# ASPIN PARK ACADEMY

## Bereavement Policy

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<tr>
<th>Version and Date</th>
<th>Action/Notes: To be reviewed every 3 years</th>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>Approved by Trustees</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
<td>Reviewed April 2020</td>
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Introduction:
The main aim of this policy is to provide a framework for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to give guidance on how to deal sensitively and compassionately in difficult and upsetting circumstances.

Aims:
One of the primary aspirations for Elevate Multi Academy Trust (Elevate) and its Academies is to support and nurture our children and staff.

When an Academy experiences a bereavement or loss their pastoral care systems and links with other agencies provides valuable support.

This policy provides support to ensure that if there is a death of a child, member of staff or adult familiar to the Academy such as a volunteer, the whole of the Elevate community will work together and with outside agencies as appropriate.

Rationale:
Within Aspin Park Academy we work in partnership with parents and carers and where necessary outside support agencies. When children join our Academy, we find out as much as possible about every child to tailor the academic, social and emotional teaching in school to match their needs.

Parents and carers are encouraged to make teachers aware of any previous changes that might have profoundly affected their child (e.g. divorce, bereavement, moving, new babies etc). This information will be shared with senior leaders and where appropriate, Elevate’s school adviser.

If there has been bereavement, information on what the child was told (in terms of religious beliefs etc.) will be sought, in order that the Academy does not say anything that could confuse or upset the child or family.

Death of a Child or Member of Staff
When Aspin Park Academy is informed of the death of a child or member of staff;

- The Head teacher will:
  - monitor progress and liaise with external agencies;
  - respond to media enquiries;
  - Be the first point of contact for family/child concerned.
Discussion will take place with the family and their wishes taken into account before decisions are taken on how and what to tell the children in school. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations;

Counselling will be offered and made available if necessary;

Staff should be informed before children and be prepared (through prior training) to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance;

Children who are affected should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them;

A letter to all school families affected will be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed;

*Aspin Park Academy* should be aware that the school timetable may need a degree of flexibility to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of children affected by the situation. However, minimal disruption to the timetable also offers a sense of security and familiarity;

Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate;

In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for the funeral or a memorial service attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial school closure in some circumstances.

Children and staff may express a wish to attend, or take part in the service, but they should only do so with the prior agreement of the deceased’s family, relatives or next of kin, as well as the agreement of their own parents or carers;

The class most affected might like to write down their thoughts and feelings. These could then be given to the bereaved family to assist in the planning of the service;

After the service, staff and children will be encouraged to meet and express their thoughts and feelings as such services are important in the grieving process;

Staff and children will be supported throughout the grieving period; anyone displaying signs of stress will be offered appropriate support;

Where necessary a press statement will be prepared by the Head Teacher and agreed by the Trust prior to publication
Aspin Park Academy should be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a child throughout their school life so information should be recorded and shared with relevant people, particularly at transition points.

**Family Bereavement:**
When Aspin Park Academy is informed of bereavement or loss:
- The family will be contacted to discuss the appropriate support for the child;
- The family will be asked how much and what the child already knows and how they have been involved;
- It will be explained to the family how Aspin Park Academy can be involved to support the child and family and how important working together will be, with both parties assessing any changes in behaviour. (e.g. eating and sleeping patterns may change or behaviour in school may deteriorate or the child becomes withdrawn.)
- The Academy will involve outside agencies as appropriate e.g. the school nurse, Psychological Service, Specialist counselling services such as Time 4 You.

For a member of staff experiencing close family bereavement, absence will be arranged for attendance at a funeral and appropriate time off in line with Elevate’s Leave Policy. Additional time may be given through sick leave as appropriate.

**Terminally Ill Children or Staff:**
- In the event of a child or member of staff becoming terminally ill, their wishes and those of their parents or carers or next-of-kin should always be respected;
- Should the child wish to attend school, the class teacher may need to inform the class of the child's condition;
- Occasionally, the child may wish to talk to their fellow classmates about their predicament themselves. Honesty about death and dying may be the best line of approach.

**Return to Aspin Park Academy**
- For the bereaved child or member of staff, returning to school may be traumatic;
- Where there has been a close family bereavement, in most cases everyone (teaching, support staff, volunteers if appropriate and children) should be made aware of the situation before the child (providing the parents or carers of the bereaved child agree) or member of staff returns;
- Staff will show appropriate compassion and allow expression to those suffering grief;
Teachers should try to foster an environment that is compassionate, yet disciplined;

Family life at this traumatic time, can be particularly distressing, routines upset, relationships strained, the future uncertain. For this reason, school routines should be kept as normal as possible in order to provide a respite;

Staff should be aware of anniversaries (e.g. birthdays, mother or father’s day, first Christmas and any other special days) as this can spark a revival of feelings of bereavement; This should be part of the relationship the class teacher builds with their individual children;

Staff might keep an eye on those particularly affected by the death of a close associate.

Talking to the Bereaved Child or an Adult:

Staff will be available to listen and support if possible, arrange a one-to-one session with an appropriate adult, e.g the Pastoral support team, SENCo or adult the child feels comfortable talking to, as soon as possible after the child returns to Aspin Park Academy;

Be calm and show them that you are listening and understanding by occasionally repeating what they have said and by acknowledging their emotions;

If people feel like crying they should cry – crying is not a sign of weakness, but often a sign of deep feeling;

Beware of using platitudes eg “I know how you feel”, (young people may feel offended that you presume how they feel).

Do:

Let the child or adult know that you genuinely care;
Make time to be available and listen;
Accept all that the child or adult is saying;
Allow them to express their feelings their way;
Let them know their feelings are normal;
Let them know that it is OK to cry;
Talk honestly and share your feelings;
Be honest;
Have eye contact;
Have appropriate physical contact;
Let them know that it is not their fault;
Be aware of the home situation

**Don’t:**
- Stop the child or adult talking;
- Tell them how they should or should not feel;
- Avoid contact;
- Change the subject;
- Deny your pain and feelings;
- Point out things for which they should be grateful;
- Be frightened of sharing your own feelings

**Websites and Helplines:**
www.childbereavement.org.uk
Helpline: 0800 02 880 40

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Winston’s Wish Family Line - 0845 2030405 – national helpline offering guidance, information and support to anyone caring for a bereaved child, including professionals and family members

www.mind.org.uk

Childhood Bereavement Network - 020 7843 6309 – a network of child bereavement services

CRUSE Bereavement Care (0870) 167 1677 www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

https://justb.org.uk/wordpress/services/
Just ‘B’ Bereavement Support for Adults 01423 814480
Just ‘B’ Bereavement Support for Children and Young People 01423 856790

**Books dealing with Death and Loss:**
Beyond the Rough Rock - Supporting a Child who has been Bereaved through Suicide - Julie Stokes, Diana Crossley
As Big As It Gets - Supporting a Child when Someone in their Family is Seriously Ill - Julie Stokes, Diana Crossley
The Secret C - Straight Talking about Cancer - Julie Stokes, Diana Crossley
I Miss You - First Look at Death - Pat Thomson
Beginnings and Endings with lifetimes in between – Bryan Melonie and Robert Ingpen
Storybooks available in Aspin Park Academy list own books

Grandpa - John Burningham
Always and Forever – Alan Durant
The Huge Bag of Worries – Virginia Ironside
What on Earth Do you Do When Someone Dies? – Trevor Romain
Badger’s Parting Gifts - Susan Varley
Saying Goodbye to Daddy – Judith Vigna
Waterbugs and Dragonflies – Explaining Death to Young Children
Time 4 You counselling powerpoint and specific leaflets and books