



**EXCELLENCE**  
GIRLS ACADEMY  
LEARNERS TODAY - LEADERS TOMORROW

# Bereavement Policy

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<b>Approved by:</b>	Mohammed Ummar Azam -Chair of Governors
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Laura Webb - Governor
<b>Last reviewed:</b>	August 2023
<b>Next review:</b>	August 2024

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# 1. Aims

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how the school will respond to a death in our school community
- Set out a plan for communicating deaths in a timely manner that balances our school community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased
- Identify best practices for supporting pupils and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the Governing Body
- Provide a roadmap and framework for pupils or staff returning to school following bereavement

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 The Headteacher

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

The Headteacher will:

- Liaise with the family of the deceased
- Where appropriate, communicate details of a death to pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils or staff

### 2.2 Pastoral support staff

The pastoral support team has responsibility for monitoring and supporting bereaved pupils 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 pupils and staff
- Signpost to external support available to bereaved pupils and staff
- Organise safe spaces for bereaved members of the school community to take a time out
- Organise memorials, e.g. temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages
- Arrange for the attendance and supervision of pupils at funerals (where permitted)
- Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved pupils or staff and ensure they're supported on those days
- Provide additional support during significant transitions e.g. when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school

### 2.3 Governing body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and supporting the Headteacher.

The Governing Body will:

- Undertake regular monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them
- Monitor the Headteacher's emotional wellbeing, for example through regular meetings between the Headteacher and Chair of Governors
- Assist the Headteacher, 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 Headteacher is not available to respond to a death immediately

## 3. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

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

The Headteacher and SLT will provide internal support to these staff members, making necessary arrangements to workload, etc. and be able to signpost them to external resources such as those found in Appendix 1.

Wherever possible, bereavement training will be provided for these staff members.

## **4. Immediate actions following a death**

Excellence Girls Academy will take the following steps both after a death that affects the whole school community (such as that of a pupil or staff member), and after a more personal bereavement (such as the death of a pupil's close family member). These will also apply to situations involving multiple fatalities (for example, an accident involving several pupils and/or staff members).

### **4.1 Clarifying information and the wishes of the family**

The Headteacher 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 school community and how.
- Determine if the news of a death can be confirmed if the family can't be immediately contacted.
- Determine what will be communicated to the school community if news of a death is spreading via social media before confirmation can be made.

### **4.2 Sharing the news with staff**

The Headteacher will:

- Be responsible for sharing the news with staff and explaining what support will be available to those who need it
- Decide what steps will be taken to ensure that staff will be informed promptly (e.g. calling a staff meeting, activating a phone tree or using staff emergency notification systems to bring staff together virtually if the school is closed)

### **4.3 Sharing the news with pupils**

The Headteacher will:

- Be responsible for sharing the news with pupils and explaining what support will be available to those who need it.
- Decide what steps will be taken to ensure pupils are informed in a timely and appropriate way (e.g. calling a whole-school assembly, calling year groups together to share the news, or using school emergency notification systems to alert parents of where to find important news online if the school is closed)

### **4.4 Informing parents/carers**

The Headteacher will decide how parents/carers will be notified of a death (e.g. sending a letter home with pupils explaining the steps you've taken during the day to inform pupils 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.

If the death is the result of suicide, the Headteacher will follow the guidance produced by Samaritans (they provide a [step-by-step programme](#) to support schools if this happens).

If the death is due to homicide or family violence, the Headteacher will follow the guidance produced by Child Bereavement UK (They have a guide to '[Supporting children and young people bereaved by murder or manslaughter](#)').

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

### **4.6 Responding to the media**

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

The Headteacher will be responsible for responding to requests from the media and take appropriate actions according to the nature of the incident.

Other staff members should not respond to media requests, and should instead refer enquiries to the Headteacher.

## **5. Follow-up actions and support following a death**

### **5.1 Support for pupils and staff**

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

We will ensure that support will be made available in school through the pastoral care team and peer-to-peer support and that pupils and staff are signposted to external support such community mental health resources and bereavement charities.

### **5.2 Timetables**

We will decide whether to adjust the timetable for some or all pupils based on the nature of the incident.

### **5.3 Tributes and condolences**

The school community will come together to memorialise the deceased through collective prayer.

If appropriate, certain forms of physical memorial may be permitted at the discretion of the Headteacher such as a book of condolences or a temporary tribute and they will decide where these will be located.

Any religious/cultural considerations will be taken into account as appropriate.

### **5.4 Funerals**

We will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

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

If staff are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:

- Staff should request leave to attend through the Headteacher
- Considerations will be made in granting permission e.g. availability of cover

If pupils are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so:

- Parents should request leave for their child to attend
- Arrangements will be made for those who attend to ensure they are able to easily catch up on any missed lessons.

## **6. Support for pupils returning to school after bereavement**

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

### **6.1 Reintegration meeting**

The Headteacher will meet with the bereaved pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil and their parents/carers have about the return to school
- Consult with the pupil about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant)
- Open lines of communication between the pupil and relevant staff to ensure support should the pupil feel overwhelmed

- Open lines of communication between the school and the pupil's parents/carers to coordinate support
- Consider any additional support needed for a pupil who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability

## 6.2 Ongoing support

- We will maintain regular contact with the pupil's parents/carers to monitor how the pupil is coping
- We acknowledge significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult so will use a bereavement calendar to monitor these dates and ensure additional support is available
- We know that grief may impact a pupil's progress and affect their behavior. To manage this, we will hold regular meetings where they talk work through any issues
- We will take care to manage changes for bereaved pupils 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 school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

### 7.1 Reintegration meeting

The Headteacher 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 (e.g. 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 pupils 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

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

We also recognise that grieving is highly personal and that there can't be a one-size-fits-all solution for monitoring and supporting a bereaved person.

We will work with each individual to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person. This may include:

- Internal support provided by the SLT to reduce workload or arrange provisions for flexible working or reduced timetables
- Signposting to external sources of support

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This document will be reviewed every year but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

It will be reviewed by the Governing Body and approved by the Chair of Governors at every review.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- › Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- › Behaviour Policy

## Appendix 1: Useful contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 <a href="https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us">https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us</a>
Winston's Wish	Helpline: 08088 020 021 <a href="https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/">https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/</a>
Cruse Bereavement Care	Helpline: 0808 808 1677 <a href="https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us">https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us</a>
Mind	Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393 Further contacts: <a href="https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/">https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/</a>