



Chiltern Way Academy

Turning Futures Around

Bereavement Policy

Responsibility for this policy (job title): Business Manager

Responsibility for its review: CEO

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1. Aims

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how Chiltern Way Academy (CWA) will respond to a death in our Academy community.
- Set out a plan for communicating deaths in a timely manner, that balances our Academy community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased.
- Identify best practices for supporting students and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the governing board.
- Provide a roadmap and framework for students or staff returning to school following bereavement.

Every bereavement is unique, and any guidelines we have will take into account the wishes of those most closely involved, individual circumstances and the wellbeing of students and staff.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The CEO / Director of Schools (DoS)

The CEO / DoS has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for delegating any responsibilities under this policy to other members of staff.

The CEO/DoS will:

- Liaise with the family of the deceased.
- Where appropriate, communicate details of a death to students and staff as set out in this policy, or activate communication teams.
- Respond to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death.
- Participate in any multi-agency reviews as requested.
- Lead reintegration meetings for students or staff returning to school after a bereavement.
- Arrange for monitoring and support of the pastoral support team or any individual staff members who are supporting bereaved students or staff.

2.2 Pastoral support staff

The pastoral support team has responsibility for monitoring and supporting bereaved students and staff members (including before their bereavement, where relevant – for example, in the case of terminal illness).

The pastoral support team will:

- Provide direct support to bereaved students and staff.
- Signpost to the external support available to bereaved students and staff.
- Organise safe spaces for bereaved members of the Academy community to take a time out.

- Organise memorials, for example temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages.
- Arrange for the attendance and supervision of students at funerals (where permitted).
- Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved students or staff and ensure they are supported on those days.
- Provide additional support during significant transitions for example, when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school.

2.3 Governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy, and supporting the CEO / DoS.

The governing board will:

- Undertake regular monitoring of how the Academy is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them.
- Monitor the CEO's / DoS's emotional wellbeing,
- Assist the CEO / DoS, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death.
- Where necessary, arrange for another staff member to take the lead if the CEO / DoS is not available to respond to a death immediately.

3. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

Supporting students and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported.

- Appropriate internal and external resources will be made available to support these staff members.
- The CEO / DoS will monitor the wellbeing of staff performing this role.
- Appropriate training will be provided for these staff members.

4. Immediate actions following a death

The CEO / DoS will consider the most appropriate course of action the Academy will take:

- After a death that affects the whole Academy community (such as that of a student or staff member).
- After a more personal bereavement (such as the death of a student's close family member).
- After a situation involving multiple fatalities (for example, an accident involving several students and/or staff members).

4.1 Clarifying information and the wishes of the family

- The CEO / DoS will be responsible for contacting the family to confirm news of a death and determine the wishes of the family in terms of what can be shared with the rest of the Academy community and how.
- The CEO / DoS will consider how news of a death will be confirmed if the family cannot be immediately contacted.
- The CEO / DoS will consider what will be communicated to the Academy community if news of a death is spreading via social media before confirmation can be made.

4.2 Sharing the news with staff

- The CEO / DoS will be responsible for sharing the news with staff and explaining what support will be available to those who need it.
- The CEO / DoS will consider the appropriate steps to take to ensure that staff will be informed promptly, including during periods of school closure.

4.3 Sharing the news with students

- The CEO / DoS will determine who will be responsible for sharing the news with students and explaining what support will be available to those who need it.
- The CEO / DoS will consider the appropriate steps to take to ensure students are informed in a timely and appropriate way, including during periods of school closure.

4.4 Informing parents/carers

- The CEO / DoS will determine how parents/carers will be notified of a death.
- The CEO / DoS will explain to parents / carers the steps the Academy has taken during the day to inform students of the death, what additional support has been made available and where to go for more help and information.

4.5 Responding to specific causes of death

Some deaths need to be handled more sensitively due to their potential to cause fear, anger or imitation.

- The CEO / DoS will determine the appropriate steps to take if the death is the result of suicide. (Samaritans [step-by-step programme](#) can support schools if this happens).
- The CEO / DoS will determine the appropriate steps to take if the death is due to homicide or family violence. (Child Bereavement UK guide to 'Supporting children and young people bereaved by murder or manslaughter', is found at the bottom of [this page](#)).

- If the death is due to contagious disease, the Academy will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team.

*** COVID-19 – addendum**

In the event of a death from COVID-19, the CEO / DoS will determine the most appropriate course of action to take to inform staff, students and parents / carers.

Consideration will be given to appropriate support for staff and students who are not currently attending school.

Consideration will be given to the restraints of social distancing and partial attendance.

4.6 Responding to the media

In the event that a death that affects the Academy raises media interest, CWA will respond in the following manner:

- The CEO / DoS or designated media coordinator will be responsible for responding to requests from the media.
- All other staff members should not respond to media requests, and should instead refer enquiries to the responsible person.

5. Follow-up actions and support following a death

The CEO / DoS will consider the most appropriate actions the Academy will take and the most appropriate support the Academy will offer:

- After a death that affects the whole Academy community (such as that of a student or staff member).
- After a more personal bereavement (such as the death of a student's close family member).
- After a situation involving multiple fatalities (for example, an accident involving several students and/or staff members).

5.1 Support for students and staff

Students and staff may require support to grieve in the initial days and weeks following a death.

The CEO / DoS will consider:

- What support will be made available in school, for example, pastoral care team, bereavement team, peer-to-peer support.
- How students and staff will be signposted to external support, for example, community mental health resources and bereavement charities.

5.2 Timetables

- The CEO / DoS will decide whether to adjust the timetable for some or even all students.

5.3 Tributes and condolences

The CEO / DoS will consider:

- How CWA will come together to memorialise the deceased.
- What forms of physical memorial will be permitted (for example a book of condolences or a temporary tribute) and where these will be located.
- How religious/cultural considerations will be taken into account as appropriate.

5.4 Funerals

The Academy will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

- Whether members of staff and/or students are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service.
- How condolences should be made and how staff and students can contribute.

If staff are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so, the CEO / DoS will consider staff requests for leave to attend, taking into account availability of cover etc.

If students are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so, the CEO / DoS will consider students requests for leave and what arrangements will be made for those who attend.

6. Support for students returning to school after bereavement

Whether a student has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole Academy community, the Academy will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

6.1 Reintegration meeting

The CEO / DoS will meet with the bereaved student and their parents/carers to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the student is emotionally ready to return to the classroom either full-time or with adjustments to the timetable to allow for a phased return
- Address any concerns the student and their parents/carers have about the return to school.
- Consult with the student about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant).

- Open lines of communication between the student and relevant staff to ensure support should the student feel overwhelmed.
- Open lines of communication between the Academy and the student's parents/carers to coordinate support.
- Consider any additional support needed for a student who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability.

6.2 Ongoing support

- The Academy will maintain regular contact with the student's parents/carers to monitor how the student is coping.
- The Academy will acknowledge that significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult and will monitor these dates to ensure additional support is available.
- We know that grief may impact a student's progress and affect their behaviour and the Academy will manage this as appropriate to the circumstances.
- The Academy will take care to manage changes for bereaved students by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions.

7. Support for staff returning to school after bereavement

Whether a staff member has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole Academy community, the Academy will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

7.1 Reintegration meeting

The CEO / DoS will meet with the bereaved staff member to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the staff member is ready to return to work and the best way to make that return (for example, a phased return to work or a temporary change in duties).
- Address any concerns the staff member may have about the return to school.
- Consult with the staff member about how or even if they want their students and colleagues to know of the death (where relevant).
- Set guidelines for communication between the staff member and their line manager to monitor and support the staff member.

7.2 Ongoing support

The Academy acknowledges that grief can have an impact on a staff member's physical and mental health, which can then go on to impact their performance.

The Academy recognises that grieving is highly personal and that there cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution for monitoring and supporting a bereaved person.

The Academy will work with each individual to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person.

• **Useful contacts**

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us
Winston's Wish	Helpline: 08088 020 021 https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/
Cruse Bereavement Care	Helpline: 0808 808 1677 https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us
Mind	Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393 Further contacts: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/
Grief Encounter	Helpline: 0808 802 0111 https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/young-people/
The Childhood Bereavement Network	http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/