



*Supporting bereaved children*

## **SCHOOL BEREAVEMENT INFORMATION PACK**



[www.mosaicfamilysupport.org](http://www.mosaicfamilysupport.org)  
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## SCHOOL BEREAVEMENT INFORMATION PACK

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## WORKING TOGETHER

Mosaic - Supporting Bereaved Children (Mosaic) is a charity that supports young people and their families across the county of Dorset. We are committed to working closely with schools to help bereaved children, their families and school professionals gain access to support and information following a death in the school community.

Death is a subject that no one ever wants to talk about but unfortunately, it will inevitably happen within our school communities. Our aim at Mosaic is to maintain an open and honest attitude towards death so that we can help children, young people and their families discover healthy ways to cope with grief and loss.

This information pack has been put together to support school staff with ideas and information on what to do in the event of the news of a death and how a school can support a bereaved pupil immediately after a death and throughout their time at your school.

In this pack we have included both an individual and a whole school approach to supporting bereaved students. This includes resources and practical ideas for assemblies and creative memory activities etc. Our aim has been to keep this information pack as user friendly as possible, therefore we have included a check list to help staff.

This information pack we hope will convey the message that most grieving students do not necessarily need the support of a 'bereavement expert' – however they do need the support of people who care around them. The school's role is vital in providing the understanding and on-going support that bereaved children will need following the death of a loved one.

## **RESPONDING TO A DEATH IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY:**

### **A PREPARED SCHOOL WILL FEEL MORE CONFIDENT IN DEALING WITH TRAGIC NEWS**

A death in the school community can have a huge effect not only on the bereaved student and the family involved – but the whole school. Therefore, schools that have prepared ahead with a formal strategy for when a tragedy occurs are best equipped to deal with and put into practice appropriate responses and supports. Having a School Bereavement Policy in place will help staff feel more confident when a bereavement occurs and act as a framework on how best to deal and respond to the death.

**We have included an example of a School Bereavement Policy in your School Pack.**

The objectives of any School Bereavement Policy will be to:

- support pupils and staff during and after a bereavement
- to enhance effective communication and pathways of support between the school, family and school community
- to identify key responsibilities within school of staff who are responsible for implementing the Bereavement Policy.
- clarify helpful services and links to the Local Authority that can offer support
- set out a plan for supporting different types of deaths and also how to support and respond to news of a terminal illness in the school community
- ensure that the Policy will always put the welfare of the bereaved child as paramount in accordance with the Children's Act 1989

**{EXAMPLE OF A SCHOOL BEREAVEMENT POLICY}**

..... PRIMARY/SECONDARY/ACADEMY

**SCHOOL BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS .....

TO BE REVIEWED .....

**RATIONALE:**

Every 22 minutes in the UK a child is bereaved of a parent, making up some 24,000 a year. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, sibling, friend or other significant person and sadly, around 12,000 children die in the UK each year. Within our school community there will almost always be recently bereaved children who are struggling with their own situation – at other times the entire school community may be impacted by the death of a member of staff or pupil. A policy within school will help us to support pupils and/or staff before, during and after bereavement in an effective way of identifying key staff and a clear pathway. It fits within our ethos of caring for staff and pupils and providing support where necessary to ensure that staff and pupils receive optimum support to promote their wellbeing

**AIMS OF THIS POLICY:**

- To support pupils and staff during and after bereavement
- To support pupils and staff following a diagnosis of a terminal illness
- To enhance communication and effective pathways for support between school, family and the community
- Identify key responsibilities within school and the Local Authority to implement the Bereavement Policy and co-ordinate support
- To ensure all support for bereaved children is in accordance with the Children’s Act 1989

**The Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy and will be the first point of contact for the family/child concerned and subsequent communication. The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the school possesses information about the death to support the child, staff and pupils
- To inform staff/pupils/governors
- Liaise with external agencies
- Respond to media enquiries

**The Role of Key Staff:**

- To identify individual staff to support a bereaved child within school
- To ensure that key staff receive adequate bereavement support training to help them with this role
- To establish links with external agencies to co-ordinate support and make referrals when needed

## **PROCEDURES:**

- Immediately following news of a bereavement, contact to be made by the headteacher to the family to offer condolences and gather information. At all times being respectful of the family's wishes on how they want the news to be communicated about the death/terminal illness within the school community
- Gather factual information around the death wherever possible to avoid rumour and any social media misinterpretation of the facts
- Religious and cultural differences to be considered and respected with regard to the death and support of a pupil
- School staff to be informed of the bereavement before pupils to enable them to help with preparation about how to share information with students in an age appropriate way. Each member of staff should feel supported on how to do this and will have access to training and support if needed
- Pupils directly affected by the death i.e. the bereaved child is known to them, should preferably be told in small groups by someone they know. However, a decision whether to give information as part of a whole school approach or through smaller groups will be taken on each individual situation
- A letter to be sent to all school families affected will need to be prepared at the earliest opportunity
- School timetables may need to be flexible to respond to the children's emotional wellbeing needs. However overall keeping to routines will offer children a sense of normality
- Staff affected by the death to be offered ongoing support whenever needed
- Communication with the bereaved family regarding the funeral arrangements, respecting their wishes as to decisions whether staff and pupils will attend
- The Headteacher will be responsible for any statements made to the media if appropriate
- Keeping records and sharing with relevant people/services so that a bereaved or terminally ill child can access supports throughout their school life/particularly with transitions to other Schools

**Date of Policy:**

**Date of Review**

**{SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS FOLLOWING A DEATH OF A CHILD IN SCHOOL}**

***Permission and contents of the letter should be agreed by the bereaved family and the school before distribution***

Dear Parents

Your child's class teacher has had the sad task today of informing the children of the death of ....., a pupil in year/class ..... We have the permission from the family to notify you and they have approved this letter.

..... died from (cancer). As you are aware many children and adults who have (cancer) get better but sadly ..... had been ill for a long time and died peacefully at home yesterday.\*

..... was a very popular student and will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him/her.

When someone dies it is very normal for those that knew that person to feel a lot of different emotions like anger, sadness and confusion. We are committed to your child in supporting them through this difficult time. The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try to answer any of their questions. However, if there is anything more that you and your child would like to know, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. We will be more than happy to help you.

In the coming days we will be arranging a special assembly to celebrate ..... 's life,

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

\*amend as appropriate

**{SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS FOLLOWING A DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER}**

***Permission and contents of the letter must be agreed by the family and the school before distribution***

Dear Parents

I am sorry to have to tell you that a much loved and respected member of our school staff ..... has died. The children were told today and understandably many of them have been affected by this news. I am sure there will be many parents who also will be saddened to hear of the death.

We have taken advice from ..... {e.g. Mosaic/Ed Psych} and we are aware that all children will respond in different ways to this news and that offering factual information and emotional support are the best ways to help them deal with bereavement. Your child may respond with different emotions from feeling very sad, confused, angry etc. to not feeling anything at all. This is both normal and healthy. You may find your child has questions to ask which we will support to answer in an age appropriate way within School, however if you feel you would like more support and advice yourself – please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

You will find some very useful advice and resources online at [www.mosaicfamilysupport.org](http://www.mosaicfamilysupport.org) or through [www.childbereavement.org](http://www.childbereavement.org)

We will share details of the funeral arrangements as soon as they are known and check with the family whether children and parents who wish to attend will be welcome to do so.

I am sorry to be the bearer of such sad news; however we are aware that this news impacts on all of us within the school community. At a time like this we are very grateful for the thriving community we have with our school families. Our priority will be to provide the children with any support that is needed and help them through, what for some, may be a very new experience in their lives.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**{SAMPLE LETTER TO BEREAVED PARENTS FOLLOWING A CHILD'S DEATH}**

Dear

We are so very sorry to hear of .....’s death. There are no words to describe what you all as a family are going through at this time.

As a school community we will miss ..... very much. We are doing our best to support and offer comfort to his/her friends. He/she was a very much-loved member of our school family.

If we can do anything to help as you plan .....’s funeral or memorial service, please let us know. In time we will also ensure that anything of .....’s that remains in school is returned to you, including photographs we may have on our school system.

You are very much in our thoughts at this very sad time and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of support in any way.

With sympathy

Headteacher

## SUPPORTING A BEREAVED STUDENT:

### IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

Any death in the school community is a tragic event and will not only affect the child and family involved – but also the whole school community. Schools are very often the first contact the family will make following a death so being prepared with resources and information to offer families reassurance of support at this time can be hugely helpful.

Below is an example of a school's immediate response to the news of a death. However, this is a general guideline and may not suit every situation:

School is informed of the death that morning:

- Obtain as much factual information as possible from parent/family member about the death i.e. if this is a death of a parent, has the child been informed?
- Inform other members of staff in school – identify sensitive ways in doing this so staff are supported with their own grief responses and any concerns about what to say to the children
- Consult with the family how they would like the rest of the school to learn about the death – encourage them that this would be helpful in supporting their child and offer how this might take place within the school
- Children should be told straight away to prevent any confusion and rumours that may follow hearing the news and help with ways to support them
- School support for the child/family may include visits to the family home to help prepare the child for their return to school
- A letter may be produced for everyone in school to take home to their parents outlining what has happened. Advising how the school will support their child with any possible reactions and responses to the death
- A letter of condolence may be sent to the family on behalf of the school community and to reassure the family of support within school
- Cards or letters from pupils can be greatly appreciated and will help a bereaved child with keeping connections to friends and aid their return back to school

### RETURNING TO SCHOOL:

Following a death, it is a normal response for a bereaved child to feel anxious about returning to school. Their lives will have changed dramatically and they may be experiencing feelings of chaos and confusion about what has happened – **school will be the one place that will offer them normality.** Therefore, encouraging bereaved children to return to school as soon as possible will not only help them to return to an environment of 'normality' - but will also help them to access the essential supports they will need through their friends and school staff.

Although the other students at school may have already been informed of the death – it will be important to prepare them for their classmate’s return. Discussing with them how they can best support their peer and talk to them about how they may be feeling about their return. It is important to make time to address any concerns they may have about this.

This is also a good opportunity to let students know that it is normal to feel lots of different emotions when someone dies e.g. feelings of sadness, anger, confusion, fear or a mixture of all these feelings. Also, essentially reminding them - that it is fine to feel happy and do normal things together.

### **WHAT DO I SAY?**

Often our normal reaction to death – is not to talk about it. Worried that we might make it worse if we talk to the bereaved person about what has happened. It is helpful to remind staff and pupils that – **the worst has already happened** – and anything you/they will say won’t make it any worse. Most bereaved children will appreciate an acknowledgement of what has happened. Pretending that everything is normal can often be miscommunicated as ‘not caring or not understanding’. Although inevitably there will be some awkwardness about talking about the death, it is always best to acknowledge what has happened. It will help the student to feel supported and will also give them an opportunity to talk to someone about the death if they want to.

Some ideas on how to approach this could be:

- If you are finding this hard or are feeling upset – don’t be scared to admit it. This will help the student know that you are not avoiding talking about the death and that it is normal to feel difficult feelings.
- An example of this may be **‘I don’t know what to say, I am really sorry to hear that your ..... died, how are you feeling/or let me know if you want to talk about it’.**
- Try to avoid using euphemisms such as ‘gone to a better place’, ‘gone to sleep’ etc. – this can be extremely confusing particularly for younger children and may lead to a misinterpretation that their loved one will return. For older children this could lead to frustration and may prevent them from talking openly about the death.

## UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT RESPONSES:

Every child is unique and reactions to a death will vary and depend on a number of factors, including their relationship with the person who died, their developmental understanding of death and the family and support network around them.

- Normalise grief responses as children can often feel scared of the intensity of their feelings. Let them know that these feelings are a normal response to the tragedy that has happened. Tell them that these feelings are called grief.
- Do not assume that you understand what they are feeling – ask questions about how they are feeling and what they understand. This will give them the opportunity to ask specific questions and gain a better understanding of the situation.
- Children can often 'puddle jump' from one feeling to another following a death. It is common for younger children to feel at one moment overwhelmed with grief and the next to rush out and want to play with their friends as if nothing has happened - this is a normal coping reaction for children and should be encouraged.
- Just as all children are different, so are grief responses. Some children will want to talk openly whereas others will not want to talk at all – both reactions are normal.
- Expect different expressions of grief through a variety of behaviours. Some children may regress to earlier behaviours for some time and negative and uncharacteristic behaviours may appear. Awareness of grief reactions can help schools to identify behaviours and will help with appropriate support.
- Encourage children to access support so they can talk – but never force them to do this. Knowing where to go for support can be helpful for children who are resistant to talking. Some children may need more tangible supports such as 'time out' cards to help them or a key member of staff they can access when needed.
- Expect an increase in anxiety behaviours as a normal response following a death. Separation anxiety is a common occurrence following a death and students may also become anxious about their own mortality. These are normal responses and with most children, will subside in time with gentle encouragement and support.
- Children have an amazing resilience which may appear at times that they are managing well and have 'moved on'. The grief process is not a linear one so be prepared for grief responses to return. These may be triggered by significant dates or when a child is ready to start to process and talk about their grief. It is important to remember that as children mature and develop their understanding of death, they may also revisit their grief and wish for support to do so.

## CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH

In understanding a child's response to a bereavement, we do need to consider their developmental capacity to understand the concept of death. Children will all mature at different rates therefore the age stages below are guidelines only:

**Early Years – under 2 years** - Babies and children will not understand death as we know it. They can experience loss as a separation from someone they have made an attachment to. This can be shown as a grief response through their behaviours e.g crying, clinging, anger, a need for constant reassurance, difficulty in sleeping or becoming withdrawn.

**Children 2-5 years** - Children still have 'magical thinking' and believe that death is reversible. Children can be convinced that it was something they said or did that caused the person to die – and also believe that they can use words, thoughts and actions to bring the person back. Reassurance at this age is very important and with young children this will need to be bite-sized information and constantly repeated. They need to understand that they are not responsible for the death with appropriate child-centred information.

Young children are very 'black and white' in their thinking so using the words 'died' and 'death' will help them in understanding and the concept of what death means. However, adults need to be aware that developmentally young children find it hard to grasp the finality of death and that they will need clear and repeated explanations.

Children may ask the same questions over and over again – this is the way they make sense of what has happened. Although this can be difficult for the adults around them, this is a normal way for children at this age to process information. Reading books on death and loss, using play and painting/drawing can help to stimulate talk about what has happened. Some children may have may revert to behaviour of a younger child e.g. tantrums, going back to wetting/soiling – again this is normal and it is important to tolerate and recognise this as a grief reaction. When life is more settled this should improve. Children at this age are most dependent on the adults around them to help them with their understanding and emotions. Helping them keep to normal routines will help them to regain the balance.

**Children 6-9 years** - Children are starting to develop a better understanding of death as being irreversible and part of what happens in the natural world. However, fears may develop from children finding death 'spooky' and frightening with stories of ghosts and zombies. It is important that such worries and anxieties are acknowledged and addressed.

Death may still be very confusing for them – so reassurance and opportunities to talk about death will help to normalise their feelings and enable them to gain a better understanding of what has happened. A natural curiosity at this age can be positive in helping children to ask questions. Although this can be quite difficult and sometimes shocking for adults, particularly around issues such as 'what happens after a body dies' it is all part of their normal development and healthy.

At this age children will often suffer with somatic complaints such as 'sore tummy' or 'headaches'. This can be the result of pent up or unexpressed emotions and their difficulty in separating their body feelings from their emotions.

**Children 9 – 13 years** - Children at this age are more aware of the finality of death and their understanding of what death means to themselves and others. They will be keen to 'fit in with their peers'. Therefore, a bereavement can lead to difficult feelings around feeling isolated and apart from others around them. During a time when they are starting to experience developmental changes they may find it hard to regulate their moods with 'ups and downs' and managing angry feelings.

They are starting to become a little more independent in their thinking and needing more interaction with peers. It is important to build self-esteem and social skills at this age to help them with changing relationships. A significant death at this age can often destabilise them leaving them feeling unsafe and more dependent on family.

**Adolescents** - Friends and peers are increasingly important as young people develop their ideas of who they are and what is important to them. They want to be accepted by other important people in their lives. Their bodies are changing, they are aware of all sorts of possibilities for themselves and are more aware of the future - their future. It is quite common for risk-taking behaviour to increase during adolescence as young people test the boundaries.

They may struggle to make longer term plans as the death of someone important causes them to reflect on "the meaning of life" and ponder on the question "what's the point?" Or you may find that they are so busy with different activities they don't stop to reflect. This can be an effective way of keeping intense feelings under wraps if they are worried about losing control of their emotions.

If you notice a teenager who is withdrawing, acting very matter of fact and detached, or angry and protesting, then remain available for them - but don't push. Your job is to remind them that you're there and if they'd prefer to speak to someone else you'll help them find peers or other trusted adults to support them. Although an adolescent's growing process is most like an adult's they are still going through important emotional development at this age and are not ready to manage adult responsibilities even if at times they think they are adult. They need to be reassured of your love and support and to know that the limits you set are still enforced.

## **BREAKING SAD NEWS – A DEATH IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

Schools are a natural 'hub' within a community for communicating and breaking the sad news of a death. It is better always to ensure that sensitive and accurate information is given to staff, pupils and parents, rather than saying nothing.

### **TELLING THE SCHOOL OR CLASS**

Whenever possible the wishes of the bereaved family/pupil need to be taken into account. However, a school has a duty of care to all the students so it may be necessary in some circumstances to talk before it is possible to contact the family. In this situation a simple acknowledgement of the death is all that is needed.

Many schools will tell the class or a year group most affected separately first and follow this up with a whole school assembly. If the bereaved pupil is at school ask them if they want to be at the assembly, if not at school it is important that they are told what was said and to whom.

Whenever possible, it is best to talk to the family and pupil involved asking them their preference of what is said and how this is done and advise them how the school would like to proceed with communicating to all staff and students.

### **BREAKING SAD NEWS IN AN ASSEMBLY**

This may not be appropriate or wanted, however in some circumstances it is the best way to give news particularly when the death has affected the whole school. This way everyone gets the same information at the same time and helps to dispel any misinterpretations and rumour.

Following the assembly having classroom time to discuss together what they have heard, can help students time to express their feelings and thoughts about what has happened.

### **GUIDELINES FOR BREAKING SAD NEWS**

- Whoever is giving the news - prepare beforehand what to say
- Don't be afraid to show emotion – this can model to the students and other staff that this 'ok' to show our feelings
- Start by an acknowledgement that you have 'sad news to talk about to everyone'
- Be honest, give the news stating simple facts and keep this brief
- If information is not known, acknowledge this and say that you will endeavour to find out more when its available

- Use the correct words such as 'death/died' – refrain from using euphemisms
- Talk about the person who has died but do not eulogise
- Discuss any arrangements that have been made
- Acknowledge that it is 'ok' to feel a lot of emotions about the death and that also it is 'ok' not to feel anything at all
- Offer ideas of activities the students can do practically ie. making cards, thinking about memorial activities to do together and/or individually
- Give students information about supports that are in place within school and external helplines/services they can access outside of school

#### **OTHER SCHOOL PARENTS:**

Inform and give basic information to other parents whose children are likely to be affected by the death by letter or newsletter will help them support their children at home. Once the bereaved family is happy for more information to be shared, this can be relayed to the school community as appropriate, letting parents know they have access to key staff through the school office when necessary.

#### **MEMORIALS – SAYING GOODBYE**

Some schools may want to hold a special assembly or memorial service following a death in the school community. It is not always appropriate or possible for pupils to attend a funeral so a memorial assembly may often be the only opportunity they have of saying goodbye. Involving both pupils and staff who knew the person who has died in organising the memorial service can be a really important way of giving them a sense of doing something positive.

Organising memorial services can involve the whole school or just year groups that are affected by the death.

An example of a memorial assembly: -

- Start by explaining the purpose of the special assembly and a brief reminder of the circumstances about the person who had died.
- Reminding all present that everyone is different and that the memorial may affect everyone differently – reassure that it is ok to feel sad and cry and also it is ok not to feel anything at all
- Lighting a remembrance candle
- Reading a story relating to the loss
- Staff and pupils could include music/songs or readings reminding them of the person who has died
- Someone may want to recount stories or memories of the deceased

The end of the assembly/memorial service will need to acknowledge that today has been a very sad time for everyone - but also give a sense of looking forward together positively as a school community. Some ideas may be:

- Producing a memory book of activities from the memorial service to give to the family or to keep in school for children to read
- Giving each child seeds or bulbs to plant later in a memory garden
- Each child to write a farewell message to the person who has died to put on a collage or memory tree as they leave
- Playing music that is uplifting and reflective of the person's personality at the end of the service
- Remind everyone present what supports there are for them if they feel they need to talk to someone
- Have break straight after the service so pupils and staff have some time out before returning to normal activities

## SUPPORTING A BEREAVED PUPIL IN SCHOOL

### **LONGER TERM:**

As described previously, when supporting a child returning to school after the death of a loved one it is very important to acknowledge what has happened and offer support to help them through what is a very traumatic time in their lives. However, a question school staff will often ask is, 'how long will a child need grief support'?

Grief will manifest in children in different ways and it can be really hard for school staff at times to recognise when a child's behaviour is a grief response or just behaviour that is generally 'pushing boundaries'. The unfortunate truth is the answer is never a simple one as a bereaved child will be living with grief for the rest of their lives. Some children will appear to be coping very well for some time and then all of a sudden begin to struggle emotionally. Others may be very open about the grief immediately and need little support thereafter. Grief responses can often be cyclical in nature and birthdays, Christmas, anniversaries, and other losses may trigger responses even with a child who is appearing to be coping really well overall. Awareness of this is key to staff knowing when a child's behaviour is a communication that they are needing extra support around their loss.

For most bereaved children having the support through school, their family and friends is all they will need to help them manage and process their grief. Schools offer such a valuable and important role in helping children – offering them an environment that is part of their everyday normal routine, with trusted staff and peers around them. Schools also offer important links to help support parents through referrals to supportive services.

### **BEREAVEMENT/MEMORY ACTIVITIES:**

These are some ideas for activities to support a child in school or that can be passed onto families to do at home:

#### **Making a Memory Box**

Children often like decorating a box that they can keep special items in to remind them of the person who has died. The drawings, patterns and colours can be used to reflect the person they are remembering and the box can contain lots of different items to keep safe and together. Memory boxes are useful to 'store memories' such as a time when 'mummy did something funny', or a phrase 'daddy used to say' these can be put on little cards or post it notes. This is particularly helpful for younger children who may have limited memories and who may need to ask older siblings. Making memory boxes can also be a very creative activity which can be helpful for talking if the child does not want to do this directly.

## **Memory stones**

Memory stones can be a lovely activity for a bereaved child. Picking a stone to remember their loved one and using colours and shapes reflecting that person. Memory stones can also be used as a way of letting a member of staff know they are having a hard day. Sometimes children will find it difficult to verbalise how they are feeling and they can use their stone if they want to let a member of staff know they need some 'time out' or someone to talk to.

## **Memory Jar**

Memory jars can be a good way of remembering someone. All that is needed is an empty jam jar, lots of different coloured chinks and table salt. The child will then choose a coloured chink to represent a memory of the person e.g. 'yellow because Mum had a sunny smile', or 'red because Dad loved Liverpool FC'. They can then roll the coloured chinks into the layers of salt, one by one, building individual layers of colour carefully inside the jar. The jar is finished with either the lid or a cloth top and a label attached setting out the colours and the memories for them to keep.

## **Memory Plant Pot**

This is an activity where children can decorate a plant pot in a similar way to their memory box and then plant seeds or a bulb that reminds them of a memory or something about the person. This is like crushing the chink into the salt for the memory jar and can be a very sensory/tactile activity with the child scooping the soil into the plant pot. This activity will need nurturing and watering so this will need to be overseen by family or school if staying within school.

## **Handprints**

This is a helpful activity for children who have a terminally ill parent. This would need to be done at home with the parent and child drawing around their hands together – having some of the fingers touching. Children can find this comforting particularly during hospital visits or post bereavement – when they can place their hand and 'feel' the other hand alongside.

## **Transitional Objects**

For children who have a parent who has died from a long illness having a transitional object such as a painted stone or teddy can be comforting. Identifying two identical but different sized teddies or animals - with the parent as the large one and the child the small one. When the parent goes into hospital, they can swap the teddies thereby looking after each other – this can be very helpful for some children particularly those with separation anxiety. Following the death this can also be comforting to the child to keep the parent teddy, although some children will choose to give their teddy to go in the coffin with their parent and some prefer to keep both teddies as a memory.

## A Bereaved Child – ‘What I need from you’

- Let people like teachers know about my loss – I might not want to talk about it, but I need them to know that I am grieving
- Don't pretend it hasn't happened although I might seem as if I would rather you did – please acknowledge what happened
- Ask me how I am feeling – it might not be obvious that I am not coping
- Help me with advice and information about loss – I might not want to ask questions sometimes but knowing I can will be helpful
- Please be aware that I am probably going to have trouble concentrating and I might get behind in my work, help me with knowing that this is 'ok'
- Help me with ways I can leave class situations briefly when my feelings become overwhelming and find somewhere to go quiet or with someone I can talk to
- Understand that I will not 'get over it' and that I will be living with my grief forever so there will be times in years later when I may struggle and need extra support
- Help with encouragement even with the smallest achievements whilst I am finding everything so hard
- Remember, although I may know it's right to talk about my loss – I might not be ready yet
- Please remind me that although I am a bereaved child - I am still 'me', it is still 'ok' to do fun things and be happy as well as grieve for my loved one

## **LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF/SCHOOL STAFF**

Supporting any child with emotional issues and particularly with any form of loss can be emotionally draining. It is important to looking after yourself in this demanding role. This is not a sign of weakness or an inability to do your role but a recognition that to do this job well, you will need your own supports in place as well. These are some ideas that can help to take care of your emotional wellbeing.

### **AWARENESS OF YOUR BOUNDARIES**

In any caring professional role, it is very easy to want to 'fix the problem' or become overly involved. It is important to remember that you cannot carry the child's grief for them and reminding yourself that nothing you can do can ever make the loss go away. Keeping professional boundaries in place will be beneficial for the child and yourself in the long run. Grief will always remain a part of a child's life – however by keeping our professional boundaries, we can share part of their grief journey by being supportive and aware.

### **ANTICIPATE YOU MAY EXPERIENCE AN EMOTIONAL REACTION**

Everyone at some point in their life will experience loss. Supporting a bereaved child will inevitably trigger our own losses and emotions, so talking about these feelings is important and can be done without breaching confidentiality. It is perfectly normal to be emotionally affected. However, recognising that in order to help others you will need to feel reasonably strong yourself. It is not a sign of weakness to admit that you may not be the best person to support a bereaved child due to your own losses. In fact, this is essential in maintaining professional boundaries and supporting the child the best way possible. It is also important to be aware of other colleagues who have become stressed or affected by these issues and help them to seek further support when needed and that they may need to pass this supportive role on to another.

### **SERVICES/SUPPORTIVE ORGANISATIONS**

Immediately following a bereavement sharing practical information and resources can be the best form of support for a family. Seeking assistance from organisations such as Mosaic can help to provide helpful information and resources that schools can pass on. Mosaic can also provide support and training for schools to help with supporting bereaved children and responding to a death in the school community. Within this pack you will see a list of helpful organisations.

### **TIME FOR YOURSELF**

Make time to do something for you or give yourself a treat. Find ways to manage your stress that works well for you. Physical exercise is a great release and helps us to gain a work/life balance. We all need to take care of ourselves before we are able to properly support others and remember you are important!

# CHECKLIST

## SUPPORTING A BEREAVED CHILD

- Refer to the School Bereavement Policy guidelines
- When offering condolences to the family, find out more information, respecting their wishes on how they want the news of the death communicated
- Offer support to the family through school and information on bereavement organisations like Mosaic
- Inform other staff offering support and advice about how to break the news to the children – create plans on how this will happen
- Break the news to the school/pupils either through a whole school assembly or through smaller groups
- Send out a condolence letter to the family reinforcing school support
- Letter to school parents informing them of the death of a pupil/staff member and offering information of supportive services
- Send cards and letters from the school to the family
- Prepare for the child/siblings to return to school preferably as soon as possible
- Offer support to other pupils about a child's return
- Ensure a bereaved child has someone they know they can talk to within school i.e. pastoral care/teacher – and a plan of ways they can access this support quickly when needed

## RESPONDING TO FRIGHTENING EVENTS:

Following traumatic events, children may present with a number of responses as they begin to try and understand and process what has happened. The following reactions can be seen as a normal response for a child following such experiences:

- Difficulties with sleeping, having nightmares
- Difficulty with concentration
- Feeling insecure needing constant reassurance, clingy with parents/carers
- Memories or pictures unexpectedly popping into their mind
- Anxiety that it may happen again
- Using play and drawings repeatedly describing the event
- Not wanting to talk about the experience and avoiding anything that reminds them of what has happened
- Difficulties with managing their feelings i.e. anger, distress
- Hypervigilance – jumpy, increase in impulsivity
- Regressing to earlier stages i.e. toilet issues, early play, talking 'like a baby', earlier behaviours etc.
- Physical complaints i.e. tummy pains and headaches

Children can often become overwhelmed and frightened of their intense feelings, therefore 'normalising' letting them know 'it's 'ok' to feel angry/sad etc.' can help to reassure children. It's important to let them know 'its 'ok' to feel happy, to go out and play as well.

### Helping children understand what has happened

When we think about traumatic experiences being difficult for adults to process, it is even more important for us to take into account a child's developmental understanding so that we can be age appropriate with our communication.

- Children will need a truthful explanation of what has happened at their level of understanding. Even young children will 'pick up' on adult conversation which they may not understand and which could make them feel confused and worried. Talking through these experiences in an age appropriate way can help to correct any misunderstandings and help to prevent any worries. Some children can become confused and think it was 'their fault' in some way.
- Younger children will need 'bite sized' information so they are not 'overwhelmed' with facts. They may need to ask the same question over and over again – this is normal and important for a child to help them develop their understanding. Offer lots of opportunities for them to ask questions.

- When the traumatic event has been a death of someone close to them, young children may need help to understand that death is permanent. Depending on the child's age and understanding, patience and time to explain can help them understand and process what has happened. It is natural for adults to want to protect children from pain and they may want to use euphemisms to describe death as 'he/she has gone to sleep', 'gone on a long journey' etc. However, this will only serve to confuse children and may create a 'longing or belief' that the bereaved person will return. Therefore, it is important to use accurate words to describe death and then be led by the child through their questions to aid their understanding. If they are asking questions this usually means they are ready to hear or are wanting to hear the answer
- Encourage maintaining normal routines – traumatic events can naturally unsettle everyone and you can help children to feel safer and secure sooner by keeping to normal routines i.e. going to school, after school activities, doing household tasks
- Encourage non- verbal opportunities for children to communicate and gain understanding of what has happened. Younger children can often find it hard to verbalise frightening events, therefore using creating play, drawing and creative activities can be an effective way of exploring feelings. Although it is beneficial for children to talk about their feelings this needs to be done in a sensitive way and at the right time for them. You should never 'force' a child to talk. Offering them time and opportunities through play, drawings and creative activities can offer a more sensitive and positive way when they are ready.

It is important to remember that children are very resilient in nature and following a traumatic event, after a number of weeks, most will return to feeling happy and confident again. If you are worried about a child and they are continuing to have problems several weeks after the event with no improvement, it may be beneficial to seek further advice through your GP. This will enable the GP to assess the child's overall health and advise whether specialised support is needed.

## DIFFERENT CULTURES & BELIEFS

Schools are having to respond to an ever increasing multi-cultural society with various beliefs, non- beliefs and cultural differences. Being aware and respectful of a family's belief and culture can help schools to navigate their different needs and how they can be best supported following a bereavement.

Each and every one of us comes from a culture or a religious or non- religious background. Our own cultural/religious traditions may be quite different from those of a bereaved family and it is best to assume nothing and ask the family about their culture/beliefs and what they feel would help them best.

The following descriptions give a brief overview of the major religions in the UK:

### **Christianity:**

Christians believe there is one God and that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who died on the cross and three days later he was raised from the dead. Christians believe in the afterlife and the idea of resurrection. The details around what happens after death can differ between different denominations with a belief that when a person dies they will go to heaven, hell or purgatory dependent on how they had lived their life. Within the different denominations there can be a number of variations of what happens at a funeral service with some churches offering a full Mass for the deceased and others having a simpler service. When someone dies an undertaker will carry out the necessary preparations for the body to be laid out. The body can be viewed before the funeral which usually takes place in a church or crematorium within a few weeks of the death. The body will either be buried or cremated depending on the wishes of the deceased and the family. A grave of the deceased is marked by a headstone or the family may choose to spread the deceased's ashes at a place that is special to them.

### **Islam:**

Muslims believe in life after death and when someone dies they are buried ideally within 24 hours of the death. Cremations are forbidden. They believe 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. Devout Muslims believe that death is part of Allah's plan and open expressions of grief may be viewed as disrespectful to this form of belief.

Following a death there is a ritual washing by the family or close friends of the body at the undertakers or mortuary. The body is wrapped in a clean cloth or shroud. At the grave the body is buried so it is aligned to face the holy city of Mecca. Muslim graves are unmarked traditionally but in the UK a simple headstone is used. There is an official mourning period of three days when the family will remain at home with friends and relatives bringing food. Forty days after the funeral relatives may wish to make regular visits to the grave on Fridays.

**Buddhism:**

Buddhists believe in rebirth and reincarnation and that nothing is permanent. The ultimate objective is to achieve a state of perfect peace and freedom. Death is approached with great calmness and open-minded acceptance. There are few formal traditions relating to funerals and they tend to be seen as non-religious events. Cremation is generally the accepted practice and the service is kept very simple. It may be conducted by a Buddhist monk or a family member.

**Hindu:**

Hindus believe in reincarnation and a cycle of rebirth. When a person dies the soul is reborn and the life they have led will influence what happens to them in the next life, the law of Karma.

A Hindu funeral is a very much celebrated service of remembrance. Cremation is the traditional practice as the soul is important not the body which is no longer needed. White is the traditional colour to wear at the funeral. Offerings such as flowers and sweetmeats are passed around and bells rung as part of the ritual. The chief mourner may shave his head as a mark of respect and he will also light the funeral pyre (in India). However, in the UK he will be chosen to press the button for the coffin to disappear. Ashes will be taken to spread in designated waters. The official mourning period lasts between 2-5 weeks

**Humanism:**

Humanists are non-religious. They follow the belief that there is no after life and the life we have is the only one. The focus of a humanist funeral is about celebrating the life of the deceased. Stories, music and memories of the person will be shared supported by an Officiant. The ceremony, usually a cremation, will be tailored to meet the family's wishes rather than following a set pattern.

## **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER FAMILIES**

There are estimated to be around 300,000 Gypsies and Travellers in the UK. Recent statistics have shown that they have the poorest life expectancy of any ethnic group. The figures show that they have a higher death rate than the overall mainstream population and are more likely to experience the premature death of a child. Suicide rates are also particularly high amongst young men.

There are many reasons behind these concerning statistics which may include the mobile lifestyle, limited access to healthcare and lack of places for gypsy and travelling communities to settle for longer periods. Those communities that have settled into static houses can often feel restricted by this lifestyle. This can result in an increase in mental health problems and risk-taking behaviours.

When a death occurs within their family it can have a huge impact on a whole wide network of people due to the very close-knit nature of the society.

In modern times Gypsy and Traveller societies may not necessarily follow all the previous traditions held by generations before them, and each family funeral will be different. Traditionally the caravan and all the possessions of the person who died would be burnt. Today possessions are more likely to be sold. Letting go of possessions like this means that all connections with the person who has died are removed. This traditional ritual can be difficult for children and relatives who are unable to keep items as a reminder of their loved one.

Following the death, it is common to 'sit with' the deceased so they are not left alone until the funeral. Religion for some communities will be an important aspect of the funeral, particularly with Catholic Irish Travellers. Traditionally the funeral will take place very quickly after a death. Gypsy and Traveller funerals can be very lavish and extravagant celebrations with ornate headstones. It is seen as an expression of the respect and value of the deceased person and how he was held within the community. It is not unusual for people to travel great distances when a community member has died.

### **IMPACT ON CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

Gypsy and Traveller Children are no different to other children from outside their own community but they will grieve in different ways. However cultural expectations and the protective nature of the communities can often highlight a general reluctance to discuss bereavement and loss following a death. This can result in some children not having the access to services or emotional support when needed following the death of a family member.

## **SUPPORTING CHILDREN BEREAVED BY SUICIDE, MURDER OR MANSLAUGHTER:**

A suicide, murder or manslaughter in the school community is something nobody ever feels prepared for but sadly they do occur. When supporting a child where a family member has decided to take their own life or has died violently, having an action plan in place (within the School Bereavement Policy) will help to have an immediate response.

### **SUICIDE:**

Deaths by suicide have escalated considerably in recent years, particularly amongst teenage boys and young male adults (75%). Suicide and violent deaths will inevitably have a devastating impact on the whole school community.

The very nature of death by suicide is still a 'taboo' subject within our society which can be particularly difficult for bereaved children and family members to understand and start to process their grief. Suicide is a very public event and as the inquest into a death can take a considerable time; in some cases up to 2 years or more – information can often be confusing for a family, with the risk of rumour and social media misinterpretation.

Children bereaved by suicide will have many questions about the death but very few answers. Trying to find a reason for what has happened and make sense of the events can complicate the natural grief process. Children affected by suicide or any traumatic or violent deaths are more likely to need professional help. The normal grief responses of guilt and anger will likely be felt more intensely particularly with the destructive effect suicide can often have on the lives of surviving family members, peers and the wider community.

### **MURDER OR MANSLAUGHTER:**

When a death occurs by violent means, this comes with an added trauma to a bereaved family, to what is already a devastating situation. These types of deaths will necessarily involve the criminal justice system which can cause lengthy delays to the funeral and gaining answers to questions the child and family may have. The nature of the death may also cause some considerable anxiety about their own safety and a view of the world as an 'unsafe place'. Children who have witnessed or have been involved in any part of the situation may also be at risk of post-traumatic stress disorder. The death is almost certainly likely to be reported in the media which can result in media intrusion and difficulty for children to keep to normal routines.

The majority of violent death statistics show that a killer is often known to the victim. In some cases, this may be a family member who is known to the child. Therefore, this may involve the child having to move from their home to live with someone else which can add to their feelings of insecurity and confusion. If the perpetrator is a parent or a family member this will also increase the sense of loss by another loved person in their lives going to prison.

## SUPPORTING CHILDREN BEREAVED BY SUICIDE & VIOLENT DEATH:

Some important points to remember when supporting a child bereaved by suicide and violent death:

- With the confusion and difficulty about knowing the facts around the death it is even more important for children to have someone they can trust to talk to and ask questions about what has happened. Gaining answers can often be difficult as some information may not be known but talking can help children to feel less isolated.
- Children who have witnessed a murder or found the body of a suicide may experience recurrent and intrusive memories of the event. This will have a major impact on their ability to concentrate. If these symptoms persist or escalate they will need to see their GP to be assessed by mental health services for possible post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Overwhelming feelings of anger and guilt following a suicide or violent death may cause challenging behaviour at school. Children will need constant reassurance that nothing they did or said caused the death. The person who died by suicide chose to take their own life. In a violent death reinforcing it was the person who killed their loved one who is to blame not them.
- Feelings of rejection are a common response and this may have an impact on a child's self-esteem. Offering support within school to help reinforce positive thinking and help the student to recognise even the smallest achievements.
- Children will naturally feel anxious about themselves and others around them following a suicide/violent death. Although you cannot offer definite reassurance this will never happen again, it can be helpful to say something along the lines of **'there are some very bad people in this world, but not many – most people are good and kind'**.
- Offering support to help them get a sense of 'control' over their lives when many aspects following the death may feel like everything is out of their control, will help them be proactive about making decisions and actions that are positive for them.
- With any death it is important for children to know it is 'ok' to feel happy and have fun despite what has happened. The wider aspects involving the legal and criminal system can weigh heavily on children. Even small children will pick up on anxieties within the family, so giving them accurate and child centred information can help to manage this. Children should know that despite what is happening, they can carry on with normal life, have fun and feel happy.

## SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH A LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESS:

Routines and normal activities can really help a terminally ill child gain a sense of welcome normality in their lives at a time when they are facing enormous challenges with their health. This can also be a challenge to a school in supporting a child who may be constantly in and out of hospital or too ill to attend regularly. For terminally ill children these small achievements to keep to routines whenever possible can make a great deal of difference, helping them with an emphasis on living their lives rather than dying.

Sharing information to other pupils will need to be done sensitively and with the family's approval. Children will inevitably ask questions or will pick up on rumours about the illness and it is always best to have an honest approach whenever possible. Understandably this is not easy, however as much as adults will try to hide what is happening, children often instinctively already know that a classmate is dying, before they are told. Classmates who have the situation explained to them are usually very supportive wanting to help with tasks i.e. pushing the wheelchair or helping out at lunchtimes.

A terminally ill child may go through a lot of physical changes so it is helpful to prepare other pupils with truthful explanations about absences, hospital visits, treatments and a change of appearance, lack of energy etc. The child who is ill may be happy to talk about his/her treatments and pass on his/her knowledge to those around them in school. There may be a hospice worker or nurse who may be helpful in explaining about the treatments and equipment needed within school and may be able to come into school to talk to staff. As part of the Pre-Bereavement Policy identifying a key worker who can be contacted for advice and support can help with sudden changes and how to respond to the changing medical needs.

When supporting a child who has a serious illness it may seem hard to keep discipline boundaries in place. However, maintaining an expectancy of behaviour will help not only give him/her a sense of normality but will also prevent feelings of favouritism from other children. It is very normal for parents of children who have a terminally ill child in their class to become anxious about how their own child will be affected. Giving parents useful information and reassuring them that their children will cope better with honest information is a positive way of helping.

Keeping good links between the family of the terminally ill child, professionals supporting and other parents in the child's class, will help to contribute to the quality of life for a seriously ill pupil. Having good communication from the start can help to respond to the changes that will happen when a child has a terminal illness. Having this good preparation will also help other pupils with the inevitable loss that will occur and ensure that supports are already in place.

## PRE-BEREAVEMENT – WHEN A FAMILY MEMBER IS NOT EXPECTED TO LIVE:

How children will react to the news that a parent is dying will vary enormously. Having information about what is happening to help support a child in school can sometimes be difficult to obtain and will need to be handled sensitively. It is a very distressing time for families who are themselves having to come to terms with their treatment needs and prognosis. It is also a time when families are balancing the harsh realities of a terminal prognosis with still holding on to hope. Although this is a very challenging time, schools can offer great support to children in helping them to build resilience and positive coping strategies that will help them. Here are some guides to supporting a child who has a terminally ill family member:

- Communicate with the family about what the child knows and discuss how to support their child within school
- Sensitively encourage the family that honest communication is best and that children at any age can often pick up more than they have been told which may result in some confusion if they do not have the accurate information
- Forward information on to parents and school staff of services such as Mosaic or CRUSE for pre- bereavement advice
- Encourage the family to keep you informed and find a way that is helpful to them to do this such as email or text etc.
- If a hospice worker is involved ask the family if they are happy for the school to contact them about advice on how to support their child if needed
- Seek and offer support for school staff on how to answer difficult questions such as – ‘is my dad going to die?’. It is often best to ask the child what they already know if asked this question. It is not the school’s place to add information but you could let the child know that you will talk to the family about this if they would like you to
- Expect concentration and behaviours to fluctuate – illnesses can sometimes be prolonged with periods of time when the situation is more settled and other times when death could happen very suddenly. This can be a very challenging time for the whole family who will feel like they are on an emotional rollercoaster
- Some families with terminal illness will need time together to create precious memories and take trips away so absences from school may occur – this will be important to a child in the long-term post bereavement
- Keeping to normal routines within school will help to give a sense of normality, however awareness of the need for emotional support and how they can access this if needed i.e. time out card, ELSA support, key staff member they can talk to is important.

## SUPPORTING BEREAVED CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

Every child deserves the right to have grief support and although their needs may be more complex; children with learning difficulties are no different. However, they may need extra support with their understanding and ability to communicate their feelings due to their learning difficulties. We can be led to believe that they need to be protected from knowing about death and that they will not cope, however, this is far from the truth as with the right support and understanding children with learning difficulties can access grief support really well.

Helping children with learning difficulties it is important to remember: -

- To use the correct words i.e. 'dead, dying' not euphemisms such as 'gone to sleep' as this will confuse them
- To use a creative approach with communication i.e. visual media, pictures, cartoons, films, using an interest the child already has to aid understanding
- If a child has had a pet bereavement this can be helpful when discussing death
- Acknowledge any death, don't ignore what has happened
- Gather information on what they know; try to clarify their understanding of death this may be developmentally different to their peers.
- Give factual information on how the body works, what happens when someone dies i.e. the heart stops pumping blood around the body etc., using pictures
- Create a scrap book of pictures of e.g. bunch of flowers when fresh and when dead, a fish in the supermarket to a fish swimming in the river.
- For some children who wish to see the dead body, it can be helpful in understanding the concept of 'no life' but this will need careful preparation

Children with learning difficulties can sometimes need support with communicating their emotions and a bereaved child can feel quite anxious and distressed on the intensity of the emotions they are feeling. Letting them know that these feelings are normal and called 'grief' and maybe it's because 'they are missing the person who has died', will help to name and normalise these feelings for them.

Below are some suggestions that can help children with communicating their feelings: -

- Using visual prompts of emotions i.e. blob cards/pictures rather than verbalising difficult feelings
- Having creative memory activities to do such as a memory box and collecting items, pictures of the person who has died can help to facilitate discussion about feelings
- Discuss your own feelings and role model when you felt similar emotions and that it is ok and normal to do so
- Use a transitional object such as a comfort 'object' which can help some children have something sensory to hold at times of distress
- Listening to audio tapes or favourite music, smelling mum's perfume or dad's after shave of the loved one who has died can help children who are visually impaired or hard of hearing

## PRE/POST BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING

Grief is a normal part of life and it touches most people's lives at some point. Most children with the support of their family and school may not need any additional bereavement counselling. However, in some cases it can be very helpful to have external support to help process grief. Some children as they develop may 'revisit' their grief as their understanding of death changes. Although this is very normal they may have questions they want to ask about the death of their family member that they were too young to talk about at the time. Also, some deaths such as suicide or traumatic deaths may have led to some secrecy or confusion about the events. Helping children to understand what happened can very often really help them. Knowing the facts can be far better than imagining what happened from fragmented bits of information.

If you feel a child/young person would benefit from having bereavement counselling, you can contact Mosaic to ask for general advice and whether a referral would be appropriate.

## EARLY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

At Mosaic we recognise the importance of families receiving early bereavement support following the death of a loved one. Access to early support following a traumatic bereavement can make a great deal of difference to a family. Bereavement research shows that in the early stages of grief early advice and information, to normalise and understand grief responses can significantly help families to manage the challenges they are facing.

All children and young people will grieve in their own unique way, so we do not believe there is a set time when children are ready or indeed will need to access bereavement counselling. Therefore, offering our Early Bereavement Support to families and professionals can help to reassure families there is support there if needed. We offer this service through contact by telephone, email and social media. We can also offer up to 3 home visits to bereaved families at this stage. This service also helps us to link families into other supports and services and offer training to school staff and other services if needed. By working closely with our families and other professionals we can respond swiftly if a young person and family would benefit from an early referral for bereavement counselling.

Our Early Bereavement Intervention is funded by Mosaic. As a bereavement charity for children and families we are grateful to our incredible fundraising team and volunteers who help to fund this support.

For more information please contact

01258 837071

[info@mosaicfamilysupport.org](mailto:info@mosaicfamilysupport.org)

## HOW SCHOOLS CAN HELP MOSAIC COUNSELLING?

Schools can offer a safe and familiar environment for a young person to access bereavement counselling. However, there are some factors that will contribute to the success and engagement of the work. When a young person is referred for Mosaic support it would be helpful if schools could: -

- offer a space for a counsellor to meet with a young person that is confidential, comfortable and away from any distractions and disruptions
- have clear processes in place with a named member of staff to report any safeguarding issues or concerns to
- ensure counsellors know prior to a session that a young person is not available for counselling
- ensure that the counsellor/client confidentiality is respected at all times
- appoint a member of the school staff to act as a liaison with the counsellor, to guarantee good contact and ensure that opportunities to review the counselling support offered are maintained throughout
- offer opportunities for pastoral support to be available following the completion of the counselling to help support a bereaved child when needed

Thank you.

## HELPFUL ORGANISATIONS:

### Below is a list of useful contacts and websites

Mosaic – Supporting Bereaved Children  
Dorset wide support for bereaved children, young people and their families  
[www.mosaicfamilysupport.org](http://www.mosaicfamilysupport.org)

Childline  
National helpline for children  
[www.childline.co.uk](http://www.childline.co.uk)

CRUSE  
Bereavement care for adults  
[www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

Childhood Bereavement Network  
Information and advice on bereavement services nationwide  
[www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

HOPElineUK 0870 170 4000  
Support, practical advice and information to anyone concerned that a young person they know may be at risk of suicide

National Children's Bureau – Childhood Bereavement Network  
Information, and advice bereavement services nationwide  
[www.ncb.org.uk/cbn/directory](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cbn/directory)

Papyrus  
A website to help young people who may be thinking about suicide  
[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

Parentline Plus  
[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

SAMM (Support after Murder and Manslaughter)  
A national UK Charity supporting families bereaved by Murder and Manslaughter)  
[www.samm.org.uk](http://www.samm.org.uk)

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide  
[www.sobs.admin.care4free.net](http://www.sobs.admin.care4free.net)

The Compassionate Friends  
Organisation to support parents who have lost a child of any age  
[www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

The Mesothelioma Centre  
The leading mesothelioma cancer resource  
[www.asbestos.com](http://www.asbestos.com)

The Way Foundation  
Organisation to support young widows  
[www.wayfoundation.org.uk](http://www.wayfoundation.org.uk)

Winston's Wish  
Offering information and support to anyone caring for a bereaved child, including professionals and family members  
[www.winstonswish.org/Bereavement](http://www.winstonswish.org/Bereavement)

At a Loss  
Charitable movement of people across the UK who are passionate about enabling the bereaved to receive the support that they need  
[www.ataloss.org](http://www.ataloss.org)

CLIC Sargent  
UK's leading children's cancer charity which provides support and advice to children suffering from cancer and leukaemia and their families  
[www.clicsargent.org.uk](http://www.clicsargent.org.uk)