a special assembly could be held at a later time in the day to remember the person who has died.
- Those pupils who have had more involvement with the person who has died should be given the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences either within the group or in a one-to-one situation.
- Allow the pupils to verbalise their feelings.
- Allow the pupils to ask questions and answer them honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.
- Allow the pupils to discuss the situation and share their experiences of death.
- Be honest about your own feelings and talk about your relationship with the person.
- Use plain English with compassion and avoid using euphemisms.
- Ensure the pupils understand that the death is nothing to do with anything they have said or done. It is in no way their fault.
- Reassure them that not all people who are ill or have had an accident will die and that many people get better.
- Conclude the discussion with a prayer or special poem to remember the person who has died and their family.
- Put an appropriate time limit on the discussion. It is preferable to resume normal school activities as soon as possible, thus ensuring minimal disruption within the school.
- Be available for any pupil who needs additional help and support.

Things to Consider in the Days Following the News of the Death

- Within the Church school it is important to deal sensitively with those who have a strong religious tradition and those who have very little. The needs of the school and the community need to be handled with considerable sensitivity and tact.
- Ensure that all parties ie school and clergy/church are working together to help support the family and those who grieve. Some kind of 'Action Plan' outlining who has been allocated responsibilities needs to be created as soon as possible.
- Consult the incumbent or local clergy to consider how the church, clergy and shared rituals can support the school/ family in coming to terms with loss.
 - The clergy are trained to try and understand the feelings that bereaved people experience. Ask what advice and support they can give.
 - Faith can provide spiritual guidance. There are usually services for all ages and at a time of sadness many find a warm, loving Church community a great strength in recovering from the death of a loved one. In the congregation there will be others who are bereaved, quietly supporting and helping one another.
 - There may be a pastoral care group in the parish with people who have also experienced bereavement – people who can support children and families.
- Identify an allocated quiet place where children, young people and staff can go if necessary. It is preferable for there to be minimum disruption to the timetable, but some flexibility may be required.
- Try to engender an awareness of when people need help and support, particularly those who worked closely with the person who has died, School Administrative Officers/other administrative staff who are taking telephone calls, dealing with parents, etc.
- Ensure that nominated staff with responsibilities for supporting staff and children are available to do so. It may be necessary temporarily to provide staff cover for their normal activities.
- Consider practical issues such as:
 - Putting an obituary in the paper, sending flowers to the home or to the funeral, arranging a collection, etc.
 - Who will attend the funeral?
 - Cover for any staff that may be going to the funeral.
 - Transport to and from the funeral.
 - Informing the parents of those pupils who will be involved.
 - Possible closure of the school. If this is the case, remember to tell the Lunchtime Supervisors, Premises Officer, etc in advance.

Guidance for parents and carers

When supporting a bereaved family or informing other families of a death within the school community, parents and carers may appreciate guidance to help them respond to questions

and better understand reactions from their children. The following information could be given to parents in order to provide help and reassurance:

Guidance for Parents and Carers¹³

Most children and young people affected by a death just need adults who care about them. You cannot take away their sadness, but you can acknowledge it and support them through the experience. Reactions will vary. If they were not close to the person who died, they may be unaffected. However, it is best not to make assumptions. Any death may make children and young people anxious, as they become more aware of their own mortality and that of those around them.

Questions are healthy, as is curiosity. A good approach with any age is to acknowledge what has happened and then answer questions as they arise. Having accurate information will enable you to answer questions with facts rather than rumour; try to obtain this from a reliable source so that information is both accurate and sensitive to the wishes of the bereaved family.

Young children often do not have adult inhibitions surrounding death and you may be taken aback by some of their comments and reactions. It is not unusual for them to act out funerals or play at being dead. It is their way of trying to make sense of what has happened. Teenagers may become withdrawn and difficult to engage with. Respect their need for personal space whilst gently reminding them that you are there if they need you.

Children often have a surprising capacity to deal with the truth, if given information in simple, straightforward language, appropriate for their age and understanding. Young children tend to make up what they do not know, and their imaginings are often worse than the reality. Adolescents and teenagers will resent a lack of honesty in the adults around them and the resultant loss of trust will be difficult to regain.

Maintain routines, such as going to school. Familiar situations and contact with friends brings security and a sense of normality. Continue to expect the usual rules of behaviour. Normality with love and compassion is what to aim for.

Do not think that you have to hide your own sadness. Seeing adults expressing emotion can give a child of any age 'permission' to do the same, if they feel they want to. Hearing how you are feeling may help them to consider their own feelings. Be ready to listen but don't expect your child to always want to talk. They usually will when ready, and often to people who are not immediate family. One way to create opportunities for sharing thoughts and memories is with a joint activity. Young people especially, tend to talk when they do not feel under pressure to do so.

You may notice some of the following which are all normal as long as they do not continue for too long:

¹³ Child Bereavement UK: Guidance for parents and carers <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/schools-informationpack-primary-schools> (accessed January 2019)

- *Change in behaviour, perhaps becoming unnaturally quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive*
- *Anger is a common response at all ages and may be directed at people or events which have no connection to the death*
- *Disturbed sleep and bad dreams.*
- *Anxiety demonstrated by clingy behaviour and a reluctance to be separated from parents or carers. Older children may express this in more practical ways, for example by expressing concerns over issues that adults may perceive as insensitive or unimportant*
- *Being easily upset by events that would normally be trivial to them.*
- *Difficulty concentrating, being forgetful and generally 'not with it.' This makes school work particularly difficult and academic performance may suffer. Older children may feel that there is no point in working hard at school and they might lose a general sense of purpose in their lives.*
- *Physical complaints, such as headaches, stomach aches and a general tendency to be run down and prone to minor illness.*

Grief is a natural and necessary response to a death. However, if concerned about your child, do not hesitate to seek advice

The Role of the School

When a child or young person experiences the death of someone important to them, they not only need to adapt to living with their grief within the family home, but also to the challenges of a changed life in the outside world. This will include school. Children spend a large proportion of their time at nursery, school or college, and their social life is often centred on friends made there. Therefore, the way their school or college responds is very important to them.

The response works best when they are consulted and involved in any decisions that may affect them. This could be something as simple as arranging for a child to arrive ten minutes after everyone else, giving her teacher time to talk to the class.

Support for your child will be most effective if everybody works together so never feel that you are 'making a fuss'.

You can expect a caring response, one which is underpinned by the school's Christian vision and ethos. Even though some staff may not be sure what to say and may feel a little out of their depth, be assured that they will be given the support that they need to help you in any way they can. The school will have access to resources and organisations that will ensure that they offer you and your child the highest quality support and guidance possible.

What school can offer a grieving child just by carrying on with normal daily routines

Some children feel that in order to protect immediate family from further upset, they sometimes find it easier to talk to someone not directly involved, such as a familiar and trusted teacher or learning mentor. They feel that going to school gives a sense of normality, and many choose to return immediately after a death has occurred for this reason. Others need to take a few days

off, but the longer they are away, the harder it can be to return. When grieving, children of any age often view school as a place where they can have some time away from overwhelming emotions and sadness.

Communication with school is important so let the school know about the death as soon as you can. If this is too difficult for you to do, ask a friend to act as a messenger. Try to keep school aware of any arrangements, such as the date of the funeral. From then on, keep up communication. Let them know of any changed behaviour and of any particular concerns or anxieties your child may have concerning school.

Request that all staff know that your child is grieving, who they are grieving for, and when the death occurred. Some children are reluctant for this information to be given out but if everyone has the basic facts, this prevents insensitive remarks being made by teachers and others because they were unaware of what has happened. Certain lesson topics may bring back painful reminders of the circumstances surrounding the death. This unintended upset can cause real distress for your child and the member of staff concerned.

What can I expect from my child's school?

Reading the For schools section on Child Bereavement UK's website (www.childbereavementuk.org) will give you a feel for what is reasonable for a school to put in place for any grieving pupil. Adults often make assumptions about what they think a grieving child needs but this can differ from what the child actually wants. So do check with your child what they would like school to do. Ask for a meeting with whoever is responsible for Pastoral Care and talk through with them what is going to be most helpful for your child.

Below are examples of what many schools will offer a grieving child:

- A chance to meet and talk to your child about how they would like their return to school managed and how best to break the news to their friends and classmates.*
- An opportunity to acknowledge what has happened but without making a fuss so that your child does not feel the spotlight is on them.*
- Someone of your child's choice that they can talk to, should they feel the need to do this.*
- A member of staff who will keep a look out for your child while they are at school, and be the person to contact if you have any queries or concerns. Learning mentors often have this role or someone with pastoral care responsibilities.*
- A 'time out' system to enable your child to have some space away from the hustle and bustle if they feel overwhelmed by powerful emotions. Some schools can organise this as time away from class, but still with an adult; others have a quiet corner in the classroom.*
- A record of key dates, such as the anniversary of the death, which can often act as a trigger for children to revisit their grief.*
- Some flexibility around deadlines for handing in work. Grieving is exhausting and a child or young person may struggle to concentrate on school work. A member of Child Bereavement UK's Young People's Advisory Group said: 'Everything seemed really trivial, and all of my work just didn't really matter to me anymore.'*

All of the above are very simple to put in place and take little in the way of resources; they just need a bit of thought. The most important thing that your child's school can provide is people who care and who have a bit of understanding. It doesn't matter that they are not trained bereavement counsellors. School staff know how to listen, and really listening is what the children we work with say means more than anything to them.

The school can signpost parents to the resource section of this document and to a booklet for parents 'Helping Children Deal with Bereavement' is also available on the Lancashire Schools' Portal in the Bereavement section.

Guidance for supporting bereaved children and young people when they return to school.

Before the child or young person comes back to school, the headteacher or class teacher should explain what has happened to class mates and/or year groups as appropriate. The headteacher is best placed to decide on how this is done most sensitively and appropriately. Approaches may differ slightly; however, it is important for the key worker, class teacher, year head or pastoral care teacher to acknowledge to the child what has happened. This will have been discussed with parents or carers prior to child returning to school.

Things to consider:

- Do not be afraid to use the words dead or death "I was very sorry to hear of the death of your..."
- Children and young people need honesty. Although sometimes difficult, it is better to answer awkward questions truthfully.
- Recognise the full tragedy for the child. Do not try to comfort with comments such as "at least it is not as bad as..." You might think this is helpful, it is not.
- Reassure them that they are not responsible. If this is an issue (it may not be for all children and young people), reassure them that the death was not their fault.
- Whether a pupil is returning to school quickly or after a period of absence, staff should ensure that there are systems in place to support them, for example: Time out cards – special cards giving the young person permission to leave the class when feeling overwhelmed, emotional. Young people often feel embarrassed about showing their emotions and do not want to cry in front of their peers. By offering time out the young person can express their grief away from the classroom.
- Support the young person to express their grief if appropriate.
- Access to a quiet space for time out and reflection if required. n More intensive support from pastoral care staff
- Access to a school counsellor, if there is one, and/or local services as appropriate.
- Grief is a very personal experience, every child and young person will experience it differently, give them space to deal with their feelings in their own way.

As time passes...

- Be prepared to listen, again and again and again.

- Give bereaved pupils time. It may be many months before they can fully cope with the pressures of school work. Remember that they will be grieving for life and the loss will always be with them.
- Offer tailor made support if required, for example, Seasons for Growth or by referring into a local service provider.
- Be aware of important dates such as the anniversary of the death, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and so on.

General Advice

- Have age appropriate books about death in all classes as a matter of course, not just after a death and during bereavement, so that pupils begin to know and understand the vocabulary of death. These help pupils articulate their fears and distress when the time comes. (See Section 4- Resources)
- Learning about dying and death should be an ordinary part of the curriculum. Some curriculum areas such as RE, Science, PSHE and English offer opportunities for discussions.

Schools may need information and advice on the various death traditions and customs of faiths other than Christian. Inadvertent insensitivity or ignorance can cause great offence and add to a family's grief.



Section 3

Acts of Collective Worship, Prayer and Reflection

Special Acts of Collective Worship - saying 'goodbye'¹⁴

Most schools feel that organising some sort of special act of collective worship or remembrance service after a death in a school community is a helpful thing to do. It can provide an opportunity for children to celebrate the life of the person who has died. It can also put back a sense of normality into what may have been a very unsettled time. Below are some ideas to help you organise something appropriate.

Why hold a special act of collective worship?

- To bring the school together to acknowledge what has happened in a manner that reflects the school's Christian ethos.
- To reflect on, remember and give thanks to God for the life of the person who has died
- To normalise and share grief in a way that reflects the school's as a caring Christian family
- To give the message that it is OK to be sad but equally OK to not be affected
- To inform pupils and staff of any support that is available

Who should attend?

Anyone who wishes to be there: teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, any family who feel able to attend. In a very large school it may not be possible to get everyone together and a year group collective worship might be more appropriate. Many families find comfort in other people organising something special and appreciate being there. Others may not wish to participate but should be given the opportunity to do so.

Who should be involved?

Anyone who wants to be. Pupils have produced some very moving acts of worship about friends who have died. It helps them to feel involved and gives a sense of doing something positive. Very young children will need greater amounts of adult input but can still participate in a way appropriate for their age and understanding.

How to structure a special act of collective worship

Have a clear beginning, middle and an end.

Begin the worship in the same way as you would other ones – Playing reflective but uplifting music can help to create the right atmosphere as can showing suitable images through a PowerPoint to set the mood, words of welcome or 'special' such as 'The lord be with you...

¹⁴ Child Bereavement UK: Special assemblies - saying goodbye, Child Bereavement UK: Guidance for parents and carers <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/schools-informationpack-primary-schools> (accessed January 2019)

And also, with you.', lighting candles with reference to welcoming God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Start by explaining the purpose and length of the collective worship. Follow with a brief reminder of the circumstances surrounding the death and when it happened. Explain that everyone is different, and some people will be more affected than others, but whether deeply sad, just a bit thoughtful, or anything in between, that is fine.

The middle section could include:

- Lighting a special remembrance candle
- A bible reading and explanation
- A poem chosen or written by pupils
- Pupils or staff taking it in turns to recount stories or memories.
- Photographs of the person or child who has died to give a visual reminder, but remember a large image can be too much for any grieving family attending.
- Placing objects associated with the person who has died into a special memory box. This can then be given to the family.
- Talking about a memory tree or collage made by sticking a collection of drawings that pupils have created onto a large sheet of paper or onto a tree outline. This can be added to during the collective worship.
- Reading a story or a section from a suitable book.
- Favourite music / songs or poems of the person who has died.
- A hymn or song for everyone to sing
- Reflection time accompanied music and/or images to view on a screen or IWB.
- Prayers for everyone to share and ones that pupils have written.
- The end needs some thought and is better if it can leave everyone with a sense of looking forward. Some suggestions include:
 - Giving a memory book to the family.
 - Blowing out the remembrance candle.
 - After leaving the collective worship, pupils who wish to, planting a bulb or plant to create a special memory garden.
 - Asking pupils to bring a farewell prayer or message to the person who has died to put into a special box as they leave. This can help pupils to personalise a goodbye.
 - Playing reflective but uplifting music can help to create the right atmosphere.
 - Remind pupils of what support is available to them.

Afterwards

It is best to arrange the collective worship before a break or playtime. Pupils and staff will need space to reflect before carrying on with the normal school timetable. Some schools time it for the end of lessons but the build-up throughout the day can be difficult to handle. If arranged for the end of the school day, leave time for pupils to compose themselves before leaving for home. Be prepared for different responses; some pupils may be deeply affected,

others not at all, or they may behave out of character. Ensure they all know where to go for support if required.

Prayer Vigils

For older pupils, a vigil is a powerful way of bringing the school community together to pray for someone who has died.

Prayer vigils often, but not always, have a specific goal as the object of the prayer. Sudden tragedies that result in the death of someone from the school community are a genuine reason organizing a prayer vigil.

The following list provides some tips for planning and holding a prayer vigil:

1. Ensure that there is clear focus for the vigil i.e. responding to the death of someone from the school community and remembering them.
2. Consider preparing an informational flyer to distribute at your vigil that includes basic facts about the deceased, some biblical quotes, a prayer or other materials that are associated with the deceased person along with ways for participants to get involved in the area of choice after the vigil.
3. Keep the expected length and attendance of the vigil at a realistic level
4. Find a suitable location. This might be the school hall, a chapel or an outdoor prayer garden. A designated area within the school environment which keeps the praying intentional and meaningful will keep distractions to a minimum and help people to 'stay on track'.
5. The most important part of any vigil is the prayer involved. Prayer should involve scripture readings, music, reflections, and participation by all those gathered, whether with a prayed response, sung musical refrain, or other mode of participation. Plan out the flow of the prayer, how many readers you'll need, what readings and songs you'll use, and any other materials you might need. Candles, for instance, are spiritual symbols that are appropriate for evening vigils.
6. Decide on who is going to be invited to attend the vigil. Spread the word. Write an announcement on the weekly bulletin and use word of mouth. Invite the local incumbent and other parish leaders to attend and if they wish to participate. Inform the family of the deceased to attend if they wish. Invite others to contribute if they wish.
7. Expect people to enter the vigil with a spirit of prayerful reverence. With good planning and a good team, a vigil can be a unique and inspiring form of prayer.
8. Afterwards, thank those who came.

Sample Vigil Programme

The following ideas will help you plan your vigil. They can be adapted to suit your audience. You may also consider what other resources you have within your school community such as a choir, poets, sign language translator or artists whose talents could be incorporated into your vigil programme.

1. Welcome

The focus of your vigil

Why now?

Who is affected?

2. Song

3. Scripture

4. Reflection

5. Prayers

6. Procession of Light

7. Speaker

8. Closing your vigil

The first prayer vigil is recorded in Acts 1. When Jesus ascended back into heaven, He told His disciples to wait for the gift from His Father before obeying His command to take the gospel to every nation (Matthew 28:19). Acts 1:14 says, "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers." This prayer vigil ushered in the new age of the Holy Spirit who would from then on indwell believers (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The outcome of this prayer vigil should be the outcome of every prayer vigil: God's people entering into right relationship with Him so that His plans and purposes can be carried out through us (Matthew 6:10).

Poetry

The following poems may provide useful discussion points and comfort. They may also provide inspiration for poetry writing in school linked to the death of adults and children.

Death Is Nothing at All

"Death is nothing at all.

I have only slipped away into the next room.

Nothing has happened. Everything remains exactly as it was.

I am I and you are you,

And the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.
Call me by my old familiar name; speak to me in the easy way which you always used.
Put no difference in your tone; wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was,
Let it be spoken without effort, without the trace of a shadow upon it.
Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was; there is absolute and unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
I am waiting for you, for an interval,
Somewhere very near, just around the corner.
All is well.
Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before"

Henry Scott Holland

1847-1918

Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral

What Is Dying?

A ship sails and I stand watching till s/he fades on the horizon and someone at my side says,
"S/he is gone."

Gone where?

Gone from my sight, that is all; s/he is just as large as when I saw her/him.

The diminished size and total loss of sight is in me, not in her/him and just at the moment
when someone at my side says, "S/he is gone,"

There are others who are watching her/him coming and other voices take up a glad shout,
"There s/he comes!"

And that is dying.

Bishop Brent

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

"Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle Autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die."

Stephen Cummins

Everlasting Life

When death walks by with quiet tread
To touch a loved one who's then led
Away from sleep, away from pain,
To wake in joy to live again.

You'll hear him/her on a whispered breeze,
A calling bird; in swaying trees.
Do not weep long, but lift your eyes,
You'll see his/her glory in God's skies.

He/she'll be there in a swallow's flight,
His/her eyes in stars on a velvet night.

His/her courage strong in every tree,
His/her name carved well for eternity.

Hide not your love within your heart,
For he/she will always be a part
Of you and everything you do,
For death is nought, when love is true.

Lynn New

When a Loved One's Gone

Those we love, remain with us,
For love itself lives on.
And cherished memories never fade because a loved one's gone.
Those we love can never be more than a thought apart.
For as long as there is memory they'll live on in the heart.

Anon.

Death hides, but it cannot divide.
Thou art but on Christ's other side.
Thou with Christ and Christ with me
And so together still are we.

Anon.

Somewhere a journey begins at the end of the worldly existence we know,
Somewhere a path stretches over the stars and rivers of memories flow,
Somewhere a silence is heard far away, and the brightness of day fills the night,
Where the trials of life are resolved into peace when a soul finds its way to the light.

Anon.

Perhaps if we could see
The beauty of the land
To which our loved are called from you and me
We'd understand.

Perhaps if we could hear
The welcome they receive
From old familiar voices – all so dear
We would not grieve.

Perhaps if we could know
The reason why they went
We'd smile – and wipe away the tears that flow
And wait content.

Anon.

I heard your voice in the wind today
and I turned to see your face;
The warmth of the wind caressed me
as I stood silently in place.

I felt your touch in the sun today
as its warmth filled the sky;

I closed my eyes for your embrace
and my spirit soared high.

I saw your eyes in the window pane
as I watched the falling rain;

It seemed as each raindrop fell
it quietly said your name.

I held you close in my heart today
it made me feel complete;

You may have died...but you are not gone

you will always be a part of me.

As long as the sun shines...

the wind blows...

the rain falls...

You will live on inside of me forever

for that is all my heart knows.

Anon

Think of Me

When you're feeling sad or a little blue,

Look around and you'll see I'm here with you

I'm the bird who soars so high above

I'm the one who filled your heart with love

Anon

When you feel Lonely

When You feel Lonely

When a person you love passes away

Look to the night sky on a clear day.

The star that to you, appears to be bright,

Will be your loved one, Looking upon you during the night.

The lights of heaven are what shows through

As your loved one watches all that you do.

When you feel lonely for the one that you love,

Look to the Heavens in the night sky above.

Anon

So, go and run free

So, go and run free with the angels
Dance around the golden clouds
For the lord has chosen you to be with him
And we should feel nothing but proud
Although he has taken you from us
And our pain a lifetime will last
Your memory will never escape us
But make us glad for the time we did have
Your face will always be hidden
Deep inside our hearts
Each precious moment you gave us
Shall never, ever depart
So, go and run free with the angels
As they sing so tenderly
And please be sure to tell them
To take good care of you for me
Author unknown.

Think of Me

When you're feeling sad or a little blue,
Look around and you'll see I'm here with you
I'm the bird who soars so high above
I'm the one who filled your heart with love
Author Unknown

Look for me in Rainbows

Time for me to go now, I won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, way up in the sky.
In the morning sunrise when all the world is new,

Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.

Time for me to leave you, I won't say goodbye;

Look for me in rainbows, high up in the sky.

In the evening sunset, when all the world is through,

Just look for me and love me, and I'll be close to you.

It won't be forever; the day will come and then

My loving arms will hold you, when we meet again.

Time for us to part now, we won't say goodbye;

Look for me in rainbows, shining in the sky.

Every waking moment, and all your whole life through

Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.

Just wish me to be near you,

And I'll be there with you.

Music and lyrics: Conn Bernard ¹⁵

Prayers

Death of a Child

O Merciful God, your Son Jesus Christ took children in his arms and blessed them. We commit this child (name) to your care. We ask you to surround his / her parents and family with your love so that they are not overwhelmed by grief, but, supported by their family and friends, they might in due course rediscover meaning and hope.

Amen.

Marcus Braybrooke

Heavenly Father, at present we can only feel the loss of (name.) We want to be strong and we want to understand why s/he is no longer with us. We pray that (name) is safe in your arms, in your heavenly kingdom. Help us to remember what s/he meant to us and what s/he left behind – the laugh, the smile, the favourite comment, the things s/he struggled with.

¹⁵ Child Bereavement UK: Special assemblies - saying goodbye, Child Bereavement UK: Guidance for parents and carers <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/schools-informationpack-primary-schools> (accessed January 2019)

Bring us happy memories in the tears. Bring (name) the peace only you can give, Lord of love and mercy.

We ask this in Jesus' Name.

Amen.

Rupert Bristow

Heavenly Father,

We give thanks for the life of ; for the smiles, the fun and the friendships s/he brought to our lives.

Through our tears we ask, Lord, that as s/he is welcomed into your loving arms s/he also stays in our hearts.

S/he will always be special to school and to Church.

Help us all, family, friends and community, to say farewell to ; but never to forget him/her.

We ask this in Jesus' Name.

Amen.

Rupert Bristow

Death of a Headteacher / Teacher

Almighty God, you know that it will be difficult for us at (name) school without (name.)

Bring us the strength and hope to carry on, as s/he would have wished.

We thank you, Lord, for the special gifts s/he brought to this school and shared with us.

May the church and the wider community give thanks for his/her contribution to the life of (name village / town) and may we redouble our own efforts to serve each other, in honour of his/her memory.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Rupert Bristow

Almighty God, as we remember all that (name) has meant to us at (name) school, we pray that s/he is now at peace with you in your eternal kingdom. Only you know why s/he was

taken from us at this time, but we give thanks for his/her special place in our hearts at our school. We pray for his/her family and friends at this difficult time. Show your love for them and for us, as we struggle to cope with the loss. May your church be a comfort and strength to us all.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Rupert Bristow

Prayer for A Loved One Departed

You shared life with us

God give eternal life to you.

You gave your love to us

God give his deep love to you.

You gave your time to us

God give his eternity to you.

You gave your light to us

God give everlasting light to you.

Go upon your journey dear soul

To love, light and life eternal.

Amen.

David Adam

Dear God,

May we look backward with gratitude, forward with courage, Upwards with confidence.

Amen.

Anon.

Prayer for a grieving family after a tragedy

Abba Father,

You hold time within your hands, and see it all, from beginning to end. Please keep and carry these precious people in their sadness and loss. Cover them with your great wings of love, give their weary hearts rest and their minds sound sleep. Lord, lift their eyes so that they may catch a glimpse of eternity, and be comforted by the promise of heaven.

We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus.

Amen.

Biblical quotes

The Bible explains the importance of God's words being passed on to children, from one generation of children to the next generation of children. In Psalm 78, the reason given for God's words to be passed on to children is so that the children "may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God."

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 reads, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way when you lie down, and when you rise up."

In Luke 8, the parable of the sower teaches us the importance of getting the Word into the heart. The seed is the Word of God. It's sown in the heart. And those who keep it will "bear fruit with patience." (Luke 8:15)

Here are 8 verses that can be 'sown' into the heart of a grieving child:

1. I am always with you. Psalm 73:23, NIV
2. God will wipe away every tear. Revelation 21:4, NKJV
3. I am the Lord your God. I am holding your right hand. Isaiah 41:13, ICB
4. You will feel safe because there is hope. Job 11:18, ICB
5. He heals the broken-hearted. Psalm 147:3, NKJV
6. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 1 Corinthians 15:26, ESV
7. God will yet fill your mouth with laughter. Job 8:21, ICB
8. The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. Hebrews 13:
9. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. Corinthians 13:7-8

The following biblical text may also be useful when planning acts of worship, acknowledging the loss of someone special and reaffirming faith in Jesus Christ.

1. Romans 6:4

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

2. Philippians 3:20-21

But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

3. Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

4. Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. John 14:1-3

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

6. Psalm 34:18

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

7. Matthew 5:4

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

8. Thessalonians 4:13-14

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

9. John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

10. Corinthians 5:1

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

11. Romans 14:8

For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.

12. John 10:27-29

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

13. Psalm 34:4-5

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.

14. Psalm 46:1-2

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.

15. Corinthians 15:54-56

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

16. John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

17. Proverbs 12:28

In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway, there is no death.

18. Psalm 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

19. Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance...

20. Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Songs and Hymns

No one can ever completely comfort a child or an adult who is grieving. Neither can any song ever take away the pain, but perhaps they can make them reflect on their life, give a little comfort and, for the believer, assure them that they have hope of seeing them again. Music can have a soothing effect no matter what a child's or young person's religious beliefs.

Traditional

- I watch the sunrise
- The day thou gavest, Lord has ended
- Morning has broken
- Abba Father
- The Lords' my Shepherd
- There is a Redeemer
- How Great Thou Art
- Be Still
- Kumbaya
- Jesus Name Above All Names
- Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God
- Be Still

Fischy Music Songs

- In a deep, deep place
- Part of Your Plan
- As We Go Now
- Bad Times Won't Last
- Precious Memories
- Bring it All To Me
- My Old Friend
- Dreaming

Contemporary

The following songs can be found on the internet and can either be sung or simply used to reflect on as part of an act of worship. They are songs of hope and encouragement, helping those grieving to be assured that God is with them even through the toughest times.

- How deep the Father's Love - Stuart Townsend
- In Christ Alone - Stuart Townsend
- Cornerstone -Hillsong
- Messiah / You're Beautiful – Phil Wickman
- I can only imagine – Bart Millard
- Save a Place for Me – Matthew West
- Heaven Song – Phil Wickman
- I will rise – Chris Tomlin
- Dancing with Angels – Monk & Neagle
- Lord, I need You – Matt Maher
- Here I am to Worship – Hillsong
- With all I am – Hillsong

- God's Will - Martina McBride
- Over the Rainbow - Judy Garland
- One More Day- Diamond Rio
- When the River Meets the Sea- John Denver
- Borrowed Angels - Kristin Chenoweth

Reflection Music

- Johann Pachelbel - Canon in D Major
- Deep Peace a Gaelic Blessing Libera (John Rutter)
- May the Road Rise Up to Meet you -Laura Quirk & Tom Kendzia
- You Raise Me Up – The Priests
- The Lord Bless You and Keep You – John Rutter
- Gabriel's Oboe - Morricone



Section 4

Resources about death and bereavement for children and adults

Bereavement Support Organisations

A Child of Mine

Supporting bereaved parents to cope with the loss of a baby or child and advocating for improved bereavement care for parents and families who have lost a child.

Website: www.achildofmine.org.uk

Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors

An online forum for people coping with the grief of losing a loved one to suicide.

Website: www.allianceofhope.org

Barnardo's Child Bereavement

Charity dedicated to the support of bereaved children and young people, based in Northern Ireland but offering support via telephone and email across the UK.

Brake

A road safety helpline offering grief support to families and individuals who have been bereaved through road accidents.

Website: brake.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 8000401

Care for the Family

A Christian charity that provides parenting, relationship and bereavement support through events, resources, courses, training and volunteer networks.

Website: www.careforthefamily.org.uk

Helpline: 02920810800

Child Bereavement UK

Supporting children who are coping with bereavement, as well as families facing the death of a child. Help and advice for schools available on the website, by telephone or via regional support services.

The Child Death Helpline

This grief helpline supports anyone who has lost a child.

Website: www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Helpline: 0800 282 986

Compassionate Friends

A bereavement charity dedicated to supporting parents, siblings and grandparents after the loss of a child, no matter how long ago.

Website: www.tcf.org.uk

Helpline: 0345 123 2304

Cruse Bereavement Care

Offering grief support and information for anyone who has lost a loved one.

Website: www.cruse.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 808 1677

Grief Encounter

Helping children through bereavement

Website: www.griefencounter.org.uk

Helpline: 020 8371 8455

Hope Again

A website for young people from Cruse Bereavement Care providing young people with a platform to share stories and find ways to cope with grief.

Website: www.hopeagain.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 808 1677

The Lullaby Trust

The Lullaby Trust offers a helpline, support and peer-to-peer networks for anyone affected by the sudden and unexpected death of a baby or young child. It also provides advice to promote safer sleep and backs research into preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Website: lullabytrust.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 6868 Miscarriage Association

Marie Curie Cancer Care

Marie Curie works with the family and friends who have been bereaved with a range of resources to help them cope emotionally as well as handle the practical side of losing someone close to them.

Website: www.mariecurie.org.uk

Helpline: 0800 090 2309

RipRap

Supporting teenagers whose parents have cancer

Website: riprap.org.uk

Samaritans

Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM)

This charity supports families bereaved by manslaughter or murder with a helpline, bereavement retreats and seminars.

Website: www.samm.org.uk

Helpline: 0121 451 1618 or 0845 872 3440

Scotty's Little Soldiers

A military charity dedicated to supporting children who have lost a parent in the Armed Forces

Website: scottyslittlesoldiers.co.uk

Helpline: 0800 092 8571

Winston's Wish

This child bereavement charity supporting children and families after the death of a parent, sibling or carer.

Website: www.winstonswish.org.uk

Helpline: 08088 020 021

Books to Support Bereavement

The following books are available through Winston's Wish website

A Child's Grief	Practical ideas and suggestions
As Big as it Gets	Suggestions for support for parents and adults
Beyond the Rough Rock	Support for children who have been bereaved through suicide
Hope beyond the headlines	Support for bereavement through murder or manslaughter
Milly's Bug Hunt	Story Book for families
Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine	Activity book for children
Never too Young to Grieve	Support for children under 5 following the death of a parent
Out of the Blue	Making memories last when someone has dies (teenagers)
The Family has been Informed	Support for military families

The Secret	Straight talking about cancer – supporting parents talking about cancer to younger family members
You Just Don't Understand	Supporting bereaved teenagers

Stories and Information Books

Some of the following books have a very clear Christian message, others can be used to deliver one.

Title	Author A-Z	Age Group
Tell me about heaven, Grandpa Rabbit	Jenny Album	4-8
Heaven for Kids	Randy Alcorn	8-12
Tell me about Heaven	Randy Alcorn	6-10
There's a Party in Heaven	Gary Bower	4-8
What happened when Grandmas died?	Peggy Barker	4-8
Jesus Still Loves Joe: About a child Whose Sister Has Died	Victoria Beech	All
- Held in Hope series	Elizabeth B. Brown	Adults
Surviving the Loss of a Child - Support for Grieving Parents		
Talking About Death and Bereavement in School - How to Help Children Aged 4 to 11 to feel Supported and Understood	Ann Chadwick	4-11
Amy and Tom -a series of books which are a tool for bereaved primary school children and distributed free to family liaison officers, schools, bereaved families and medical professionals across the country	CHUMS – Child Bereavement, Trauma and Emotional Wellbeing Service www.amyandtom.org	7-16
Missing Mummy	Rebecca Cobb	4-8
Always and Forever	Alan Durant	4-8
The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide – practical, compassionate advice for helping a child (pre-school to teenagers) cope with the death of a parent or other loved one in a variety of circumstances.	Helen Fitzgerald	Adults
The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Friends	Helen Fitzgerald	Teenagers
No Matter What	Debi Giori	
Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers: How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love	Earl A. Grollman	
Someone I Loved Died	H Christine Harder	4-8
Tapestry - Grandma Sews a Picture of Hope	Tangvald	4-11
The Lonely Tree	Bob Hartman	4-8
	Nicholas Halliday	

<p>The Secret Garden – 2 children coping with the death of their parents in different ways</p> <p>When Someone Very Special Dies: A practical format for allowing children to understand the concept of death and develop coping skills for life, this book is designed for young readers to illustrate.</p> <p>Grandad – a story to help children cope positively with bereavement</p>	<p>Frances Hodgson Burnett</p> <p>Marge Heegaard</p> <p>Sarah Hewitt</p>	<p>4-11</p>
<p>Josh - Coming to terms with the death of a Friend</p>	<p>Stephanie Jeffs and Jacqui Thomas</p>	<p>4-11</p>
<p>Amazing Questions Kids Ask About Heaven and Angels</p> <p>Someday Heaven</p> <p>Goodnight Mister Tom</p> <p>Finding a Way Through When Someone Close Has Died: What it Feels Like and What You Can Do to Help Yourself: A Workbook by Young People for Young People</p> <p>'Til We Meet Again</p>	<p>Multiple authors</p> <p>Wayne McLaughlin</p> <p>Michael Magorian</p> <p>Pat Mood & Lesley Whittaker</p> <p>Julie Muller & Camryn Cox</p>	<p>7-12</p> <p>4-8</p> <p>8 – 16</p> <p>11-18</p> <p>4-11</p>
<p>What happens when we die?</p> <p>A Monster Calls– a young person desperately trying to cope with his mother’s approaching death.</p>	<p>Carolyn Nystrom</p> <p>Patrick Ness</p>	<p>4-8</p> <p>11-adults</p>
<p>Children and Grief: Helping Your Child Understand Death</p>	<p>Joey O’Connor</p>	<p>Adults</p>
<p>Are You Sad, Little Bear? - A Book About learning to Say Goodbye</p> <p>Sad Book</p>	<p>Rachel Rivett</p> <p>Michael Rosen</p>	<p>4-11</p> <p>All</p>
<p>Waterbugs and Dragonflies – Explaining Death to Young Children</p> <p>We Were Gonna Have a Baby, But We Had An Angel Instead</p>	<p>Doris Stickney</p> <p>Pat Schwiebery</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>
<p>The Memory Tree</p> <p>Little Pilgrim’s Progress</p> <p>God Gave Us Heaven</p>	<p>Britta Teckentrup</p> <p>Helen L. Taylor</p> <p>Lisa Tawn Bergren</p>	<p>6-12</p> <p>6-12</p> <p>4-8</p>
<p>Badger's Parting Gifts</p>	<p>Susan Varley</p>	<p>4-11</p>
<p>The Velveteen Rabbit</p> <p>Charlotte’s Web</p> <p>Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens: 100 Practical Ideas - Simple Tips for Understanding and Expressing Your Grief</p>	<p>Margery Williams</p> <p>EB White</p> <p>Alan D. Wolfelt</p>	<p>4-8</p> <p>6-12</p> <p>Teenagers</p>

Short Films and DVDs¹⁶

[Co-op Funeral Care - www.co-operativefuneralcare.co.uk/child-bereavement](http://www.co-operativefuneralcare.co.uk/child-bereavement)

Co-op Funeral care have teamed up with Child Bereavement, Trauma and Emotional Wellbeing Service (CHUMS) to provide local schools, medical professionals, community groups and bereaved families with access to a series of short animated films aimed at helping bereaved children aged 7- 16 cope with the loss of a loved one and provide additional resource to relatives, teachers and other organisations who all play a role in supporting a child through their loss.

The four animated films including 'Our Year Since Dad Died' and 'Our Year Since Grandma Died' look at issues young people face when losing a parent or grandparent and focus on difficult dates such as Mother's Day, Father's Day and a family member's birthday providing practical guidelines on how to overcome these hurdles.

You can view a preview of each of the videos on the website. Funeral Care Homes can help schools in obtaining a copy of any of the DVDs.

[Child Bereavement Network - childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

The Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) works with bereaved children, young people and their families across the UK. They provide support and representation: bringing them together across localities, disciplines and sectors to improve bereavement care for children. They produce a range of postcards and DVDs for use with children, young people and those supporting them. These can be ordered through the National Children's Bureau webshop which can be accessed either through the CBN website in the section 'Help Around a Death' or through the NCB webshop - www.ncb.org.uk/shop

Titles of DVDs include:

'It will be ok' - Young people talk about what helped them cope with bereavement.

'You'll always remember them, even when you're old' - Children aged 6-12 talk about the support they received

'A death in the lives of...' - Young people share their experiences of bereavement.

[CONCORD MEDIA www.concordmedia.org.uk](http://www.concordmedia.org.uk)

An educational charity with a strongly ethical ethos that sells and hires films and DVDs touching educational and social issues. Titles which include bereavement can help schools to cope with these sensitive areas.

¹⁶ Child Bereavement UK: Books and Resources <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/schools-informationpack-primary-schools> (accessed January 2019)

Examples of some of the titles:

'Teenage Grief' - Animated film about teenagers coping with the death of someone close.

'Not Too Young to Grieve' - Understanding and helping bereaved under fives.

'Grief in the Family' - This animated film looks at the ways children and young people respond to grief, and how people can help.

'Suicide of Young People - interview with Colin Murray Parkes' - Colin Murray Parkes, bereavement expert, talks to Malcolm Brown.

Section 5

Different Cultures and Beliefs¹⁷

Schools have to function within an increasingly multi-cultural society, in which various beliefs, religious and non-religious, require to be taken into account. Respect for the differing needs, rituals and practices is essential when acknowledging a death. It is this diversity that enriches our lives.

General points for Eastern Faiths: Within a faith there are often many variations and it is wrong to be prescriptive- beliefs can be moderated by life in a Western Culture. This is especially so for the younger generation, who may find it difficult to fit in with the stricter requirements of older members of a family or community. Families tend to be much more involved in preparing the body and the funeral arrangements than in Christian faiths. Because of belief in an afterlife, it is important that the whole body is retained. Post-mortems therefore tend to be viewed as unwelcome procedures. The coffin is likely to be kept at home until the funeral and may well be open. All who wish to pay their respects will be very welcome.

The following descriptions merely give an overview of the major religions and belief systems that are found in the UK.

Islam

Muslims believe in life after death when, on the Last Day, the dead will come back to life to be judged by Allah. The good will reside in Paradise, the damned in Hell. Muhammad teaches that all men and women are to serve Allah and that they should try to live perfectly, following the Qur`an. Devout Muslims believe that death is a part of Allah's plan and open expressions of grief may be viewed as disrespectful to this belief.

As cremation is forbidden, Muslims are always buried, ideally within 24 hours of the death. Ritual washing is usually performed by the family or close friends at the undertakers or mortuary. They will wrap the body in a clean cloth or shroud. The coffin is often very plain as traditionally one would not be used. The grave is aligned to enable the head of the deceased to be placed facing the holy city of Mecca. Muslim graves are unmarked but to meet UK requirements, a simple headstone is used as a compromise.

There is an official mourning period of three days when the family will remain at home and be brought food by friends and relatives. For forty days after the funeral relatives may wish to make regular visits to the grave on Fridays.

¹⁷ Child Bereavement UK: Books and Resources <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/schools-informationpack-primary-schools> (accessed January 2019)

Hinduism

Hindus believe in reincarnation and a cycle of rebirths. When a person dies, the soul is reborn in a new body, returning to earth in either a better or worse form. What a person does in this life will influence what happens to them in the next, the law of Karma. Those that have performed good deeds in this life will be reborn into higher order families, those whose behaviour has been bad will be born again as outcasts.

A Hindu funeral is as much a celebration as a remembrance service. Hindus cremate their dead as it is the soul that has importance, not the body which is no longer needed. White is the traditional colour and mourners usually wear traditional Indian garments. If attending, it may be worth asking what appropriate dress will be. During the service, offerings such as flowers or sweetmeats may be passed around and bells rung so noise is a part of the ritual. The chief mourner, usually the eldest son, and other male members of the family, may shave their heads as a mark of respect. In India, the chief mourner would light the funeral pyre. Here, he will press the button to make the coffin disappear and, in some instances, may be permitted to ignite the cremator. Ashes may be taken back to India to be scattered on the River Ganges. In the UK, some areas of water have been designated as acceptable substitutes.

The mourning period lasts between two and five weeks.

Sikhism

Sikhs believe the soul goes through a cycle of rebirths, with the ultimate objective being to reach perfection, to be reunited with God and, as a result, break the cycle. Thus, death holds no fear and mourning is done discretely. The present life is influenced by what happened in previous ones and the current life will set the scene for the next.

The deceased is cremated as soon as possible after death. The coffin is taken to the family home where it is left open for friends and family to pay their respects. It is then taken to the Gurdwara where hymns and prayers are sung. A short service follows at a crematorium, during which the eldest son presses the button for the coffin to move behind the curtain. In India, the eldest son would light the funeral pyre and no coffin would be used. After the funeral, a meal may be held at the Gurdwara. The ashes may be taken back to India to be scattered. Here they may be sprinkled in the sea or river.

The family remain in mourning for several days after the funeral and may listen to readings from the Guru Granth Sahib (Holy Book).

Buddhism

Buddhists believe that nothing that exists is permanent and everything will ultimately cease to be. There is a belief in rebirth but not of a soul passing from one body to another. The rebirth is more a state of constantly changing being rather than a clear-cut reincarnation. The ultimate objective is to achieve a state of perfect peace and freedom. Buddhists try to approach death with great calmness, and an open-minded attitude of acceptance. There are

few formal traditions relating to funerals and they tend to be seen as nonreligious events. Cremation is the generally accepted practice and the service is kept very simple. It may be conducted by a Buddhist monk or sometimes family members.

Judaism

Jewish people believe that they are judged once they die. This judgment by God will determine whether they will be compensated and go to a higher state of being known as The World to Come. There are four different types of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reform.

According to Jewish traditions the person who has died should be buried as soon as possible – usually within 24 hours after death. When it comes to cremation, the different movements of Judaism differ in their views.

At the same time, autopsies are forbidden, as it is considered to be a desecration of the body. Autopsies can be conducted, however, if it is legally requested, but even then, a rabbi should be present during the procedure. Embalming is widely prohibited by Judaism.

Immediately after death, the Dayan Ha'Emet prayer is recited and a shomer, or guardian, is assigned to tend to the body from the moment of death until burial.

The loved one is then washed and purified by members of the chevra kadisha who are of the same sex as the person who has passed. They dress the body in a plain white shroud of linen or muslin. If the loved one is male, he may also be buried in a religious skullcap, called a kippah or yarmulke, and a prayer shawl, called a tallit or tallis.

A Jewish coffin is usually quite simple, made of pine and is metal-free so it is completely biodegradable. Once placed in the coffin, the body will not be seen.

One Jewish funeral custom that may be observed is of the mourners ripping off pieces of material from their own clothes. This ritual is a demonstration of their grief, with the visibly torn garment traditionally being worn for the week following the death.

The funeral service is usually held at a synagogue, a funeral home or a gravesite and can take anywhere from 15 to 60 minutes. Mourners can expect a Jewish funeral service to start with a eulogy read by the rabbi, leading to various prayers, psalms and hymns. When the funeral service is finished, the mourners should follow the hearse to the place of burial.

After a Jewish funeral, a reception is usually hosted at the synagogue or at the bereaved family's home, where a consolation meal is prepared by friends or members of the congregation.

Jewish mourning periods are traditionally structured into two parts. The first takes place over the seven days immediately after the funeral. This is known as shiva, meaning seven. On the first day, a candle is lit and left to burn throughout the week. The bereaved family will stay at home during this time to mourn and pray. Although the family will not work or participate in their everyday activities, guests are welcome to visit while the family is sitting shiva.

The second mourning period lasts for 30 days after the funeral. This is known as shloshim, meaning thirty. During this time, the family will go back to their normal routines but will still recite prayers and hymns daily. The duration of this mourning may extend for longer than 30 days, especially when mourning the death of a parent, which could last for up to a year.

Jewish funeral services often involve prayers that end with 'Amen' or responsive readings, where the congregation replies in unison at certain points. If you are not Jewish you are still welcome to respond to prayers and readings in this manner, but equally it is acceptable for you to remain silent.

One very important thing to note is that traditionally Jewish people do not send flowers to funerals. Instead guests are encouraged to give donations, or tzedakah, as a tribute to the deceased. Often the family will suggest an appropriate charity.

Humanist

Humanists are non-religious. They follow the principle that this life is the only one we have and therefore when you are dead there is no moving on to another one. The focus of a Humanist funeral is on celebrating the life of the deceased. The person people knew is talked about, stories shared, and memories recalled. Their favourite music may be played, whatever it is. This is done by friends and family who are supported by an Officiant. The ceremony, usually a cremation, will be tailored to meet the family's wishes rather than following a set pattern.

Section 6

Contacts

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Blackburn with Darwen Services for Schools 01254 666461 bwdservicesforschools@blackburn.gov.uk	Blackpool Schools Service 01253 477477 www.blackpool.gov.uk
Wigan Council Education Support Educational Psychology 01942 486238	

Bibliography

Child Bereavement UK

'Rebuilding Lives Together; Parents Information Pack'

www.childbereavementuk.org

Southwark Diocesan Board of Education

'Bereavement Pack'

Southwark Diocesan Board of Education 48 Union Street, London, SE1 1TD

www.education.southwark.anglican.org

Glasgow City Council Education Service, City Chambers East, 40 John Street, Glasgow G1 1JL

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde – 'A Whole School Approach to Supporting Loss and Bereavement'

www.glasgow.gov.uk

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, 700 Light Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230

'Prayer Vigils – A How-To Guide' (Adapted from a resource of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition www.interfaithimmigration.org)

www.LIRS.org

A Child of Mine – Help for Bereaved Parents

A Child of Mine, 17 Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ

www.achildofmine.org.uk

Winston's Wish

17 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham, GL50 3DA

www.winstonswish.org.uk

The Book People

Salisbury House, Weyside Park, Catteshall Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1XE

www.thebookpeople.co.uk

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www.amazon.co.uk

Fischy Music

4 New Broompark, Edinburgh EH5 1RS

www.fischy.com