

Lingfield Primary School

A Personal Best School



Bereavement Policy

Date Agreed by Governors	Summer 2025
Review Date	Summer 2027

Objectives and Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a structured and supportive approach to managing bereavement within the Lingfield Primary School community. It aims to ensure that all staff, children and families receive appropriate support and that the school's response is sensitive, respectful and in line with the wishes of the bereaved family.

This policy has been produced in conjunction with Jigsaw South East, an organisation that provides support to children and young people facing bereavement.

Lead Member of Staff

The lead member of staff for bereavement is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will coordinate the school's response and ensure that all procedures are followed in conjunction with the Headteacher and the Leadership Team.

Roles of Staff

Headteacher: Coordinates the overall response, liaises with the bereaved family and communicates with the school community.

Class Teachers: Provide direct support to children, identify those who may need additional help and communicate with parents/carers.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Offers emotional support to children and staff and provides resources and guidance on coping with grief. This includes signposting support to parents.

Office Staff: Discreetly, assist with communication and logistical arrangements as directed by the Leadership Team.

Appropriate Training

All staff will receive training on how to support bereaved children and colleagues over the course of a two year teaching cycle. This will include recognising signs of grief, understanding cultural differences, and knowing how to provide appropriate support.

How the Policy is Shared with Parents/Carers

The bereavement policy will be shared with parents/carers through the school website and during parent meetings when appropriate to do so. A paper copy can be provided on request.

How a Death is Communicated Within the School Community

The Headteacher will communicate the news of a death to the school community, taking into account the wishes of the family and cultural values. This may involve an email to parents/carers, an announcement in assembly, or individual conversations with affected children and staff.

How Information is Shared with Parents/Carers and children

Information will be shared with sensitivity and respect for the family's wishes. Parents/carers will be informed through emails or meetings, and children will be told in an age-appropriate manner, either in class or in small groups.

Support for Staff, children and Families

There is no single approach that will work for every family or individual managing grief. Below are examples of potential strategies and approaches:

Pre-Bereavement:

Emotional Support: Signposting to families facing terminal illness. The DSL will provide a safe space for children and staff to express their feelings and concerns.

Practical Support: Assist families with practical needs, such as coordinating with external agencies for additional support and providing information on available resources.

Post-Bereavement

Short-Term Support:

Immediate Communication: Inform the school community about the bereavement in a sensitive and respectful manner, considering the family's wishes and cultural values.

Counselling Services: Provide access to counselling for children, staff, and families. The DSL will be available for one-on-one sessions and group support.

Classroom Support: Teachers will be given guidance on how to support grieving children in the classroom, including recognising signs of distress and providing a supportive environment.

Memorial Activities: Organise age-appropriate memorial activities, such as creating a memory book or holding a remembrance assembly, to help children process their grief.

Long-Term Support:

Ongoing Support: Continue to offer reasonable adjustments for as long as needed. Regular check-ins with the DSL will help identify those who may require extended support.

Support Groups: Establish support groups for children and staff who have experienced loss. These groups can provide a space for sharing experiences and coping strategies.

Academic Support: Provide additional academic support for children who may be struggling with their learning due to grief. This may include intervention support and/or adjustments to their workload.

Staff Training: Offer ongoing training for staff on how to support bereaved children and colleagues. This will include recognising long-term signs of grief and knowing how to provide appropriate support.

Family Engagement: Maintain regular communication with bereaved families to ensure they continue to receive the support they need. This may include home visits, phone calls, or meetings at school.

Community Resources: Connect families with external support services, such as local bereavement charities and counselling organisations. Some useful resources include:

<https://www.jigsawsoutheast.org.uk>

<https://thelucyraynerfoundation.com/suicide-bereavement-support-service-surrey>

<https://www.tcf.org.uk>

<https://www.siblingsupport.co.uk>

More signposting, including books, is on the school website.

School Emergency Plan in the Case of a Crisis

The bereavement policy is linked to the school emergency plan to ensure a coordinated response in the event of a crisis. This includes clear procedures for communication, support and managing the impact on the school community.

Operation Duke on Trips

Operation Duke procedures will be followed on school trips to ensure that any incidents of bereavement are managed appropriately and that support is provided to affected children and staff.

Resources to Support Individuals and Families

The school will provide resources such as books, counselling services, and contact information for external support agencies to help individuals and families cope with bereavement. Some useful resources include:

The Centre for Grief Recovery and Therapeutic Services

My Grief Angels

SAMHSA - Coping with Bereavement and Grief

Bereavement Within the PSHE Curriculum

Bereavement and coping with loss will be included in the PSHE curriculum to help children understand and manage their emotions. Lessons will be age-appropriate and delivered with sensitivity.