



## BEREAVEMENT POLICY

**Adopted:** May 2020

**Review:** May 2022



## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Aims of Bereavement Policy .....	1
Rationale .....	1
Guidelines for Staff & Governors .....	1
Guidelines for Informing Children (see Appendix 1) .....	2
In the Days After the Death .....	3
Supporting the Child to Return to School.....	4
Appendix 1 .....	6
Appendix 2: Communication Pathways.....	7
Appendix 3 - Communication & Letter Templates.....	12
Appendix 4 .....	14

## Introduction

Bereavement and loss are an inevitable part of living and growing. At The Ferns Primary Academy, we recognise it is important to provide learning opportunities for children to develop their own appropriate range of emotional, spiritual and intellectual responses to manage these experiences. At The Ferns, our 4C values of courage, curiosity, confidence and co-operation and ethos of openness and mutual support, provide a framework in which these experiences can be realised in a supportive manner.

Bereavement impacts everyone in different ways and for different periods of time. We recognise that whatever the level of understanding about bereavement, we have a duty to help support anyone when they could be feeling their most vulnerable, in the way that best meets their needs. By adopting a planned, open and considered approach, The Ferns Primary Academy can support the emotional well-being of the child, family and staff.

The purpose of this Bereavement Policy is to help everyone within the school community realise bereavement is a normal, natural part of life which needs to be discussed openly. It outlines ways; to respond in caring for the wellbeing of children and staff at a time when they may be in shock, upset and confused, to ensure effective communication takes place, support available for each member of the school community to ensure there is as little disruption as possible to the daily school routine.

## Aims of Bereavement Policy

- To identify key staff within the school and the Kite Academy Trust, resources and further support services to help the whole school community work together
- To provide a framework for all staff, teaching and non-teaching, to give guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately with difficult and upsetting circumstances
- To have clear expectations about the way school will respond to the death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all
- To support children and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after bereavement
- To meet the needs of all children and staff and to be a place that both the child and family can rely on, and gain much needed support
- For children to have the opportunity to tell their story, express their feelings, share their memories and develop coping strategies through support by sensitive staff

## Rationale

- Every 30 minutes in the UK a child loses a parent
- 290 children a week are bereaved (approx. 41,000 bereaved children each year)
- Teachers in a Primary school are certain to encounter students who have been deeply affected by bereavement
- 3% of 5-15 year olds have experienced the death of a parent or sibling and many others have lost grandparents
- It is thought that 92% of children in the UK will experience bereavement before the age of 16
- Close bereavements bring profound effects and changes to a child's life
- There is no fixed pattern to how a child will grieve
- The 'Five Stages of Grief' (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance) can be used as a way of starting to understand what the child or young person may be experiencing

## Guidelines for Staff & Governors

- Where possible, discussion should take place with the bereaved family and their wishes taken into account before any decisions are made in relation to how and what to tell the staff and wider school community
- It is important to consider any cultural or religious implications and seek advice if necessary

- ALL staff (including support staff such as lunch time supervisors, PE coaches...) should be informed as soon as possible using normal method of communication, e.g. a whole school staff meeting or team meeting, ensure this includes part time staff and measures are taken to inform absent staff over the telephone
- Staff will be given a factual explanation of how the death occurred and, if applicable, the circumstances of what happened leading up to the death
- Ensure Senior Leadership team are prepared for reactions to this news including visible upset and feelings of anger/guilt. People may connect the incident to their own personal experience of bereavement, so feelings about past bereavements may need to be discussed
- A member of Senior Leadership would be available to members of staff, parents or children if they are finding the situation particularly hard. Seek the advice of external support services as appropriate (see Appendix 2)
- Be prepared to arrange supply cover if necessary
- Establish one person as a point of contact for the family to ensure free flow of accurate information to and from the school
- Bereavement support or counselling should be available to all as necessary (requesting external bereavement support if needed - Simon Says, Winston's Wish, Cruse, Compassionate Friends and Kite FSW team.)
- Arrange staff/pupil condolences with collaborative agreement if felt appropriate
- Agree a set time for teachers to inform their class what has happened, how this is to be done and EXACTLY what is going to be said. Identify any absent pupils
- Consider following this up with a special assembly, memorial service or memorial tree/garden
- Arrange for the Senior Leadership Team to be on hand at the end of the working day for staff to debrief and reflect upon the day's events and to agree upon any further action or support that may need to be put in place. Staff who will be alone that night could be identified and arrangements made for colleagues to contact them by phone if necessary
- Speed and chaos may be a major factor on a day when a critical incident has happened - the speed and chaos meaning that constant referring to plans and lists is not possible. However, it is important to keep people as informed as possible
- Where possible, staff who request to attend the funeral or memorial should be released

## Guidelines for Informing Children (see Appendix 1)

- Identify children who are most likely to be impacted by the news because they had a close relationship with the deceased or are already bereaved. These children should be told together as a separate group. For other children, where possible, inform them in the smallest group, preferably their class. This should be done by class teacher or in any event by a familiar adult. All children within the school will be informed.
- Staff to follow the guidelines about how to inform children: they should be honest and tell the children if they do not have answers to their questions but, when possible, this question should be revisited at a later date when the answer is available.
- Staff should be prepared for children to say or do the unexpected. Sometimes this can be upsetting for the adults. No response from a child does not mean they do not care.
- Identify any key answers that may need preparation, e.g. the facts about an illness, or dates which may be relevant to the death.
- Finish the discussion on a positive note - it is important the children remember and are reassured that not all people who are ill or have accidents die - many get better. Consider a prayer or reflection (whichever is appropriate) to remember the deceased and their family.
- Give children the opportunity to take part in an activity to express their thoughts and feelings. Representatives from the school may attend the funeral.

## In the Days After the Death

- Ensure consideration is given to any cultural or religious implications and seek advice if necessary.
- Ensure nominated staff (bereavement lead and/or ELSA) with responsibilities for supporting staff and children, are available to do so.
- If necessary, provide staff with cover for their normal activities to enable them to support the school community as appropriate.
- Identify an allocated quiet place where any member of the school community can go if necessary.
- Whilst we would try to ensure minimal disruption to the timetable, it might be necessary / appropriate to be flexible within this.
- Support each other and be aware of those who might need support and help, particularly those who worked closely with the person who has died and office staff who are taking telephone calls, dealing with parents etc.
- The nominated staff member who has responsibilities for liaising with the individual's family, should ascertain their wishes about the school's involvement in the funeral, if any.
- In line with the families' wishes, SLT should consider practical issues such as:

Sending flowers to the home or to the funeral, making a collection etc.

- Who will attend the funeral?
- Cover for any staff who may be going to the funeral.
- Informing the parents of those pupils who will be involved.
- Possible closure of the school.

### You are informed of a bereavement:

Identify the relevant communication pathway (see Appendix 2) and, as a team, the tasks required and who is best to complete them.



Member of SLT to contact family - phone call/send card/letter of condolence.



Nominated person to discuss with the family and child who they want their story shared with and outline support available to them.



Inform others - staff, families, children as agreed with the bereaved family and child.

(Appendix 3 Letter templates)



Nominated person to be point of contact for family - discuss funeral arrangements/return to school.



Nominated person will arrange to see child at home or, if more appropriate in school, to assess their needs and level of support required at the time.



Nominated person will liaise with child and support their return to school.



Nominated person will ensure significant dates and events for the child are recorded and shared with all staff for future reference (birthdays, anniversaries).



Nominated person continues to assess the needs of the child. Using observation, discussion with significant people, including the child regarding their concerns or worries, and outside agencies if required.



Ensure friendships are secure as peer support is very important.



Continue regular contact with the family - show our care for them and their child. Sign post to outside agencies if deemed appropriate.

## Supporting the Child to Return to School

We should recognise that when the child returns to school they may want to get straight back into friends, work and routine. They will have been surrounded by grieving family members and often a chaotic household of visitors. School maybe their break from that.

We will put in place these actions to support the child:

- A member of the school staff will be identified as the main contact point for them and their family. This could be Class Teacher or a member of staff that the child has a particular attachment with.
- Regular contact with the family. This may be daily or weekly depending on needs and wishes of the family. This will help the school understand how the family are coping, what support they may need now and in the future, to discuss concerns and worries and plan strategies to cope.
- If the child stays at home, remember them. Have cards and messages sent to them from appropriate people.
- Before the child returns to school, ensure all staff are aware of the bereavement and the possible effects on them, their behaviour and their learning so that appropriate care and support can be given throughout the school. Bereaved children may have 'physical' illness, such as headaches, tummy aches and feeling sick, as well as mental sadness including lack of concentration, feeling tired, disorganised anger and frustration. These will have an impact on work load and learning. Class teacher should monitor how things are going on the child's return and maintain communication with SLT.
- Normal rules and expectations of behaviour should be maintained. This is important for both the bereaved child and the rest of the children. The rules and expectations are part of the 'normal' routine and will help to make the child feel secure.
- If appropriate, implement 'time out' strategies that suit the child. Time out cards, signals or signs that can help them to exit the room quickly if they are feeling vulnerable or emotional. Identify a safe place for the child to withdraw to.
- It is likely the bereaved child will take time off school during the early stages of their bereavement. The need to be with their family is likely to be strong. They may suffer from separation anxiety when the time comes for a return to school. For other children, the familiarity, stability and routines of school life may prompt an early return.

### Dealing with the child's concerns on return to school

The time away from school will vary from child to child. When they do return, the child may have a number of concerns. The nominated person will talk to the child and ask them to share these concerns or questions. These may include:

1. How will staff and peers react- who has been told, what do they know, what will be said, how much will the child be expected to say to others?
  - We will help by meeting with them to welcome them back, to acknowledge the death and talk through their concerns. A start to this conversation might be “I am sorry to hear that your dad died - sometimes it helps to talk about it and if so, who would you like to be there for you? Where possible we will offer the child choices about how things should be handled and what support would be helpful. This information will be disseminated to staff and children, in particular classmates, so they are aware how the child would like to be received and supported.
2. Fear of sudden emotional outbursts - anger, distress, panic...
  - We will help by normalising grief reactions and providing choices about what strategies will help the child to cope in the classroom e.g. able to leave lessons without fuss - “exit card” system, where they can go, who they can talk to.
3. Fear when they realise they may not remember what the deceased person looks like.
  - We will consider various methods, e.g. a laminated photo of the deceased person may give enormous comfort. A special teddy or other memento can give great comfort in times of distress and upset. The child might also want to show this when talking about the person who died. It is important that whatever helps the child (within reason) should be encouraged.
4. Fear of being behind with work and unable to catch up
  - We will help by clarifying with staff what is essential to accomplish and what can be left, and offer appropriate help to achieve what needs to be done.
5. Inability to concentrate and feel motivated or sit still.
  - We will reassure the child that this lack of motivation and concentration is normal and will pass. We will offer shorter more manageable tasks, write down the task, give encouragement for achievements, and minimise difficulties.
6. Family grief impacting on normal family functioning - It is possible that the child might be inadequately prepared for school, might not have the necessary equipment, and may be tired or hungry. Staff will understand that disrupted routines, sporadic meals, chaotic bedtimes quite likely explain this.
  - We will support by talking with the child to ascertain where areas of difficulty lie and try and work out strategies with them and their family to help keep things on an even keel in school. We will identify the child’s strengths and build on them.
7. Unable to meet homework deadlines because of altered responsibilities within the family and home
  - We will help the child to work out and meet priorities. Staff will be flexible and offer additional support where needed.

### **Transition**

It is vitally important to ensure that if a child has experienced bereavement that this information is passed on to the relevant persons when they move on to a new class or school.

# GUIDELINES ON HOW TO INFORM CHILDREN

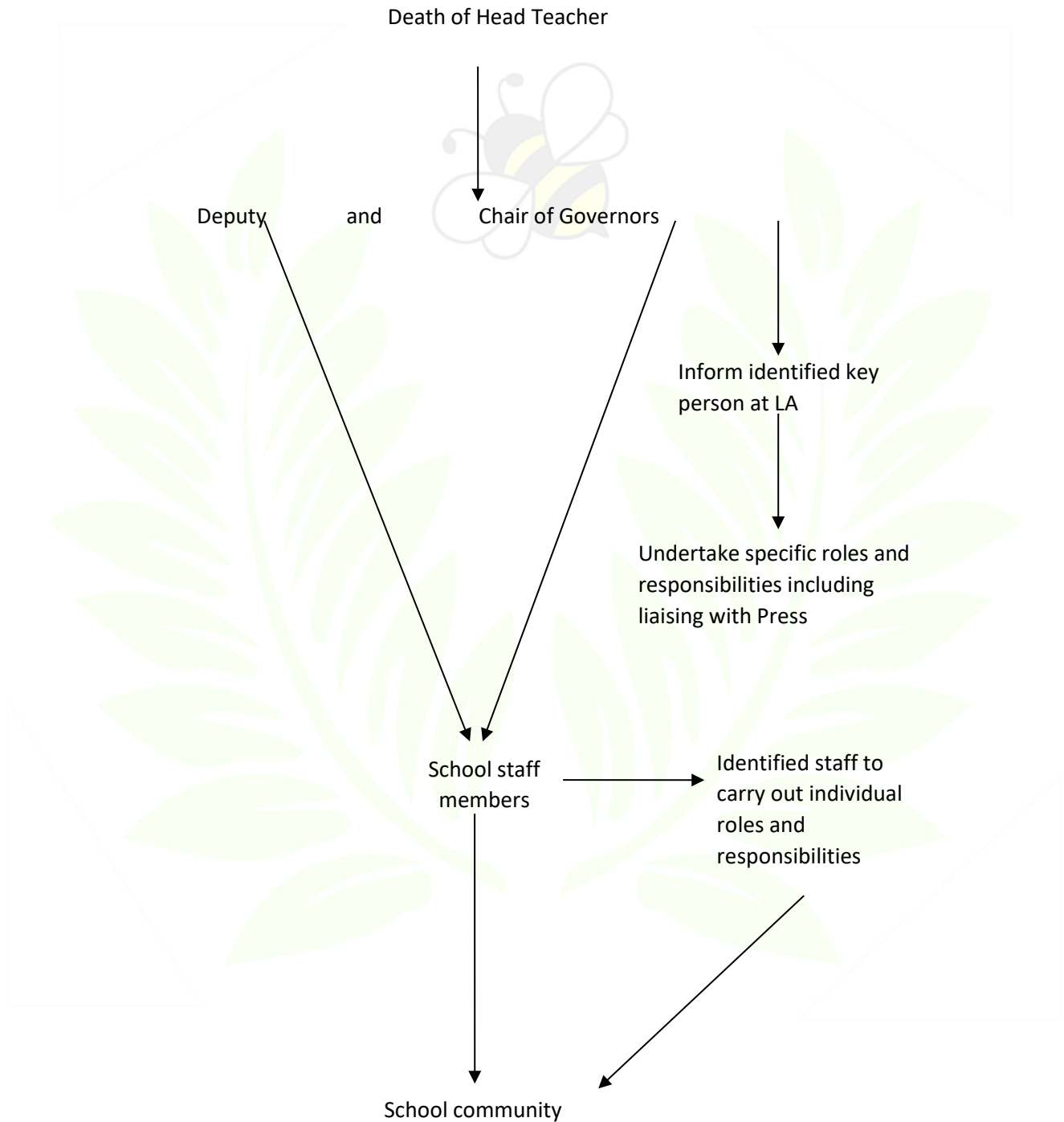
---

Remember it is ok to show your emotions in moderation. It is important we model to children and young people healthy responses to sad news and a natural response to hearing about a death is to shed a tear.

- Be honest and factual.
- Use clear language - use the person's name, do not use euphemisms like 'passed away' or 'lost' use the words dead, died and death to avoid confusion.
- Allow the children/young people to ask questions and answer them honestly and factually in terms they will understand.
- Allow the children/young people to ask questions and answer them honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.
- Allow the children/young people to verbalise their feelings.
- Allow the children/young people to discuss the situation and share their experiences of death (even if that is the death of a pet).
- Ensure the children/young people 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.
- Acknowledge some days will be harder than others.
- Do not expect to go straight into maths, allow for a time of restoration preferably with a physical outlet.
- 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 day which also offers a sense of security and familiarity.



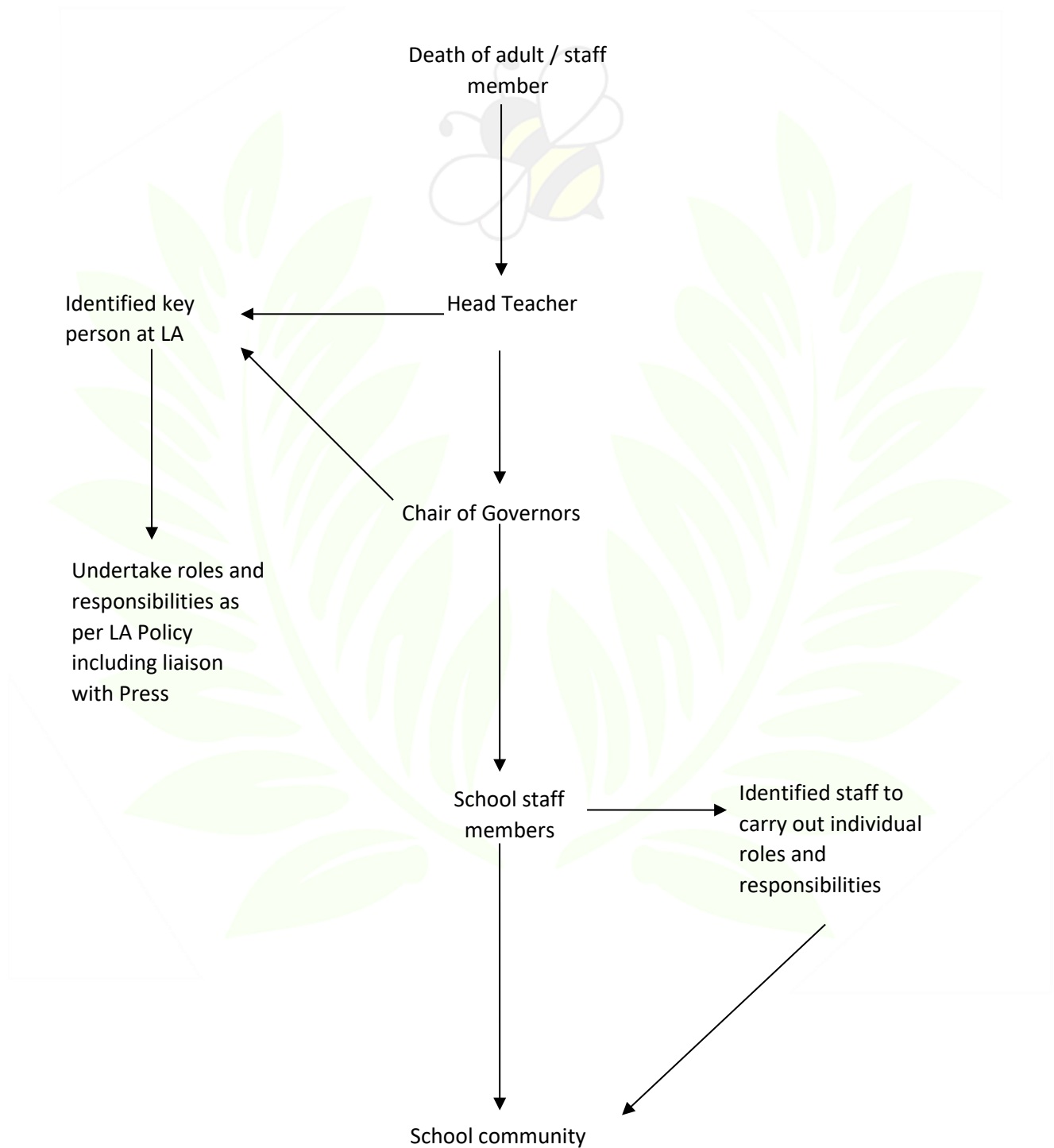
## INFORMATION SHARING PATHWAY FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF HEAD TEACHER



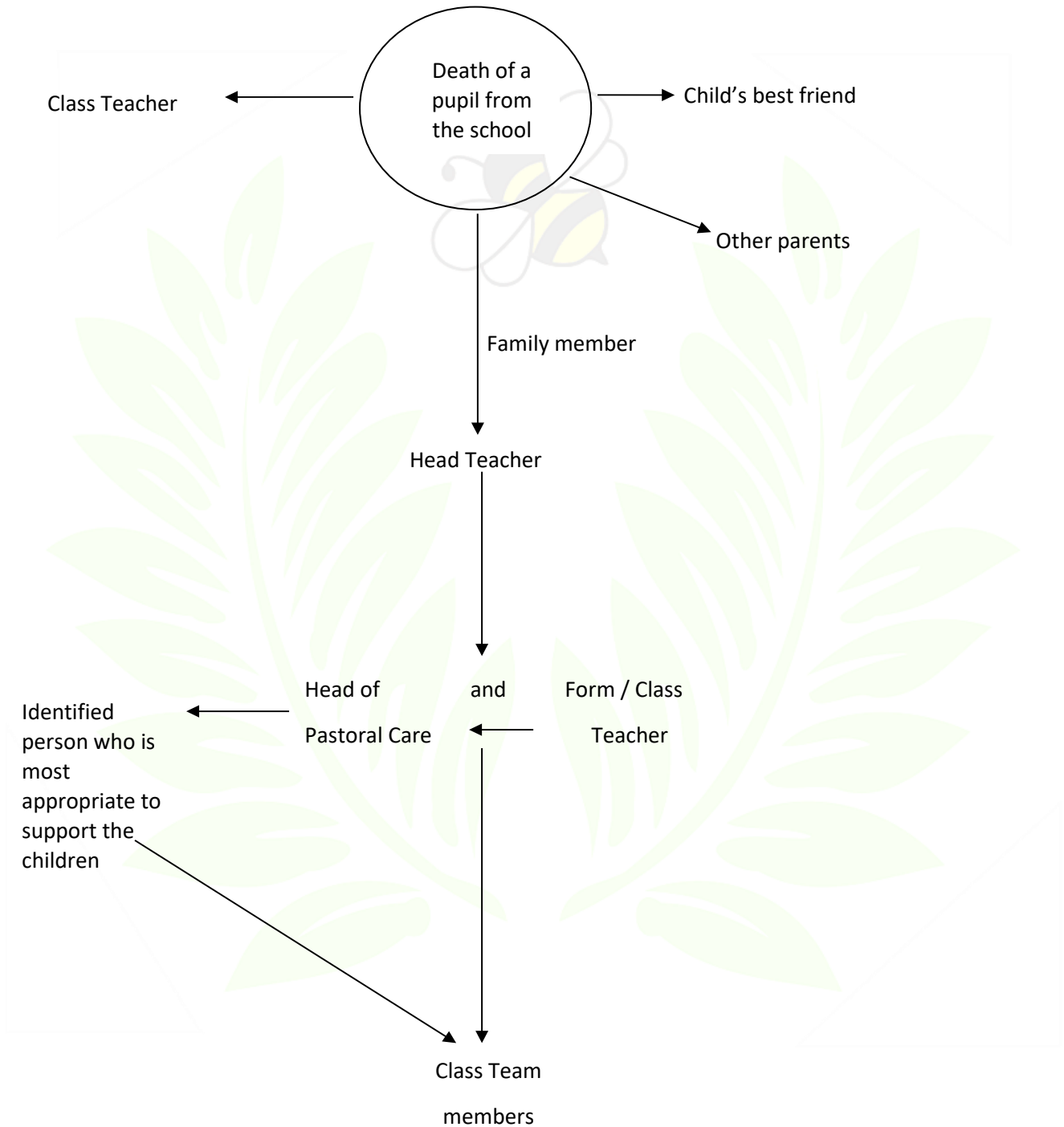
---

# INFORMATION SHARING PATHWAY FOLLOWING DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER

---



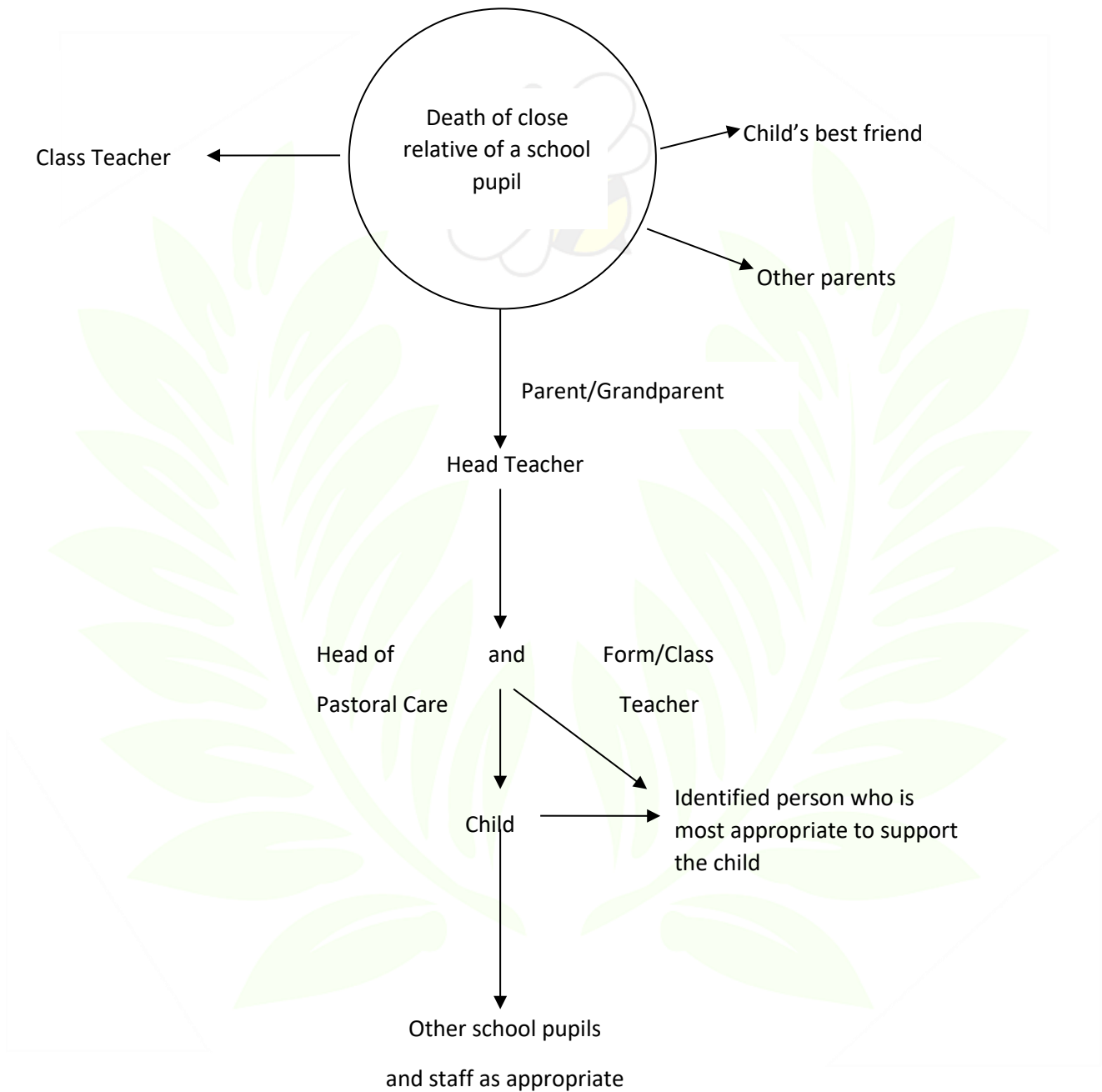
# INFORMATION SHARING PATHWAY FOLLOWING DEATH OF PUPIL



---

# INFORMATION SHARING PATHWAY FOLLOWING DEATH OF CLOSE FAMILY MEMBER OF SCHOOL PUPIL

---



---

# AMENDMENT TO INFORMATION SHARING PATHWAYS FOLLOWING DEATH DURING TIMES OF SCHOOL CLOSURE (HOLIDAY/ EXTENDED LOCKDOWN PERIODS)

---

**In the event of whole school closure over a period time, the policy still stands as guidance for bereavement.**

Our communication flowchart will be a crucial part of managing bereavement remotely and this will be used to inform and update staff instead of meeting physically.

Meetings to plan response and support will be held remotely using Microsoft Teams, with a range of different teams within the staff team accessing.

Forward planning will consider attendance and support in school or remotely for either children or adults affected by bereavement.

## **Case Study: Corona Virus (COVID-19) - Grieving and isolation**

Being bereaved can be an extremely lonely time and talking with those we rely on and trust most is one of the most helpful ways to cope. Grief at this time is further impacted by the current national health context and self-isolation/social distancing; this could make the feelings more intense. If children and teenagers are isolated, it could be difficult for carers to keep them occupied and deal with their own emotions and fears. The impact of dealing with a bereavement, compounded with feelings of worry about external situations, can mean that feelings of grief aren't fully expressed. Isolation can make it harder to process grief. At times like this when there is a constant stream of new and distressing information, people can find themselves distracted from dealing with their grief. They could be worrying about the situation as a whole or worrying about themselves or others. The current climate means that school communities are drastically altered, with most children largely being kept at home, there are inevitable changes to staffing within schools, and support services are primarily working remotely.

Children not able to have direct contact with their friends and wider family. Our lives are currently dominated by discussion about the impact the virus is having. We acknowledge this will be an anxious time for many children - they may have worries and questions about how the virus might affect them and those close to them, especially older members of their family and those already in poor health.

There is an obvious chance that one or more of our community may lose someone they care about.

Child Bereavement UK has made a short film about supporting bereaved children during the outbreak

Winston's Wish has produced guidance on:

- talking to bereaved children about coronavirus
- telling a child that someone has died from coronavirus

Cruse Bereavement Care has produced some tips about talking to children among their wider resources about grief and coronavirus.

**Saying goodbye and funerals:** The requirements around social distancing mean that many won't be able to attend the funeral of a loved one during the outbreak. Below are some suggestions about other ways of saying goodbye:

- How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible, from Winston's Wish
- Guidance for families around funerals, from Nelson's Journey
- Organising a meaningful funeral from Quaker Social Action

## Appendix 3 - Communication & Letter Templates

### Suggested scripts to use when someone dies:

“I’ve got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. I know most of you will have heard of cancer, and know that sometimes people with cancer get better, but other times people die from it. \_\_\_\_\_, Mr / Mrs.....x teacher, has been ill with cancer for a long time. I have to tell you that \_\_\_\_\_ died yesterday in hospital”.

“Sometimes people have accidents at work, at home, at school or on the road. People may be hurt or injured in the accident and they may have to go to hospital for treatment. Sadly, there are some accidents that cause people to die. I have some really sad news to tell you that might upset you. Yesterday \_\_\_\_\_, who is in Year 4, was in an accident and he was so badly injured that he died”.

### Template Letter to Parents

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

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

### Sample letter on death of a pupil:

Dear Parent,

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

<Name> died from an illness called cancer. As you may be aware, many children who have cancer 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 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 ring the school office and we would be more than happy to help you.

We will be arranging a memorial service in the school in the next few months to celebrate <Name’s> life.

Yours sincerely,

### Template letter to bereaved parents

Dear

We are so very sorry to hear of <Name>’s death. There are no words to express the sadness of losing a child and we can only begin to imagine the anguish you must be going through.

The school community at The Ferns will miss him/her very much and we are doing our best to offer comfort and support to his/her friends and classmates. He/She was a very much part of the school family community and will be greatly missed.

If there is anything that we can do to help with <Name’s> funeral service or any other memorial ceremonies, please do let us know.

Please be assured that you are 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,

## Template letter to parents

**Before sending a letter home to parents about the death of a member of staff, permission must be gained from the deceased's family.**

### Sample letter on death of a staff member:

Dear Parents,

I am very sorry to have to inform you that a much-loved member of staff <name> has sadly died. The children were told today and many have been quite distressed to hear the news. No-one wants to see the children sad, but we are very aware that factual information and emotional support are the best means of helping children deal with bereavement. I am sure that there will be many parents who are also saddened by the news.

Children respond in different ways to bereavement, and may dip in and out of sadness, denial and anger and may wish to ask questions, this is normal and healthy.

You may find that your child has questions to ask which we will answer in an age-appropriate way in school, but if you feel you would like more support and advice yourself, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. You may also find some very useful advice and resources online at [www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk).

We will share details of the funeral as soon as they are known. Children who wish to attend will be welcome to do so. It is likely that the school will be closed on the morning or afternoon of the funeral as staff will, naturally, wish to pay their respects to a very popular colleague.

I am sorry to be the bearer of this sad news, and I appreciate an occurrence like this impacts on the whole school community. I am so very grateful for the thriving partnership we have with parents and trust that we, together, will be able to guide and support the children through what may be, for many, a very new experience in their lives.

Yours sincerely,

### Sample letter: death of another child:

Dear Parents,

Your child's tutor had the sad task of informing the children of the death of <Name>, a pupil in <Year>. They were told that <name> died from an illness called <cancer>. Sometimes people who have cancer can get better, but other times people die from it. <Name> had been ill with <cancer> for a long time and died at home yesterday.

When someone dies, their family and friends have lots of feelings of sadness, anger, and confusion - these are all normal. The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try and answer their questions at school, but I have made available some information which may help you to answer your child's questions as they arise. You can obtain this from contacting Simon Says, a Hampshire based child bereavement support charity. Their contact details are 02380 647550, email [info@simonsays.org.uk](mailto:info@simonsays.org.uk) or visit their website [www.simonsays.org.uk](http://www.simonsays.org.uk).

The funeral will take place at <Named Church or Crematorium> on <Day and Date> at <Time>. Your child may wish to attend the funeral. If this is the case, you may collect your child from school and accompany them to the church. Please inform your child's teacher if this is the case.

Yours sincerely,

# EXTERNAL SUPPORT AGENCIES

---

[simonsays.org.uk](http://simonsays.org.uk) - Child/Adolescent Bereavement Support.

[autism.org.uk/about/family-life/bereavement.aspx](http://autism.org.uk/about/family-life/bereavement.aspx) - Advice when supporting someone with autism cope with a death.

[childbereavement.org.uk](http://childbereavement.org.uk) - Supports families and professionals when a child is bereaved or facing bereavement.

[childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk) - Childhood bereavement.

[childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk) - Free national telephone helpline for children and young people.

[crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://crusebereavementcare.org.uk) - All aspects of bereavement.

[griefencounter.org.uk](http://griefencounter.org.uk) - Helps bereaved children & young people rebuild their lives.

[hopeagain.org.uk](http://hopeagain.org.uk) - Specifically for young people aged 12-18.

[supportline.org.uk](http://supportline.org.uk) - Confidential emotional support for children, young people & adults.

[papyrus-uk.org](http://papyrus-uk.org) - Provides resources & support for those dealing with suicide, depression or distress - particularly teenagers & young adults.

[seesaw.org.uk](http://seesaw.org.uk) - Grief support service for children and young people.

[sands.org.uk](http://sands.org.uk) - Providing support for parents & families whose baby is stillborn or dies soon after birth.

[teenissues.co.uk](http://teenissues.co.uk) - Discussing the issues teenagers face.

[theredlipstickfoundation.org](http://theredlipstickfoundation.org) - Support for families bereaved by suicide.

[uk-sobs.org.uk](http://uk-sobs.org.uk) - Those who are left behind after a suicide can be helped by talking to others who have experienced a similar loss.

[Widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://Widowedandyoung.org.uk) - peer-peer network for those widowed before their 51<sup>st</sup> birthday

[winstonswish.org.uk](http://winstonswish.org.uk) - Help for grieving children and their families.

### Book List - Pre-bereavement Books

**My Brother and Me** by Sarah Courtauld. Available from CBUK shop ([www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org))

This pre-bereavement book is designed to help children understand how they and the rest of their family might feel when someone in that family is seriously ill. It offers opportunities to share concerns and fears and ways to manage difficult feelings such as jealousy. Age 4-10 but could be used with younger children.

**The Saddest Time** by Norma Simon. Explains death as the inevitable end of life and provides three situations in which children experience powerful emotions when someone close has died. The scenarios are an uncle with a terminal illness, a classmate killed in an accident and a grandparent who dies of old age.

### KS 1 Books

**I Miss My Sister** by Sarah Courtauld. Available from CBUK shop



A young girl's sister has died and the impact on her and her family is sensitively illustrated with minimum text. Designed to be shared with an adult, it will help to start conversations, answer questions and allay any fears.

**Missing Mummy** by Rebecca Cobb. Available from CBUK shop

Beautifully illustrated and with moments of wonderful warmth, this is a touching, honest and helpful book about the death of a parent. With minimum text, it touches on some of the worries and fears that a young child may have after a death, offering reassurance and hope.

**When your mum or dad has cancer** by Ann Couldrick. Available from CBUK shop

This is a useful booklet for younger children (7+) to teenage children. It has an introduction for parents but then explains cancer in a simple way children can relate to. It also covers many questions children ask such as will the person die and what exactly happens, but tackles the answers with insight and honesty.

**The secret C** by Straight Talking About Cancer by Julie Stokes, Vicky Fullick

This illustrated guide for children provides a sensitive introduction for a child when a parent, sibling or a person close to them is diagnosed with cancer. It is aimed at children aged 7 to 10 years and will work best when an adult is present to expand on the simple messages in the text.

**Badger's Parting Gifts** (also available in Urdu and Arabic) by Susan Varley

When old badger dies, his friends think they will be sad forever. Gradually they are able to remember Badger with joy and treasure gifts he left behind. Sensitively written, this book will help children identify and begin to understand feelings associated with the death of someone they love.

**The Lonely Tree** by Nicholas Halliday

A story based on the life cycle in the natural world. The young tree is sad when his old friend the Oak dies but Spring brings joy to the little tree. Schools information pack © Child Bereavement UK Registered in England and Wales: 1040419 and Scotland: SCO42910 Version: 05 Reviewed 2016 Author: J Lynham Date: 2016 Next review date: April 2020

**Am I Like My Daddy** by Marcy Blesy

This beautifully illustrated and poignant book will help children bereaved when very young who struggle to remember the parent who died. Grace in the process of learning about who her father was through the eyes of others learns about who she is today. This book is American, but relevant to all.

**Heaven** by Nicholas Allan

While he is waiting for the angels to collect him, Dill the dog explains to Lily what he thinks heaven is like: hundreds of lampposts to pee against, lots of whiffy things to smell and bones everywhere. Lily completely disagrees. Luckily, they agree to disagree just in time for a poignant, last goodbye.

**Waterbugs and Dragonflies** by D.Stickney

Written from a Christian perspective, this book can be used to help explain the concept of death to young children. The story illustrates that death is inevitable, irreversible but natural. It is presented as something sometimes difficult to understand but a happy experience for the deceased. Josh - coming to terms with the death of a friend by Stephanie Jeffs and Jacqui Thomas Josh's friend Max has died. The book explains with simple clarity not only what happens to the body of a dead person but also the Christian belief that we will be safe in heaven.

**Dogger** by Shirley Hughes

A sensitively written story, with which adults and children will identify. It is about a little boy who loses his favourite toy "Dogger" and describes his feelings and responses as a result. Useful as a gentle intro to Loss.

**Beginnings and Endings With Lifetimes In Between** by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen.

A beautifully illustrated book which aims to help parents/teachers explore the subjects of life and death.

**When Uncle Bob Died** by Althea

A helpful book which in a simple way explains the facts surrounding death. It is honest but reassuring. A good book to read to a young child to prepare them for the death of someone close. Realistic illustrations.

**When Dinosaurs die: A Guide to Understanding Death** by Laurene Krasny Brown, Marc Brown. The authors explain in simple language the feelings people may have regarding the death of a loved one and the ways to honour the memory of someone who has died.

**What does dead mean?** By Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas. Available Jessica Kingsley [www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com)

Beautifully illustrated book that guides children gently through 17 of the 'big' questions they often ask about death and dying. Suitable for children aged 4+, this is an ideal book for parents and carers to read with their children, as well as teachers, therapists and counsellors working with young children.

**Key Stage 2**

**Us Minus Mum** by Heather Butler

The boys think Mum is invincible. But they're wrong. Because Mum is ill. Really ill. It's up to George and Theo to keep Mum (and everyone else) smiling - which will almost probably definitely involve willies, shepherd's pie and Goffo's victory at the pet talent show. This book is funny and a little bit sad.

**When your mum or dad has cancer** by Ann Couldrick. Available from CBUK shop

This is a useful booklet for younger children (7+) to teenage children. It has an introduction for parents but then explains cancer in a simple way children can relate to. It also covers many questions children ask such as will the person die and what exactly happens, but tackles the answers with insight and honesty.

**The secret C by Straight Talking About Cancer** by Julie Stokes, Vicky Fullick

This illustrated guide for children provides a sensitive introduction for a child when a parent, sibling or a person close to them is diagnosed with cancer. It is aimed at children aged 7 to 10 years and will work best when an adult is present to expand on the simple messages in the text.

**The Huge Bag of Worries** by Virginia Ironside

Bereaved children and those in families where someone is expected to die, often have worries that they feel unable to share. This reassuring story will encourage them to voice their fears and concerns.

**Always and Forever** by Alan Durant

When Fox dies the rest of his 'family' are absolutely distraught. How will Mole, Otter and Hare go on without their beloved friend? But, months later, Squirrel reminds them all of how funny Fox used to be, and they realise that Fox is still there in their hearts and memories.

**The Tenth Good Thing About Barney** by Judith Voirst

A lovely short story that by dealing with the death of a pet, takes a child through the rituals associated with any death. It addresses the feelings children have when faced by loss, and how we all deal with those feelings, learn from them, and grow. This book does not have religious overtones, so it can be used by families with different sets of beliefs.

### **Remembering Mum** by Ginny Perkins

A simple photo journey of a real family whose Mum died. It shows how that family - a Dad and two primary aged boys - coped with the anniversary of Mum's death, and how they are living without her but still including her in their daily lives. Very real and one that children will identify with.

### **Sad Book** by Michael Rosen

Michael Rosen talks of his sadness after the death of his son. A personal story that speaks to adults and children. Minimum text with moving illustrations.

### **What On Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?** by Trevor Romain

Child friendly, accessible text, this short book deals with the many questions that bereaved children of this age have when someone dies.

### **Support if a teacher dies**

#### **The Copper Tree** by Hilary Robinson and Mandy Stanley

When Olivia's teacher dies, the children at her school are encouraged to think of everything that reminds them of her. Written with sensitivity and sprinkled with light hearted moments, The Copper Tree approaches grief with sensitivity and sound judgement. A delightful and touching short story. © Child Bereavement UK Registered in England and Wales: 1040419 and Scotland: SCO42910 Version: 05 Reviewed 2016 Author: J Lynham Date: 2016 Next review date: April 2020

### **Books to support staff**

**Good grief: Exploring feelings, loss and death with under 11's.** Available Jessica Kingsley [www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com) With twenty educators contributing ideas piloted with children of different abilities and backgrounds in their care. To explore and demystify the experience of loss within the framework of the National Curriculum.

**As big as it gets.** Published & available [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

**Supporting a Child when a Parent is seriously ill.** This booklet provides a range of ideas for parents and carers so that they feel able to involve their children in what is happening. The book also includes some suggestions about what parents might say to children and how to offer support.

#### **The Invisible String** by Patrice Karst

In this heart-warming story, delivers a very simple approach to overcoming the fear of loneliness or separation from parents, written with an imaginative flair that children can easily identify with and remember. Specifically written to address children's fear of being apart from the ones they love, The Invisible String delivers a particularly compelling message in today's uncertain times that though we may be separated from the ones we care for, whether through anger, or distance or even death, love is the unending connection that binds us all, and, by extension, ultimately binds every person on the planet to everyone else.