



Bereavement Policy

1. Rationale or Purpose

All children have a right to feel that they are being supported in difficult times. As teachers, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to bereavements within our community of families.

2. Policy Statement

This policy is to ensure that children do feel supported in their time of grief and that staff act appropriately and proactively to support them.

3. Implementation

- All members of staff will be informed when we are notified of a bereavement in one of our families. Explicit information surrounding the bereavement will only be shared with those whom are in the best position to use that information to assist the child.
- Staff will be reminded of this school's Confidentiality Policy.
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal.
- The Principal/Assistant Principal/Student Support Officer will keep a record of all discussions around a student with whom there is a concern.
- The Student Support Services Co-ordinator will be notified.

STRATEGIES

- Meet with the child's parents or carer to determine in what ways the school can assist the student.
- Attend the funeral on behalf of the whole school community.
- Get permission from the parents to inform the rest of the class of what has happened excluding specific details.
- If this is to happen contact the SSSO service and seek the support of a psychologist or Wellbeing coordinator to be present to assist the class in processing this information and how they can support their class mate.

WHEN THE STUDENT RETURNS TO SCHOOL

- Allow the child to come into class as usual.
- Talk privately with them early in the day and let them know that you have been thinking of them. Be honest, sincere and direct.
- Refer to the deceased person by the name the child referred to them; e.g. Nona
- It is better to use words such as "dead" and "died".
- Never say "I know how you are feeling"
- Listen carefully so that questions can be answered honestly and sincerely.
- If necessary reassure the child that the death was not their fault
- Maintain a normal classroom routine and continue to show empathy and care within an on-going daily structure.

- Ensure that there is nothing in the work program that may upset the student e.g. Drug Education lesson (postpone)
- Allow extra time for the student to complete work or reduce the amount of work the student needs to finish.
- Be sensitive that the student may want periods of “quiet time” so have a quiet spot to sit or an arrangement for the student to visit another teacher, the Principal or the Assistant Principal.
- Check in with the child regularly, ask how they are going and if they need assistance.
- If a teacher is feeling uncomfortable with the situation they are able to organise for another member of staff to assist them at any time.

4. Evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed according to the School Council Calendar Policy Review

5. Definitions

Nil

6. References

Further information can be obtained on the following website:

School Policy and Advisory Guide:

- [Supervision](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Visitors in Schools](#)

This policy was ratified by School Council on 20th August 2019

ATTACHMENT TO BEREAVEMENT POLICY

Grief is a normal emotional reaction that encompasses a wide range of thoughts, feelings and behaviours. These reactions do not always occur in a particular or predictable order and do not end within a certain period of time.

In children over seven years of age the permanency of death is typically understood however, younger children and children with intellectual disabilities may see death as reversible.

CHILDREN EXPERIENCING BEREAVEMENT MAY DISPLAY THE FOLLOWING:

- Tearfulness
- Lack of motivation
- Poor attention
- Decrease in academic performance
- Indifference
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety and fears that they or others will die or become sick.
- School refusal.
- Tiredness (due to difficulty in getting to sleep)
- Aggressiveness or anger.
- Refusal to follow school or class rules.
- Headaches, stomach aches etc.
- A need to constantly talk about the deceased person

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