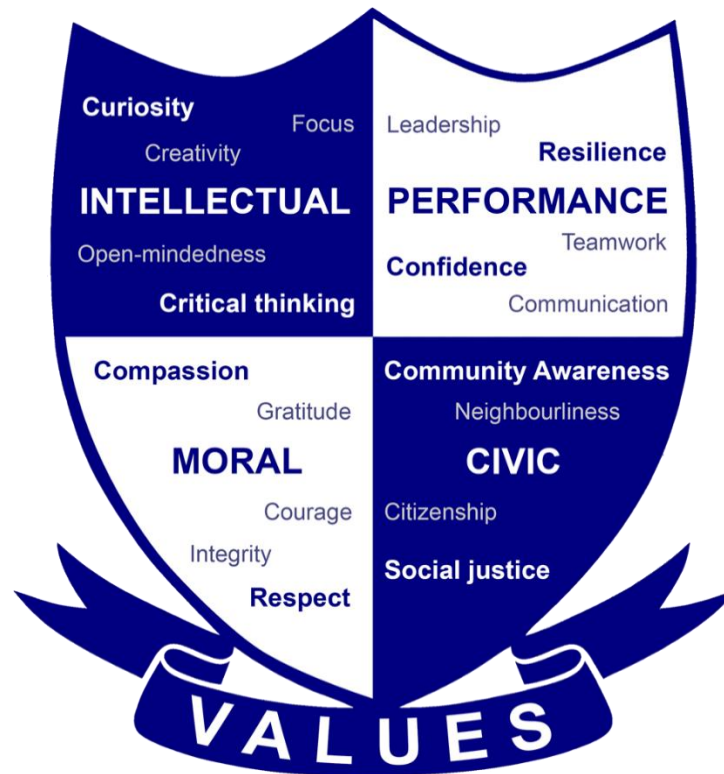


Pupil Bereavement Policy

Beverley High School



Date: March 2025

Introduction

Bereavement is an experience which will be faced by everyone at some point. Within a school community there will almost always be some students who are struggling with bereavement – or sometimes the entire school may be impacted by the death of a pupil, member of staff or someone who is an intrinsic part of the community. At times, students have to prepare for the loss of a family member or a friend and it is important that as a school we support them through this time and help prepare them for life after a death.

The term ‘bereavement’ refers to the process of grieving and mourning and is associated with a deep sense of loss and sadness. Empathetic understanding within the familiar and secure surroundings of school can be of benefit in providing support in difficult and upsetting circumstances.

Grieving students need people who care. Our school ethos is ‘underpinned by the values of respect, compassion, integrity and resilience’¹ and as a school it is vital that we listen and support where we can. Schools, just by carrying on with their usual day-to-day activities while being aware of the bereavement, can do a huge amount to support a grieving pupil. Every situation is different, and young people will be affected to a greater or lesser degree, dependent on the circumstances of the death and the nature of the relationship they had with the person who has died.

Beverley High School is committed to supporting the emotional health and well-being of every member of our school community and this policy outlines the practical measures we will take to create an ethos and environment that supports any individual, or the whole school community, as they cope with the loss of a loved one. The policy is also designed to give all staff a confidence in recognising and adopting a particular procedure.

Aims

The purpose of the Bereavement Policy is to help everyone involved at a time when there may be shock, upset and confusion, ensuring that there is as little disruption as possible, effective communication takes place and each member of the school community is supported to help them through a very difficult time.

By:

- Giving guidance on how to deal sensitively and compassionately with bereavement.

¹ Beverley High School, Behaviour for Learning Policy

- Providing appropriate support to any child, parent or staff member before (where applicable), during and after bereavement.
- Encouraging the whole school community to work together, with outside agencies as appropriate, to support each other.
- Giving children the opportunity to tell their story, express their feelings, share their memories and develop coping strategies through the on-going support of sensitive staff.
- Outlining clear expectations about the way the school will respond to the death, including staff responsibilities and effective communication
- Ensuring a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all.

Objectives

To have clear procedures that enable us to communicate with, and support bereaved pupils and their families, both before, and after, a pupil's return to our school. We accept that each family and bereavement is unique and can result in different challenges; but all students need to see the importance of the following:

1. **Be safe** – with their welfare supported
2. **Be involved** – be given information and choices
3. **Feel connected** – with support from people they trust and can help
4. **Understand, and be understood** – particularly regarding their reactions, feelings and thoughts
5. **Be respected** – have their identity and family context acknowledged
6. **Thrive** – within our supportive education setting.

Procedures

If a pupil is bereaved or is preparing for the death of a family member or friend, we will commit to supporting both them and their family by establishing a core group of staff responsible for communication and co-ordination of support offered which will include a main point of contact.

Assistant Headteacher is notified of the loss or about a student preparing for the loss of a friend or family member and a main person of contact is identified.

1. Contact the family offer the school's condolences, and listen to their story of bereavement, if they want to tell it. Establish the family's initial wishes regarding what the child, wider school community, and media (if applicable) should be told about the death
2. Send sympathy card on behalf of the school
3. Notify the relevant people in school

Student attending school?

No

Yes

Determine the date of that return in discussion with the family, reflecting on the needs of the pupil

Identify emotional wellbeing support to address the needs of the student through Emotional Health Support Worker in school or external agencies where applicable.

EBSA strategies may be employed if student is struggling to return to school.

Acknowledge their bereavement directly with them. Discuss how the school can support. Work to enable the pupil's re-integration into 'normal' school routines and create a safe and secure environment for them.

Meet with student on a weekly basis at first or more regularly if needed. Identify if further support is needed.

Ensure significant dates (such as death anniversaries, birthdays and culturally-significant dates such as annual festivals) are recorded and considered

Consider a pupil's bereavement when planning school activities/ lessons that might trigger thoughts or feelings about the bereavement and engage the pupil and their family in discussions regarding the pupil's involvement, providing information and choice.

Strategies to help a bereaved pupil:

- a) Ensure they know who they can reach out to for support and how to access this help in ways that are easy and discreet;
- b) Offer them opportunities to express their reactions, feelings and emotions about their bereavement, in ways they want to, safely and confidentially;
- c) Offer a safe and supervised space where a pupil can go if they need time out from a classroom or playground because of their bereavement;
- d) Direct a student towards age-appropriate bereavement resources; for example, www.sudden.org and from other child or youth-specific bereavement charities.
- e) Be aware of the pupil's family circumstances, including their cultural background, and its relevance to their bereavement;
- f) Monitor behaviour issues on Edulink to identify changes in behaviour that may be a sign of a mental health condition, or other illness or risk to health and safety
- g) If needed, signpost to support for the wider family, as well as the pupil, through the local authority, in order that the family unit work together where necessary.