



Thameside Primary School: Bereavement Action Plan for Covid-19

Approved by Governors: April 2020

Review date: As required



Contents

Introduction	3
The death of a pupil	5
The death of a member of staff	8
The death of a governor / member of the wider school community	11
The death of a pupil's family member	14
The death of a member of staff's family	17
The death of a governor's family member	20
Additional sources of support / information	22
Appendix	25
1. Sample script for informing pupils of a death	25
2. Sample script for informing staff of a death	30
3. Sample letter re. the death of a pupil	32
4. Sample letter re. the death of a staff member	34
5. Sample letter re. the death of a governor / member of the wider school community	36
6. Sample letter re. the death of a pupil's family member	38
7. Sample letter re. the death of a staff member's family	40
8. Making a statement to the press / media	42
9. Social stories to support younger pupils or those with SEND	43

Policy written by:	Charlotte Rollinson
Policy reviewed by:	Sophie Greenaway
Key Changes:	This is a new action plan so there are no changes at this time



INTRODUCTION

A parent of children under 18 dies every 22 minutes in the UK; around 23,600 a year. This equates to around 111 children being bereaved of a parent every day.

1 in 29 5-16 year-olds has been bereaved of a parent or sibling – that's a child in every average class.

(Child Bereavement UK)

When there is a death in the school community, it can be difficult for Senior Leadership to respond efficiently and proactively when coping with their own shock and emotions. However, news travels fast in schools and it is important to manage the information in a timely manner so that it can be communicated in a sensitive and accurate way.

(Grief Encounter, 2019)

It is natural for adults to want to try and protect children from hurt and distress. Discussing difficult events such as serious illness and bereavement can provoke anxiety, there is often a fear that any acknowledgement, no matter how well intentioned, could make things worse. When a significant death has happened, or is inevitable, sadly adults cannot protect children and young people from that reality. In order to equip them to come to terms with what has happened children need acknowledgement, information, reassurance, involvement and the opportunity to express their feelings.

(Daisy's Dream)

This action plan is not designed to be an exhaustive list of the support available for all members of the school community, and may need to be amended to reflect the current situation, especially in the event of a national emergency. Additional efforts may need to be made to contact all members of the school community who are unwell, absent, injured or in the case of a bereavement during the school holidays.

Please note, due to the nature of some illnesses or in the case of sudden death (particularly in the school holidays), it may not be possible for each staff member to fulfil their role themselves. Throughout the policy, if the Headteacher is unavailable, the Deputy Headteacher will fulfil their actions. Other unwell members of staff should have their actions fulfilled by their immediate line manager, e.g. a phase leader's actions could be completed by the Assistant Head, a class teacher's actions by their phase leader. Actions by the Inclusion Manager should be distributed between the Deputy Headteacher, Assistant SENDCo and ELSA.



We also recognise that families are Thameside are all different, with different structures, relationships and support strategies. We want to support all families, however they are comprised, so the relationships listed in the action plan are not an exhaustive list.



THE DEATH OF A PUPIL

The death of a pupil will be a shocking and distressing event for the whole school community and it is important to make contact with the pupil's family while supporting all staff, pupils and families.

MAKING CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY

- This should be by a member of the SLT, ideally the Headteacher, or possibly a member of staff known particularly well to the family, for example in the case of a SEND pupil
- This should be done either in person or by telephone (although staff members should not go to a pupil's house alone)
- Staff member should listen to the account of what has happened
- Explain that, with their consent, this will be communicated to staff, pupils and governors within school
- Identify if there are any siblings who also attend the school and the support they will require
- Ask about funeral arrangements and their feelings about representatives of staff and pupils being in attendance

INFORMING STAFF MEMBERS AND GOVERNORS

- Begin by informing SLT and the child's current class teacher
- Then call all staff together if possible (noting down any staff absent from this who will need a phone call). If this is not possible (e.g. in school holidays), then SLT should contact each teacher in their phase, and teachers should contact all support staff regularly working in their class. The SBM should contact lunchtime staff. The Headteacher / Deputy Head will contact the Chair of Governors who should inform members of the governing body. All members of staff informing others should use script in Appendix 2a.
- Tell the story of what has happened as simply and as factually as possible
- Be prepared to support staff who are strongly affected by this news, paying special attention to teachers who know the family well or have previously taught the pupil
- Identify the whereabouts of any belongings / work the pupil may have in school and collect this for the staff member who has made contact with the family to deliver at an appropriate time. This should be hand delivered with a handwritten note or card if the member of staff is not directly speaking to the family.
- SLT should agree what the rest of the school pupils are to be told (using the script in Appendix 1a) and when this should take place.
- A discussion should take place regarding possible media interest. No staff members should put anything to do with the death or their feelings on public social media, or on closed groups until SLT are sure that every member of that group has been sensitively informed. No staff member should speak to the media about the death unless given express permission by the Headteacher or Deputy Head.
- The Inclusion Manager will inform Brighter Futures for Children as listed in the critical incident plan, initially contacting Dr Deb Hunter, Head of SEND and Principal Child & Educational Psychologist (0118 937 2439, 07885 822486, Deborah.Hunter@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) and Dr Sarah Martineau, Educational Psychologist allocated to Thameside (0118 937 6151, 07970 004134, Sarah.Martineau@brighterfuturesforchildren.org). This will initiate additional support for the school community.
- The Headteacher will contact any additional members of staff e.g. those who have recently left or retired.



INFORMING PUPILS WHILE SCHOOL IS OPEN

- It is best to tell children in the smallest group possible, normally this would be their class
- You may wish to identify a very small group of children who were particularly close to the pupil and tell them separately. You may also wish to tell particular children with SEND or cognitive difficulties separately as they may need the information presented in a different way to support their understanding.
- Class teachers should not be required to fulfil this task alone, so a member of SLT should be present. If class teachers feel unable to fulfil this task, the member of SLT will do this for them. In the event of the pupil belonging to the class of an SLT member, another member of SLT will be present for support. If the member of SLT is informing the children, is it important for their class teacher and teaching assistant to remain in the room wherever possible, as it is important for the children to feel they have this support and shared feeling of grief. There should be additional members of staff outside the room to take children who need some 1:1 support or comfort to another familiar location within school, such as the garden room. It is imperative that these locations are empty. There should also be a place where staff can go for support, such as the Deputy Head's office.
- Tell the children what has happened as simply and as factually as possible (using the script in [Appendix 1a](#)) and avoid euphemisms.
- Staff should be prepared for some pupils to react with emotion and some not to react at all. Staff should also be prepared for their own feelings to surface, as this is a very challenging task.
- Pupils will probably want to talk about their own feelings, fears and concerns. There may also be other pupils in the class who have experienced bereavement.
- The pupils may ask questions about what has happened. Be truthful honest, and if you don't know something, say so.
- The meeting should be brought to an end by encouraging the class to do something positive, such as sharing a favourite memory, drawing a picture or making a card.
- Once the pupil's own class have been informed, the rest of the classes should also be informed in the same way as above, beginning with the other class in the year group and the closest year groups. Staff should identify pupils who may be more affected, e.g. due to siblings, club friendships, wraparound care attendance.
- Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.

INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE (e.g. SCHOOL HOLIDAYS)

- The majority of pupils will need to be told by their parents / carers about the death of a pupil. A letter should be sent to all families at the same time (see [Appendix 3](#)), including a suggested script for parents to use. This letter should also emphasise the importance of keeping this news off social media and a request to not speak to the media without the express permission of the pupil's family.
- This letter to parents should be sent alone, and not along with any other communications. A text should also be sent to alert parents to an important letter being sent. Any families not on the email list should have this letter posted.
- Key staff members should, wherever possible, be in school for a few days following this letter to parents, to be available for families who need additional support to contact via phone or email. Phone calls should also be made to families of close friends of the pupil. Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.
- A box should be made available in the school office for any cards, pictures or other items that are sent in from the children / families.



- A discussion should take place as soon as school is open again regarding the death to identify any families or pupils who are not aware of the news.

INFORMING PARENTS AND CARERS

- A letter should be sent to all parents / carers, to be received by them before the children leave school on the day they have been told. Please see sample letter in [Appendix 3](#).
- Funeral details can be passed onto other appropriate parents / carers if you have the permission from the deceased pupil's parents.

LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider if the family would like a pupil representative at the funeral. Be mindful this may be the first funeral the child has attended and let them know what they can expect. The rest of the class may need different activities in class on the day of the funeral, or it may be necessary to close this class for the day.
- Consider what happens to the pupil's desk, chair, tray and peg etc. Removing these too quickly may appear insensitive.
- Set up a memory display where photographs, messages and other objects can be placed.
- The school Inclusion Manager will arrange additional support for pupils as required, this could include (but is not limited to) art therapy, play therapy, ELSA, drawing and talking therapy, Primary Mental Health Worker support and referrals to external charities and support.
- Consider a longer-term way to remember the pupil, such as a tree, bench or similar.



THE DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER

The death of a staff member will be an equally shocking and distressing event for the whole school community. It is important to consider the feelings and emotions of other staff members in this situation, particularly those who were close to the deceased.

MAKING CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY

- This should be by a member of the SLT, ideally the Headteacher, or the Deputy Head in their absence.
- This should be done either in person or by telephone
- Staff member should listen to the account of what has happened
- Explain that, with their consent, this will be communicated to staff, pupils and governors within school
- Identify if there are any children who also attend the school and the support they will require
- Ask about funeral arrangements and their feelings about representatives of staff and pupils being in attendance

INFORMING STAFF MEMBERS AND GOVERNORS

- Begin by informing SLT and the chair of governors.
- Then call all staff together if possible (noting down any staff absent from this who will need a phone call). If this is not possible (e.g. in school holidays), then SLT should contact each teacher in their phase, and teachers should contact all support staff regularly working in their class. The first staff to be informed should be those working in the same class / year group as the deceased. The SBM should contact lunchtime staff and the Local Authority. The Chair of Governors who should inform members of the governing body. All members of staff informing others should use script in [Appendix 2b](#).
- Tell the story of what has happened as simply and as factually as possible
- Be prepared to support staff who are strongly affected by this news, paying special attention to staff members who were particularly close friends, close colleagues, or recently bereaved themselves.
- Identify the whereabouts of any belongings the staff member may have in school and collect this for the Headteacher / Deputy Head who has made contact with the family to deliver at an appropriate time. This should be hand delivered with a handwritten note or card if the member of staff is not directly speaking to the family. Condolences in the form of flowers should also be sent.
- SLT should agree what the school pupils are to be told (using the script in [Appendix 1b](#)) and when this should take place.
- A discussion should take place regarding possible media interest. No staff members should put anything to do with the death or their feelings on public social media, or on closed groups until SLT are sure that every member of that group has been sensitively informed. No staff member should speak to the media about the death unless given express permission by the Headteacher or Deputy Head.
- The Inclusion Manager will inform Brighter Futures for Children as listed in the critical incident plan, initially contacting Dr Deb Hunter, Head of SEND and Principal Child & Educational Psychologist (0118 937 2439, 07885 822486, Deborah.Hunter@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) and Dr Sarah Martineau, Educational Psychologist allocated to Thameside (0118 937 6151, 07970 004134, Sarah.Martineau@brighterfuturesforchildren.org). This will initiate additional support for the school community.



- The Headteacher / Deputy Head will contact any additional members of staff e.g. those who have recently left or retired.

INFORMING PUPILS WHILE SCHOOL IS OPEN

- It is best to tell children in the smallest group possible, normally this would be their class
- You may wish to identify a very small group of children who were particularly close to the staff member and tell them separately. You may also wish to tell particular children with SEND or cognitive difficulties separately as they may need the information presented in a different way to support their understanding.
- Class teachers should not be required to fulfil this task alone, so a member of SLT should be present. If class teachers feel unable to fulfil this task, the member of SLT will do this for them. If the member of SLT is informing the children, is it important for their class teacher and teaching assistant to remain in the room wherever possible, as it is important for the children to feel they have this support and shared feeling of grief. There should be additional members of staff outside the room to take children who need some 1:1 support or comfort to another familiar location within school, such as the garden room. It is imperative that these locations are empty. There should also be a place where staff can go for support, such as the Deputy Head's office.
- Tell the children what has happened as simply and as factually as possible (using the script in [Appendix 1b](#)) and avoid euphemisms.
- Staff should be prepared for some pupils to react with emotion and some not to react at all. Staff should also be prepared for their own feelings to surface, as this is a very challenging task.
- Pupils will probably want to talk about their own feelings, fears and concerns. There may also be pupils in the class who have experienced bereavement.
- The pupils may ask questions about what has happened. Be truthful honest, and if you don't know something, say so.
- The meeting should be brought to an end by encouraging the class to do something positive, such as sharing a favourite memory, drawing a picture or making a card.
- Once the staff member's own class have been informed, the rest of the classes should also be informed in the same way as above, beginning with the other class in the year group and the closest year groups. Staff should identify pupils who may be more affected, e.g. due to staff member's children, intervention support, wraparound care attendance.
- Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.

INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE (e.g. SCHOOL HOLIDAYS)

- The majority of pupils will need to be told by their parents / carers about the death of a staff member. A letter should be sent to all families at the same time (see [Appendix 4](#)), including a suggested script for parents to use. This letter should also emphasise the importance of keeping this news off social media and a request to not speak to the media without the express permission of the school or staff member's family.
- This letter to parents should be sent alone, and not along with any other communications. A text should also be sent to alert parents to an important letter being sent. Any families not on the email list should have this letter posted.
- Key staff members should, wherever possible, be in school for a few days following this letter to parents, to be available for families who need additional support to contact via phone or email. Phone calls should also be made to families of children who were particularly close to the staff member. Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.
- A box should be made available in the school office for any cards, pictures or other items that are sent in from the children / families.



- A discussion should take place as soon as school is open again regarding the death to identify any families or pupils who are not aware of the news.

INFORMING PARENTS AND CARERS

- A letter should be sent to all parents / carers, to be received by them before the children leave school on the day they have been told. Please see sample letter in [Appendix 4](#).
- Funeral details can be passed onto appropriate parents / carers if you have the permission from the deceased staff member's family. It may be more appropriate for a representative from the TSA to attend if permitted under Government guidelines.

LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider if the family would like a pupil or parent representative at the funeral. Be mindful this may be the first funeral the child has attended and let them know what they can expect. The rest of the class may need different activities in class on the day of the funeral.
- Consider if the school can safely remain open on the day of the funeral, given that it is likely that many members of staff will want to attend. It may be necessary to have a partial school closure.
- Consider what happens to the teacher's desk, chair, belongings etc. Removing these too quickly may appear insensitive.
- Consider support for the replacement member of staff, and how they are introduced to the pupils, staff and school community.
- Set up a memory display where photographs, messages and other objects can be placed.
- The school Inclusion Manager will arrange additional support for pupils and staff as required, this could include (but is not limited to) art therapy, play therapy, ELSA, drawing and talking therapy, Primary Mental Health Worker support and referrals to external charities and support. The Educational Psychologist and Primary Mental Health Worker would also be available for staff as required, or support can be gained through the EPA (contact details in 'additional sources of support').
- Consider a longer term way to remember the member of staff, such as a tree, bench or similar.



THE DEATH OF A SCHOOL GOVERNOR / MEMBER OF THE WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The death of a member of the governing body or wider school community will impact across different sections of the school community. It is important to consider the relationships between the people who worked most closely with the deceased and how they may require additional support.

MAKING CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY

- This should be by a member of the SLT, ideally the Headteacher, or the chair of governors in the case of a member of the governing body.
- This should be done either in person or by telephone
- Staff member / chair of governors should listen to the account of what has happened
- Explain that, with their consent, this will be communicated to governors, staff, and appropriate pupils within school
- Identify if there are any children or family members who also attend the school and the support they will require
- Ask about funeral arrangements and their feelings about representatives of staff and pupils being in attendance

INFORMING STAFF MEMBERS AND GOVERNORS

- Begin by informing SLT and the chair of governors.
- If a member of the governing body, The Chair of Governors who should inform members of the governing body first. Then call all staff together if possible (noting down any staff absent from this who will need a phone call). If this is not possible, then SLT should contact each teacher in their phase, and teachers should contact all support staff regularly working in their class. The first staff to be informed should be those most closely with the deceased. The SBM should contact lunchtime staff. If not a member of the governing body, the Chair of Governors should then inform members of the governing body. All members of staff informing others should use script in [Appendix 2c](#).
- Tell the story of what has happened as simply and as factually as possible
- Be prepared to support staff who are strongly affected by this news, paying special attention to staff members who were particularly close friends, close colleagues, or recently bereaved themselves. This may be unexpected staff depending on the role of the deceased.
- Identify the whereabouts of any belongings the staff member may have in school and collect this for the Headteacher / Deputy Head who has made contact with the family to deliver at an appropriate time. This should be hand delivered with a handwritten note or card if the member of staff is not directly speaking to the family. Condolences in the form of flowers should also be sent.
- SLT should agree what the school pupils are to be told (using the script in [Appendix 1c](#)) and when this should take place. It may be most appropriate to let only certain groups of children know in this instance, for example, only those who knew a member of staff who has recently left the school.
- A discussion should take place regarding possible media interest. No staff members should put anything to do with the death or their feelings on public social media, or on closed groups until SLT are sure that every member of that group has been sensitively informed. No staff member should speak to the media about the death unless given express permission by the Headteacher or Deputy Head.
- The Inclusion Manager may need to inform Brighter Futures for Children as listed in the critical incident plan depending on the situation, initially contacting Dr Deb Hunter, Head of SEND and Principal Child & Educational Psychologist (0118 937 2439, 07885 822486,



Deborah.Hunter@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) and Dr Sarah Martineau, Educational Psychologist allocated to Thameside (0118 937 6151, 07970 004134, Sarah.Martineau@brighterfuturesforchildren.org). This will initiate additional support for the school community.

- The Headteacher / Deputy Head will contact any additional members of staff e.g. those who have recently left or retired.

INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL BEING OPEN

- It is best to tell children in the smallest group possible, normally this would be their class, if it is appropriate to let them know of the death
- You may wish to identify a very small group of children who were particularly close to the deceased and tell them separately. You may also wish to tell particular children with SEND or cognitive difficulties separately as they may need the information presented in a different way to support their understanding.
- Class teachers should not be required to fulfil this task alone, so a member of SLT should be present. If class teachers feel unable to fulfil this task, the member of SLT will do this for them. If the member of SLT is informing the children, is it important for their class teacher and teaching assistant to remain in the room wherever possible, as it is important for the children to feel they have this support and shared feeling of grief. There should be additional members of staff outside the room to take children who need some 1:1 support or comfort to another familiar location within school, such as the garden room. It is imperative that these locations are empty. There should also be a place where staff can go for support, such as the Deputy Head's office.
- Tell the children what has happened as simply and as factually as possible (using the script in [Appendix 1c](#)) and avoid euphemisms.
- Staff should be prepared for some pupils to react with emotion and some not to react at all. Staff should also be prepared for their own feelings to surface, as this is a very challenging task.
- Pupils will probably want to talk about their own feelings, fears and concerns. There may also be pupils in the class who have experienced bereavement.
- The pupils may ask questions about what has happened. Be truthful honest, and if you don't know something, say so.
- The meeting should be brought to an end by encouraging the class to do something positive, such as sharing a favourite memory, drawing a picture or making a card.
- Other classes can then be informed, if this is appropriate, in the same way as above, beginning with the other class in the year group and the closest year groups. Staff should identify pupils who may be more affected, e.g. due to staff member's children, intervention support, wraparound care attendance.
- Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.

INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE (E.G. SCHOOL HOLIDAYS)

- The majority of pupils will need to be told by their parents / carers about the death of a governor or member of the wider school community if this is appropriate. A letter should be sent to all families at the same time (see [Appendix 5](#)), including a suggested script for parents to use. This letter should also emphasise the importance of keeping this news off social media and a request to not speak to the media without the express permission of the school.
- This letter to parents should be sent alone, and not along with any other communications. A text should also be sent to alert parents to an important letter being sent. Any families not on the email list should have this letter posted.
- Key staff members should remain in school for a few days following this letter to parents (in separate rooms if needed) to be available for families who need additional support to contact via



phone or email. Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.

- A box should be made available in the school office for any cards, pictures or other items that are sent in from the children / families.
- A discussion should take place as soon as school is open again regarding the death to identify any families or pupils who are not aware of the news.

INFORMING PARENTS AND CARERS

- A letter should be sent to all parents / carers, to be received by them before the children leave school on the day they have been told. Please see sample letter in [Appendix 5](#).
- Funeral details can be passed onto appropriate parents / carers if you have the permission from the deceased's family members. It may be more appropriate for a representative from the TSA to attend.

LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider if the family would like a pupil representative at the funeral. Be mindful this may be the first funeral the child has attended and let them know what they can expect. The rest of the class may need different activities in class on the day of the funeral.
- Consider if the school can safely remain open on the day of the funeral, given that it is likely that members of staff may wish to attend. It may be necessary to have a partial school closure.
- Consider what happens to the deceased's roles and belongings. Removing these too quickly may appear insensitive.
- Consider support for the replacement member of the community, and how they are introduced to the pupils, staff and school community.
- Set up a memory display where photographs, messages and other objects can be placed.
- The school Inclusion Manager will arrange additional support for pupils, staff and the wider school as required, this could include (but is not limited to) art therapy, play therapy, ELSA, drawing and talking therapy, Primary Mental Health Worker support and referrals to external charities and support. The Educational Psychologist and Primary Mental Health Worker would also be available for staff as required, or support can be gained through the EPA (contact details in 'additional sources of support').
- Consider a longer term way to remember the adult, such as a tree, bench or similar.



THE DEATH OF A PUPIL'S FAMILY MEMBER

When there is a death within a pupil's family, there are a number of factors to be considered before approaching the situation. Please pay particular attention to any staff members or other families who have been close to the deceased.

MAKING CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY

- This should be by a member of the SLT, ideally the Headteacher, or possibly a member of staff known particularly well to the family, for example in the case of a SEND pupil
- This should be done either in person or by telephone
- Staff member should listen to the account of what has happened, which may come from a supporting friend or relative.
- Explain that, with their consent, this will be communicated to staff and particular pupils at the school.
- If possible, speak to the pupil. Show concern and ask if they would like their classmates to be told. Agree what will be told to staff and other pupils.
- Identify if there are any siblings or other family members who also attend the school and the support they will require
- Ask about funeral arrangements and their feelings about representatives of staff and pupils being in attendance
- Offer reassurance about attendance, school work and exams. Pupils often want to return to school very soon after someone has died to help them re-establish a sense of normality. It can also be helpful to family members who need to make arrangements for funerals etc.

INFORMING STAFF MEMBERS AND GOVERNORS

- Begin by informing SLT and the child's current class teacher
- Then call all staff together if possible (noting down any staff absent from this who will need a phone call). If this is not possible, then SLT should contact each teacher in their phase, and teachers should contact all support staff regularly working in their class. The SBM should contact lunchtime staff. The Headteacher will let the chair of governors know, but it would not always be useful for all members of the governing body to know this information. All members of staff informing others should use script in [Appendix 2d](#).
- Tell the story of what has happened as simply and as factually as possible
- Be prepared to support staff who are strongly affected by this news, paying special attention to teachers who know the family well, have taught the pupil or have recently been bereaved.
- SLT should agree what the rest of the class are to be told and any other classes as appropriate (using the script in [Appendix 1d](#)) and when this should take place.
- A discussion should take place regarding possible media interest. No staff members should put anything to do with the death or their feelings on public social media, or on closed groups until SLT are sure that every member of that group has been sensitively informed. No staff member should speak to the media about the death unless given express permission by the Headteacher or Deputy Head.
- The Headteacher will contact any additional members of staff as appropriate e.g. those who have recently left or retired.

INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL BEING OPEN

- It is best to tell children in the smallest group possible, normally this would be their class
- You may wish to identify a very small group of children who were particularly close to the pupil and tell them separately. You may also wish to tell particular children with SEND or cognitive



difficulties separately as they may need the information presented in a different way to support their understanding.

- Class teachers should not be required to fulfil this task alone, so a member of SLT should be present. If class teachers feel unable to fulfil this task, the member of SLT will do this for them. In the event of the pupil belonging to the class of an SLT member, another member of SLT will be present for support. If the member of SLT is informing the children, is it important for their class teacher and teaching assistant to remain in the room wherever possible, as it is important for the children to feel they have this support and shared feeling of grief. There should be additional members of staff outside the room to take children who need some 1:1 support or comfort to another familiar location within school, such as the garden room. It is imperative that these locations are empty.
- Tell the children what has happened as simply and as factually as possible (using the script in [Appendix 1d](#)) and avoid euphemisms.
- Staff should be prepared for some pupils to react with emotion and some not to react at all. Staff should also be prepared for their own feelings to surface, as this is a very challenging task.
- Pupils will probably want to talk about their own feelings, fears and concerns. There may also be other pupils in the class who have experienced bereavement.
- The pupils may ask questions about what has happened. Be truthful honest, and if you don't know something, say so.
- The meeting should be brought to an end by encouraging the class to do something positive, such as sharing a favourite memory, drawing a picture or making a card.
- Once the pupil's own class have been informed, the other class in the year group should also be informed in the same way as above if agreed by the pupil and their family. Staff should identify pupils who may be more affected, e.g. due to siblings, club friendships, wraparound care attendance and consider seeking permission to share the news with them.
- Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.

INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE (E.G. SCHOOL HOLIDAYS)

- The majority of pupils will need to be told by their parents / carers about the death of a pupil's family member. A letter should be sent to families in the same year group at the same time (see [Appendix 6](#)), including a suggested script for parents to use, if agreed by the pupil and their family. This letter should also emphasise the importance of keeping this news off social media and a request to not speak to the media without the express permission of the pupil's family.
- This letter to parents should be sent alone, and not along with any other communications. A text should also be sent to alert parents to an important letter being sent. Any families not on the email list should have this letter posted.
- A key staff member should remain in school for a few days following this letter to parents (in separate rooms if needed) to be available for families who need additional support to contact via phone or email. Phone calls should also be made to families of close friends of the pupil to check if any additional support is required. Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.
- A box should be made available in the school office for any cards, pictures or other items that are sent in from the children / families.
- A discussion should take place as soon as school is open again regarding the death to identify any families or pupils who are not aware of the news.

INFORMING PARENTS AND CARERS

- A letter should be sent to all parents / carers, to be received by them before the children leave school on the day they have been told. Please see sample letter in [Appendix 6](#).



- Funeral details can be passed onto other appropriate parents / carers if you have the permission from the deceased's family.

LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider if the family would like a pupil or staff representative at the funeral. Be mindful this may be the first funeral the child has attended and let them know what they can expect. The rest of the class may need different activities in class on the day of the funeral.
- Consider implications for family events at the school, such as Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, assemblies and Sporting events. Key dates should be passed to the next class teacher at transition meetings.
- The school Inclusion Manager will arrange additional support for pupils as required, this could include (but is not limited to) art therapy, play therapy, ELSA, drawing and talking therapy, Primary Mental Health Worker support and referrals to external charities and support.



THE DEATH OF A MEMBER OF STAFF'S FAMILY

When there is a death within a member of staff's family, this will impact in different ways on different members of staff. It may be more appropriate to not tell the pupils initially, and save this news for nearer to the staff member's return.

MAKING CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY

- This should be by a member of the SLT, ideally the Headteacher, or possibly a member of staff known particularly well to the family.
- This should be done either in person or by telephone
- Staff member should listen to the account of what has happened.
- Explain that, with their consent, this will be communicated to staff at the school. Agree what will be communicated.
- Identify if there are any siblings or other family members who also attend the school and the support they will require
- Ask about funeral arrangements and their feelings about representatives of staff being in attendance (if permitted under current government regulations)
- Offer reassurance about school work and who will cover the class and other duties.
- Discuss whether pupils should be told at this point or at a later date.
- Arrange for condolences to be sent in the form of flowers or similar.

INFORMING STAFF MEMBERS AND GOVERNORS

- Begin by informing SLT and their partner teacher.
- Then call all staff together if possible (noting down any staff absent from this who will need a phone call). If this is not possible, then SLT should contact each teacher in their phase, and teachers should contact all support staff regularly working in their class. The SBM should contact lunchtime staff if appropriate. The Headteacher will let the chair of governors know, but it would not always be useful for all members of the governing body to know this information. All members of staff informing others should use script in [Appendix 2e](#).
- Tell the story of what has happened as simply and as factually as possible
- Be prepared to support staff who are strongly affected by this news, paying special attention to teachers who know the staff member well or have recently been bereaved.
- SLT should agree what the class are to be told and any other classes as appropriate (using the script in [Appendix 1e](#)) and when this should take place. It may be more appropriate to say that the member of staff is off sick for the time being.
- A discussion should take place regarding possible media interest. No staff members should put anything to do with the death or their feelings on public social media, or on closed groups until SLT are sure that every member of that group has been sensitively informed. No staff member should speak to the media about the death unless given express permission by the Headteacher or Deputy Head.
- The Headteacher will contact any additional members of staff as appropriate e.g. those who have recently left or retired.

INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL BEING OPEN

- It is best to tell children in the smallest group possible, normally this would be their class
- You may wish to identify a very small group of children who were particularly close to the staff member and tell them separately. You may also wish to tell particular children with SEND or cognitive difficulties separately as they may need the information presented in a different way to support their understanding.



- Class teachers should not be required to fulfil this task alone, so a member of SLT should be present. If class teachers feel unable to fulfil this task, the member of SLT will do this for them. In the event of the staff member belonging to the team of or being particularly close to an SLT member, another member of SLT will be present for support. If the member of SLT is informing the children, is it important for their class teacher and teaching assistant to remain in the room wherever possible, as it is important for the children to feel they have this support and shared feeling of grief. There should be additional members of staff outside the room to take children who need some 1:1 support or comfort to another familiar location within school, such as the garden room. It is imperative that these locations are empty.
- Tell the children what has happened as simply and as factually as possible (using the script in [Appendix 1e](#)) and avoid euphemisms.
- Staff should be prepared for some pupils to react with emotion and some not to react at all. Staff should also be prepared for their own feelings to surface, as this is a very challenging task.
- Pupils will probably want to talk about their own feelings, fears and concerns. There may also be other pupils in the class who have experienced bereavement.
- The pupils may ask questions about what has happened. Be truthful, honest, and if you don't know something, say so.
- The meeting should be brought to an end by encouraging the class to do something positive, such as drawing a picture or making a card.
- Once the staff member's own class have been informed, the other class in the year group should also be informed in the same way as above if agreed by the staff member. Staff should consider pupils who are involved with the staff member in another aspect of school life, such as wraparound care.
- Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.

INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE (E.G. SCHOOL HOLIDAYS)

- The majority of pupils will need to be told by their parents / carers about the death of a staff member's family. A letter should be sent to families in the same year group at the same time (see [Appendix 7](#)), including a suggested script for parents to use, if agreed by the staff member and their family. This letter should also emphasise the importance of keeping this news off social media and a request to not speak to the media without the express permission of the school.
- This letter to parents should be sent alone, and not along with any other communications. A text should also be sent to alert parents to an important letter being sent. Any families not on the email list should have this letter posted.
- A key staff member should remain in school for a few days following this letter to parents (in separate rooms if needed) to be available for families who need additional support to contact via phone or email. Attention should be given to the emotional aspect of this task for all staff members, with regular debriefs and check-ins for all staff as required.
- A box should be made available in the school office for any cards, pictures or other items that are sent in from the children / families.
- A discussion should take place as soon as school is open again regarding the death to identify any families or pupils from the year group who are not aware of the news.

INFORMING PARENTS AND CARERS

- A letter should be sent to all parents / carers, to be received by them before the children leave school on the day they have been told. Please see sample letter in [Appendix 7](#). If the pupils are not being told the reasons for the staff absence initially, it may be necessary to email parents and tell them the staff member is unwell and give them an alternative member of staff to contact if required.



LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider if the family would like a staff representative at the funeral.
- Consider implications for return to work, would they like their loss acknowledged?
- Consider implications for family events at the school, such as Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, assemblies and Sporting events. Consider anniversaries, birthdays and other significant milestones.
- The school Inclusion Manager will arrange additional support for pupils as required, this could include (but is not limited to) art therapy, play therapy, ELSA, drawing and talking therapy, Primary Mental Health Worker support and referrals to external charities and support.
- Please also see 'Compassionate Leave policy' for further information



THE DEATH OF A GOVERNOR'S FAMILY MEMBER

While a traumatic event for the family involved, this event will have a lesser impact on the wider school. However, care and empathy should still be given to the bereaved using the steps below.

MAKING CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should ideally be by the Headteacher or chair of governors. • This should be done either in person or by telephone. • Headteacher or Chair of Governors should listen to the account of what has happened. • Explain that, with their consent, this will be communicated to the rest of the governing body and staff at the school. Agree what will be communicated. • Identify if there are any family members who also attend the school and the support they will require • Ask about funeral arrangements and their feelings about a representative being in attendance • Arrange for condolences to be sent in the form of flowers or similar.
INFORMING STAFF MEMBERS AND GOVERNORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by informing SLT. • Inform all members of the governing body via a phone call from the Headteacher or Chair of governors, using an amended version of the script in Appendix 2e. • Then call all staff together if possible (noting down any staff absent from this who will need a phone call). If this is not possible due to current school closures and social distancing measures, then SLT should contact each teacher in their phase, and teachers should contact all support staff regularly working in their class. The SBM should contact lunchtime staff if appropriate. All members of staff informing others should use the amended version of the script in <u>Appendix 2e</u>. • Tell the story of what has happened as simply and as factually as possible • Be prepared to support staff who are strongly affected by this news, paying special attention to others who know the governor well or have recently been bereaved. • A discussion should take place regarding possible media interest. No staff members should put anything to do with the death or their feelings on public social media, or on closed groups until SLT are sure that every member of that group has been sensitively informed. No staff member should speak to the media about the death unless given express permission by the Headteacher or Deputy Head. • The Headteacher will contact any additional members of staff as appropriate e.g. those who have recently left or retired.
INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would not be usual to inform the pupils of the death of a governor's family member, unless there is another connection, such as having a pupil at the school. The other sections of guidance would then take precedence.
INFORMING PUPILS IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL BEING OPEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would not be usual to inform the pupils of the death of a governor's family member, unless there is another connection, such as having a pupil at the school. The other sections of guidance would then take precedence.
INFORMING PARENTS AND CARERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would not be usual to inform parents and carers of the death of a governor's family member, unless there is another connection, such as having a pupil at the school. The other sections of guidance would then take precedence.
LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider if the family would like a staff representative at the funeral.



- Consider implications for return to meetings, would they like their loss acknowledged?



ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT / INFORMATION

There is a wide range of support already on offer at school for pupils for a range of reasons, this includes:

- ELSA (in the event of a death within the school community, most routine ELSA would be suspended and all four trained staff utilised to support affected pupils)
- Drawing and Talking Therapy
- Art therapy
- Play therapy
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
- Primary Mental Health Worker (PMHW)

As employees of Reading Borough Council, staff also have access to the **Employee Assistance Programme**. To access support, please call 0800 243 458 and when asked where you work, state 'Reading Borough Council'.

However, due to the wide ranging impact and longer term effects of grief, there are additional sources of information which may be beneficial for all members of the school community. There are a number of charities (contact details below) which offer support to pupils, families and staff.

<p>Daisy's Dream</p>	<p>Established in 1996, Daisy's Dream is a professional support service which responds to the needs of children and families affected by life threatening illness or bereavement. We work predominantly in Berkshire and the surrounding areas, with a pilot project running in East Cheshire.</p> <p>Originally set up to meet the needs of children who had been bereaved, over recent years we have expanded our service to encompass families where there has been a serious illness diagnosis.</p> <p>We offer a flexible service which is tailored to meet the individual needs of each child and their family. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone support and advice for parents/carers/professionals • Group events • Home and school visits for the child or young person • Training for associated professionals <p>Website: www.daisysdream.org.uk</p> <p>Phone: 0118 934 2604</p>
-----------------------------	---



<p>Winston's Wish</p>	<p>We support children and young people after the death of a parent or sibling. This is one of the most devastating losses a child will ever face.</p> <p>Our free national helpline (08088 020 021) offers therapeutic advice following a bereavement. Our Helpline provides bereavement support for parents, carers and professionals who are looking for childhood bereavement advice and support.</p> <p>Our online chat is designed to help you talk about your grief and manage your grief when you do feel like you need help. Visit our online chat page and click on the 'Ask us' image to speak to someone. Our online chat is open Wednesdays and Fridays from 12-4pm.</p> <p>Website: www.winstonswish.org Freephone National Helpline: 08088 020 021 Email: ask@winstonswish.org</p>
<p>Grief Encounter</p>	<p>We support bereaved children and their families to help alleviate the pain caused by the death of someone close. Our services are free, funded through the generosity of our supporters.</p> <p>Rebuilding a new life after the death of a loved one is hard for everyone, but especially for children and young people. Once the shock and trauma of a life changing event such as bereavement has been managed, finding a way to move forward must begin.</p> <p>Children have an overwhelming sense of confusion, fear and anxiety, alongside their grief, which must be cared for in order for them to continue into adulthood with a sense of confidence and long lasting happiness.</p> <p>We help families address a multitude of challenging issues following the death of a loved one, alleviating the hurt and confusion caused, whilst promoting healing.</p> <p>Website: www.griefencounter.org.uk Phone: 0808 802 0111, Mon-Fri 9am-9pm Grieffalk: an online chat service through a link on the website home page</p>
<p>Child bereavement network</p>	<p>Our vision is for all families to have the support they need to rebuild their lives, when a child grieves or when a child dies. Our mission is to ensure the accessibility of high-quality child bereavement support and information to all families and professionals by increasing our reach and plugging the gaps that exist in bereavement support and training across the country and embedding standards in the sector.</p> <p>We provide confidential support, information and guidance to families and professionals. We provide support at a number of locations across the country. Support includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face support • Groups for families



- Groups for young people
- Groups for parents

We also offer consultancy and bespoke solutions for organisations looking to address specific local needs.

Website: <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

Phone: 0800 02 888 40 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Email: support@childbereavementuk.org



APPENDIX

1. SAMPLE SCRIPTS FOR INFORMING PUPILS OF DEATH

All words highlighted in yellow should be edited to reflect the exact details of the situation. You can include the sentence in brackets if this information has been agreed to be shared, if not, please do not include it. It is recommended to re-write this if you feel it is best to read this from paper, and to practise saying it aloud before saying it in front of children (this will help adults to better understand their own emotions that are likely to surface when sharing this information). When informing about family members, Thameside recognises that families include a wide range of relationships. The examples below can be adapted to reflect the nature of relationship between family members and are not designed to be an exhaustive list.

1a. The Death of a Pupil

Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 / SEND

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may already know that NAME in class [] has been ill with _____. Most people with _____ get better, but very sadly some people don't get better and yesterday NAME died.

OR:

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may have heard on the news that there was a car accident last night on the motorway. The doctors and nurses tried very hard, but very sadly they weren't able to help and yesterday, NAME died.

Key Stage 2

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. I know that you have all heard of _____, and know that most people with _____ get better, but that sometimes people might die from it. NAME, in class [], has been ill with _____. I'm very sad to tell you that NAME died yesterday.

OR:

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. You might have heard on the news that there was a car accident last night on the motorway. NAME was involved in the car accident. The doctors and nurses tried really hard to help, but sadly they weren't able to and yesterday, NAME died.



1b. The Death of a Staff Member

Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 / SEND

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may already know that **NAME** has been ill with _____. Most people with _____ get better, but very sadly some people don't get better and **yesterday NAME** died. (**NAME** will be teaching your class for now.)

OR:

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may have heard on the news that there was a **car accident last night on the motorway**. The doctors and nurses tried very hard, but very sadly they weren't able to help and **yesterday, NAME** died. (**NAME** will be teaching your class for now.)

Key Stage 2

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. I know that you have all heard of _____, and know that most people with _____ get better, but that sometimes people might die from it. **NAME**, has been ill with _____. I'm very sad to tell you that **NAME** died **yesterday**. (**NAME** will be teaching your class for the time being.)

OR:

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. You might have heard on the news that there was a **car accident last night on the motorway**. **NAME** was involved in the **car accident**. The doctors and nurses tried really hard to help, but sadly they weren't able to and **yesterday, NAME** died. (**NAME** will be teaching your class for the time being.)



1c. The Death of a member of wider school community (including members of staff who have recently left / retired)

Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 / SEND

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may already know that **NAME**, who works **in the kitchen / as a governor**, has been ill with _____. Most people with _____ get better, but very sadly some people don't get better and **yesterday NAME** died.

OR:

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may have heard on the news that there was a **car accident last night on the motorway**. The doctors and nurses tried very hard, but very sadly they weren't able to help and **yesterday, NAME**, who works **in the kitchen / as a governor**, died.

Key Stage 2

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. I know that you have all heard of _____, and know that most people with _____ get better, but that sometimes people might die from it. **NAME**, who works **in the kitchen / as a governor** has been ill with _____. I'm very sad to tell you that **NAME** died **yesterday**.

OR:

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. You might have heard on the news that there was a **car accident last night on the motorway**. **NAME**, who works **in the kitchen / as a governor**, was involved in the **car accident**. The doctors and nurses tried really hard to help, but sadly they weren't able to and **yesterday, NAME** died.



1d. The Death of a pupil's family member

Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 / SEND

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may already know that **NAME's Mum / Dad / brother / sister**, has been ill with _____. Most people with _____ get better, but very sadly some people don't get better and **yesterday NAME's Mum / Dad / brother / sister** died. **NAME** won't be in school for a while and we will tell you more when we can.

OR:

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may have heard on the news that there was a **car accident last night on the motorway**. The doctors and nurses tried very hard, but very sadly they weren't able to help and **yesterday, NAME's Mum / Dad / brother / sister**, died. **NAME** won't be in school for a while and we will tell you more when we can.

Key Stage 2

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. I know that you have all heard of _____, and know that most people with _____ get better, but that sometimes people might die from it. **NAME's Mum / Dad / brother / sister**, has been ill with _____. I'm very sad to tell you that **NAME's Mum / Dad / brother / sister** died **yesterday**. **NAME** won't be in school for a while and we will tell you more when we can.

OR:

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. You might have heard on the news that there was a **car accident last night on the motorway**. **NAME's Mum / Dad / brother / sister** was involved in the **car accident**. The doctors and nurses tried really hard to help, but sadly they weren't able to and **yesterday, NAME's Mum / Dad / brother / sister** died. **NAME** won't be in school for a while and we will tell you more when we can.



1e. The Death of a member of staff's family

Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 / SEND

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may already know that **NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son**, has been ill with _____. Most people with _____ get better, but very sadly some people don't get better and **yesterday NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son** died. **NAME** won't be in school for a while and we will tell you more when we can.

OR:

I have got something very sad to tell you. You may have heard on the news that there was a **car accident last night on the motorway**. The doctors and nurses tried very hard, but very sadly they weren't able to help and **yesterday, NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son**, died. **NAME** won't be in school for a while and we will tell you more when we can.

Key Stage 2

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. I know that you have all heard of _____, and know that most people with _____ get better, but that sometimes people might die from it. **NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son**, has been ill with _____. I'm very sad to tell you that **NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son** died **yesterday**. **NAME** won't be in school for a while and we will tell you more when we can.

OR:

I've got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. You might have heard on the news that there was a **car accident last night on the motorway**. **NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son** was involved in the **car accident**. The doctors and nurses tried really hard to help, but sadly they weren't able to and **yesterday, NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son** died. **NAME** won't be in school for a while and we will tell you more when we can.



2. SAMPLE SCRIPTS FOR INFORMING STAFF OF DEATH

2a. The Death of a pupil:

Thank you all for meeting / talking to me today. You may have been aware that NAME (in class ___) has been unwell with _____ / was in an accident yesterday and I am very sorry to have to tell you that NAME passed away yesterday in hospital / at home. STAFF MEMBER is in regular contact with the family and we will make arrangements for you to pass on your condolences as soon as we can. Please can we ask you all to keep this sad news off social media and to yourselves for the time being while we continue to inform absent staff members in a sensitive way.

2b. The death of a staff member:

Thank you all for meeting / talking to me today. You may have been aware that NAME has been unwell with _____ / was in an accident yesterday and I am very sorry to have to tell you that NAME passed away yesterday in hospital / at home. We are sending condolences / flowers to their family on behalf of the school and will make arrangements for you to send individual condolences as soon as possible. Please can we ask you all to keep this sad news off social media and to yourselves for the time being while we continue to inform absent staff members in a sensitive way.

2c. The Death of a member of wider school community (including members of staff who have recently left / retired)

Thank you all for meeting / talking to me today. You may have been aware that NAME (who works in the kitchen / is a governor / was previously a class teacher here) has been unwell with _____ / was in an accident yesterday and I am very sorry to have to tell you that NAME passed away yesterday in hospital / at home. We are sending condolences / flowers to their family on behalf of the school and will make arrangements for you to send individual condolences as soon as possible. Please can we ask you all to keep this sad news off social media and to yourselves for the time being while we continue to inform absent staff members in a sensitive way.

2d. The Death of a pupil's family member

Thank you all for meeting / talking to me today. You may have been aware that NAME's (in class ___) Mum / Dad / sister / brother has been unwell with _____ / was in an accident yesterday and I am very sorry to have to tell you that NAME's Mum / Dad / sister / brother passed away yesterday in hospital / at home. STAFF MEMBER is in regular contact with the family and we will make arrangements for you to pass on your condolences as soon as we can. Please can we ask you all to keep this sad news off social media and to yourselves for the time being while we continue to inform absent staff members in a sensitive way. (ADD IN DETAILS OF PUPILS RETURN TO SCHOOL IF THIS IS KNOWN)

2e. The Death of a member of staff's family

Thank you all for meeting / talking to me today. You may have been aware that NAME's husband / wife / son / daughter has been unwell with _____ / was in an accident yesterday and I am very sorry to have to tell you that NAME's husband / wife / son / daughter passed away yesterday in hospital / at home. We are



sending **condolences / flowers** to NAME and their family on behalf of the school and will make arrangements for you to send individual condolences as soon as possible. Please can we ask you all to keep this sad news off social media and to yourselves for the time being while we continue to inform absent staff members in a sensitive way. (Obviously, **NAME** will now have some time off work and we will let you know when we can about when they will return.)



3. SAMPLE LETTERS RE. THE DEATH OF A PUPIL

Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING OPEN.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

Your child's class teacher had the sad task of informing the pupils of the death of NAME, a pupil in class _____. NAME died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday.

He / She was a valued / cherished / highly-regarded / well-liked / popular / friendly member of the class and school community and will be missed by everyone who knew him / her. We have already begun offering additional support to pupils in school who need this, and TEACHER and TEACHER are available over the coming days to speak to any concerned parents.

When someone dies, children and young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME's family and friends at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate / remember NAME's life. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING CLOSED.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

Your child's class teacher had the sad task of informing the pupils of the death of NAME, a pupil in class _____. NAME died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday. He / She was a valued / cherished / highly-regarded / well-liked / popular / friendly member of the class and school community and will be missed by everyone who knew him / her.

As the school is currently closed, we are asking you to share this sad news with your child. A suggested script for doing this is written below. TEACHER and TEACHER are available via the school office over the coming days to speak to any concerned parents and we will offer additional support to pupils once we return to school.

COPY AND PASTE APPROPRIATE SCRIPT HERE

When someone dies, children and young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We suggest that you try to answer their questions, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME's family and friends at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate / remember NAME's life. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



4. SAMPLE LETTER RE. THE DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER

Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING OPEN.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that a well-respected / long-standing / well-loved / popular / well-known member of our staff, NAME, died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday.

The pupils were told today by their class teacher / phase leader / other member of staff and many will be reacting to this news. When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME's family at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate / remember NAME's life. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING CLOSED.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that a well-respected / long-standing / well-loved / popular / well-known member of our staff, NAME, died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday.

As the school is currently closed, we are asking you to share this sad news with your child. A suggested script for doing this is written below. TEACHER and TEACHER are available via the school office over the coming days to speak to any concerned parents and we will offer additional support to pupils once we return to school.

COPY AND PASTE APPROPRIATE SCRIPT HERE

When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We would suggest that you try to answer their questions, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME's family at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate / remember NAME's life. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



5. SAMPLE LETTER RE. THE DEATH OF A GOVERNOR / MEMBER OF THE WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING OPEN.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that a well-respected / long-standing / well-loved / popular / well-known member of our school community, NAME, died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday. NAME has supported the school community through his / her role as a _____.

The pupils were told today by their class teacher / phase leader / other member of staff and many will be reacting to this news. When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME's family at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate / remember NAME's life. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING CLOSED.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that a well-respected / long-standing / well-loved / popular / well-known member of our school community, NAME, died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday. NAME has supported the school community through his / her role as a _____.

As the school is currently closed, we are asking you to share this sad news with your child. A suggested script for doing this is written below. TEACHER and TEACHER are available via the school office over the coming days to speak to any concerned parents and we will offer additional support to pupils once we return to school.

COPY AND PASTE APPROPRIATE SCRIPT HERE

When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We would suggest that you try to answer their questions, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME's family at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate / remember NAME's life. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



6. SAMPLE LETTER RE. THE DEATH OF A PUPIL'S FAMILY MEMBER

Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING OPEN.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that NAME's Mother / Father / brother / sister, NAME, died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday

The pupils were told today by their class teacher / phase leader / other member of staff and many will be reacting to this news. When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME and their family at this time. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING CLOSED.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that NAME's Mother / Father / brother / sister, NAME, died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday. As the school is currently closed, we are asking you to share this sad news with your child. A suggested script for doing this is written below. TEACHER and TEACHER are available via the school office over the coming days to speak to any concerned parents and we will offer additional support to pupils once we return to school.

COPY AND PASTE APPROPRIATE SCRIPT HERE

When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We would suggest that you try to answer their questions, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME and their family at this time. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



7. SAMPLE LETTER RE. THE DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER'S FAMILY

Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING OPEN.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son, NAME, died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday. They will not be at work for some time and the class will temporarily be taught by TEACHER.

The pupils were told today by their class teacher / phase leader / other member of staff and many will be reacting to this news. When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME and their family at this time. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



Please copy and paste this letter onto the current school letterhead, changing all sections highlighted in yellow. This version of the letter is to go home to pupils, the same day as they were told, IN THE EVENT OF THE SCHOOL BEING CLOSED.

DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that NAME's husband / wife / daughter / son, NAME, died yesterday following a diagnosis of _____ / following a car accident yesterday. As the school is currently closed, we are asking you to share this sad news with your child. A suggested script for doing this is written below. TEACHER and TEACHER are available via the school office over the coming days to speak to any concerned parents and we will offer additional support to pupils once we return to school. NAME will not be at work for some time and the class will temporarily be taught by TEACHER.

COPY AND PASTE APPROPRIATE SCRIPT HERE

When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We would suggest that you try to answer their questions, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit any of the websites below:

- Daisy's Dream
- Winston's Wish
- Grief Encounter
- Child Bereavement UK

Our thoughts are with NAME and their family at this time. We would politely request that at this time, you do not share this news or your feelings regarding it on social media out of respect for NAME's family.

Yours sincerely,

HEADTEACHER



8. MAKING A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS / MEDIA

Statements made to the press / media should only be made by the Headteacher, Deputy Head or Chair of Governors unless in very exceptional circumstances and should be written in advance. None of these members of staff should be expected to give this statement alone, so may be supported by another member of the senior leadership team as appropriate. A written version of this statement could also be put on the school's website. Statements made to the media could also be written, supported or delivered by the local authority.

Statements to the media about a death must be given with the family's permission and should include:

- Facts
- The person's name and role within school (e.g. pupil, teacher, teaching assistant)
- Qualities of the person who has died (see ideas included in sample letters)
- Thoughts / condolences for the family of the deceased
- A request for privacy so the school community can grieve together



9. SOCIAL STORY TO SUPPORT UNDERSTANDING IN VERY YOUNG OR SEND CHILDREN WITH COGNITIVE / SOCIAL COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES

NAME

Choose one of the following:

- You might have seen that **NAME** hasn't been at school for a little while. This is because they were very poorly with something called _____. Some people with ___ can stay at home and get better, and some people go to hospital so the doctors and nurses can try to make them better. This is OK.
- You might have seen that **NAME** isn't at school today. This is because they were in an **accident** yesterday. Sometimes accidents are small, like falling over in the playground, and sometimes accidents are bigger. After accidents, some people can stay at home and get better, and some people go to hospital so the doctors and nurses can try to make them better. This is OK.

Sometimes, the doctors and nurses aren't able to make everyone better. This might be because they were poorly before, or because the medicine doesn't work. Sometimes, people die from ____ because they don't get better. This can make people feel very sad, confused or cry. This is OK.

NAME has died this week because they weren't able to get better. Dying means that we never see the person again. This might make people feel sad, upset, cross, angry or lots of other feelings. Having lots of different feelings or being upset is OK.

People might want to ask questions, or talk about **NAME**. We can make or draw something to remember **NAME**. This is OK. We should all try to stay calm, use our words to say how we feel, and remember happy times with **NAME**.

VIDEO SOCIAL STORY ABOUT DEATH

The video social story below is specific to the death of a grandma, but the words might be helpful for you if you need to adapt it to the death of a different family member.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=82&v=OR9ROPABq48&feature=emb_logo