



Barnabas Oley School

Bereavement Policy

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1.0	B Smith	New policy created	June 2016	April 2019

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1 Introduction

Death is a subject that is difficult to address. It is almost inevitable though, that at some point the school community will be affected by a death. This might be the death of a pupil, staff member, pupil's family member, or of someone connected with the school.

Through providing a curriculum that acknowledges and addresses loss, death, bereavement and grief we can improve the skills of children and young people to deal with and emerge positively from them. Our school is well-placed to help children and young people to explore and develop an awareness and understanding of death, as well as to support those personally affected by it. An important part of this is the ability to support pupils, families and staff at times of loss and bereavement, as well as helping children and young people to support their peers, decreasing the sense of isolation that can be part of it.

Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and this policy has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances.

At Barnabas Oley School, we are committed to the emotional health and well-being of all staff and pupils. We are dedicated to the continual development of a 'healthy school'. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that support and prepare pupils for coping with separation or loss of a loved one, either through death or divorce.

This policy is for all staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school.

2 Our Aims

Our aims are:

- to support all those affected by loss and death in a supportive and caring environment in which everyone can respond appropriately to individual circumstances;
- to offer understanding of the impact of loss and grief on children and young people's physical and emotional health;
- to gain insight into children and adult reactions to loss and grief and how we should respond in order to meet the needs of grieving pupils, parents and staff;
- to give pastoral support for pupils, parents and staff;
- to provide effective support for all members of the school community and access to relevant support materials.
- This policy outlines practical measures to be taken when people are in shock, or upset, especially with sudden or multiple deaths or traumatic circumstances.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

The management of a bereavement situation is a whole school issue but there needs to be clear lines of accountability to ensure our aims are fulfilled. The main areas of responsibility are outlined below.

Governors are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and to provide support in terms of media enquiries.

The Head Teacher, with the support of the governors, will have overall responsibility for support and liaison in event of a death or traumatic loss. In the event that this person is absent then the Deputy Head Teacher will take responsibility.

These responsibilities are:

- to monitor progress and deal with external agencies;
- to co-ordinate media enquiries;
- to be the first point of contact for the individual concerned and their family or nominate a member of staff to be first point of contact;
- to identify appropriate support within the school community for the individual(s) concerned;
- to offer support as appropriate to pupils in the wider school community.

4 Procedures

When a bereavement or loss situation occurs the following steps will be taken:

- contact will be made with the family to identify the facts and offer support;
- staff will be informed and decisions taken concerning the best way to inform pupils and for the internal mechanisms for support to be organised and employed;
- pupils will be informed in the agreed manner. If possible parents will have already been informed;
- the Local Authority, parish clergy and other agencies will be informed and involved as appropriate;
- if appropriate, a press statement will be prepared and a strategy for dealing with the media agreed with the family. This should be discussed with the Chair of Governors before any statement is made;
- discussions will take place concerning attendance at the funeral and any memorial service (including school assembly) agreed with the family;
- a review process will be agreed with the appropriate staff.

When/if it is considered appropriate, a short assembly will be held to pray for and remember the deceased. Parish clergy will be invited to attend and support. This assembly may be Key Stage or whole school based depending on the connection with the deceased and any school community member who has had close links with the pupil, staff or school community member will be invited. If applicable the child's parents and close family should also be invited to this.

Please see the Bereavement Toolkit, (Appendix A), for more detailed guidelines when dealing with bereavement.

5 Training

Training and development is a fundamental aspect of our school community and appropriate staff will have the opportunity to undertake relevant training in the management of bereavement. This may include general awareness-raising for all staff and more specialised training for those with specific responsibility, such as senior staff members and pastoral staff, for example our home school support worker.

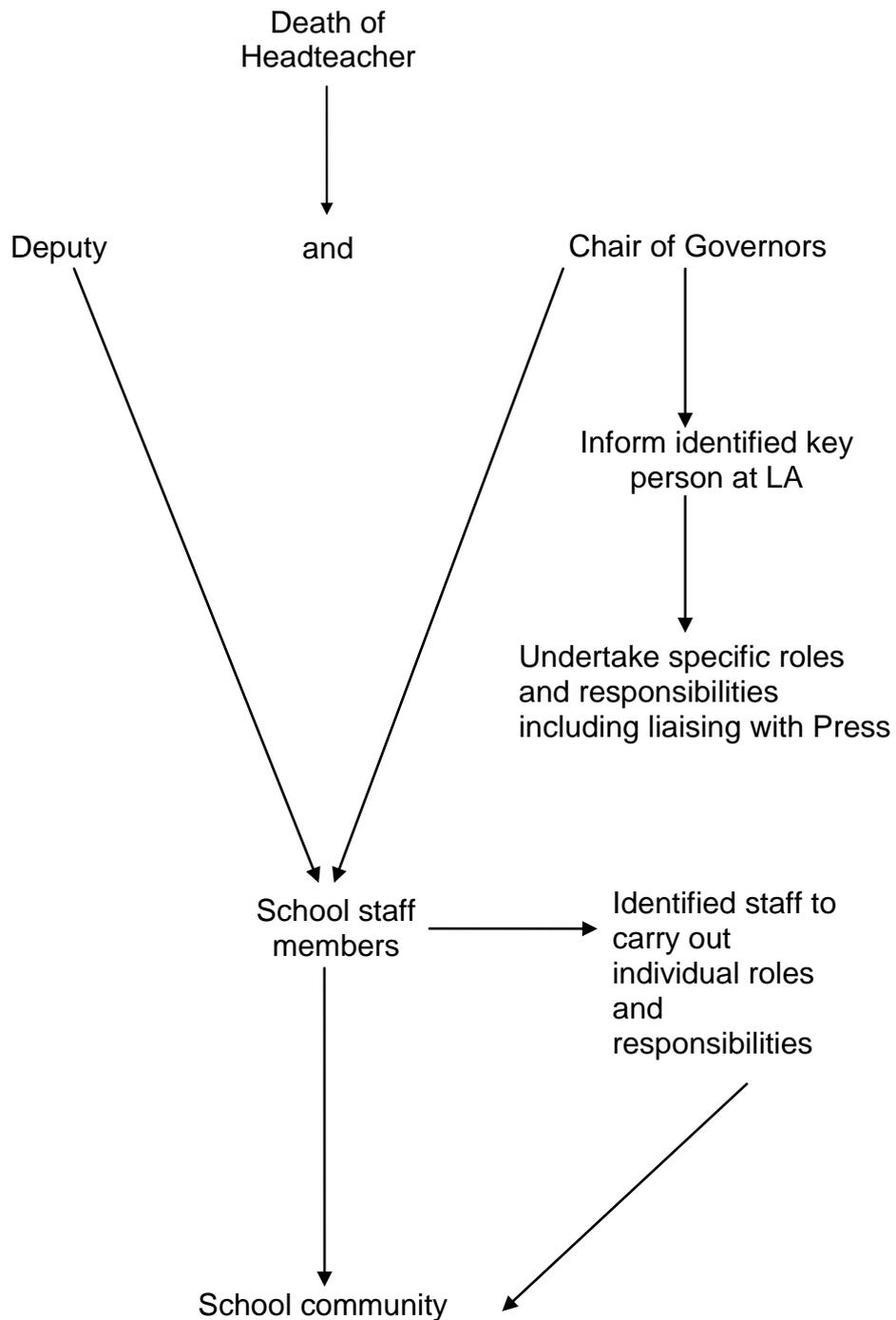
6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Senior Management Team and reported to the Governors on a three-yearly basis.

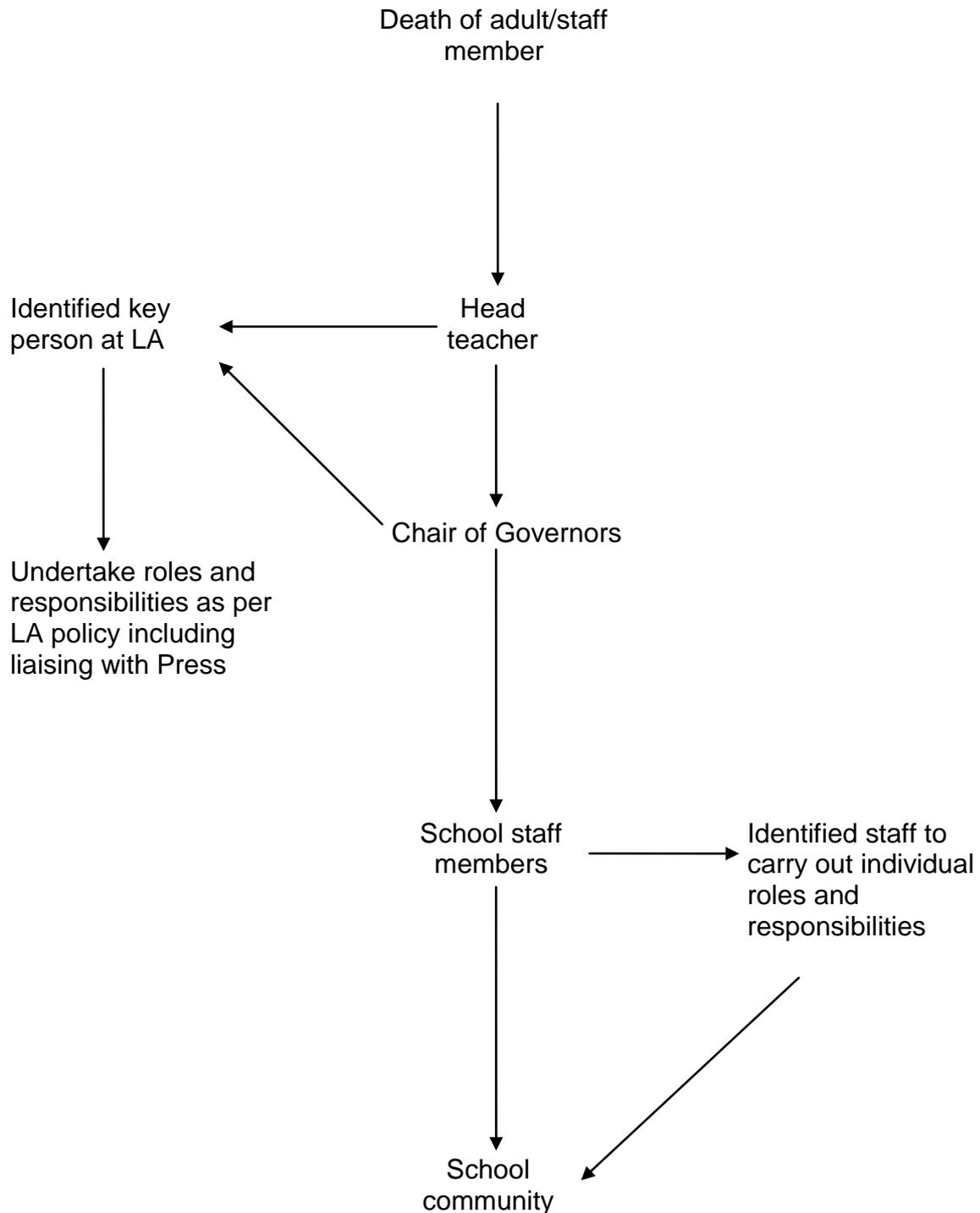
Appendices

A. Bereavement Toolkit

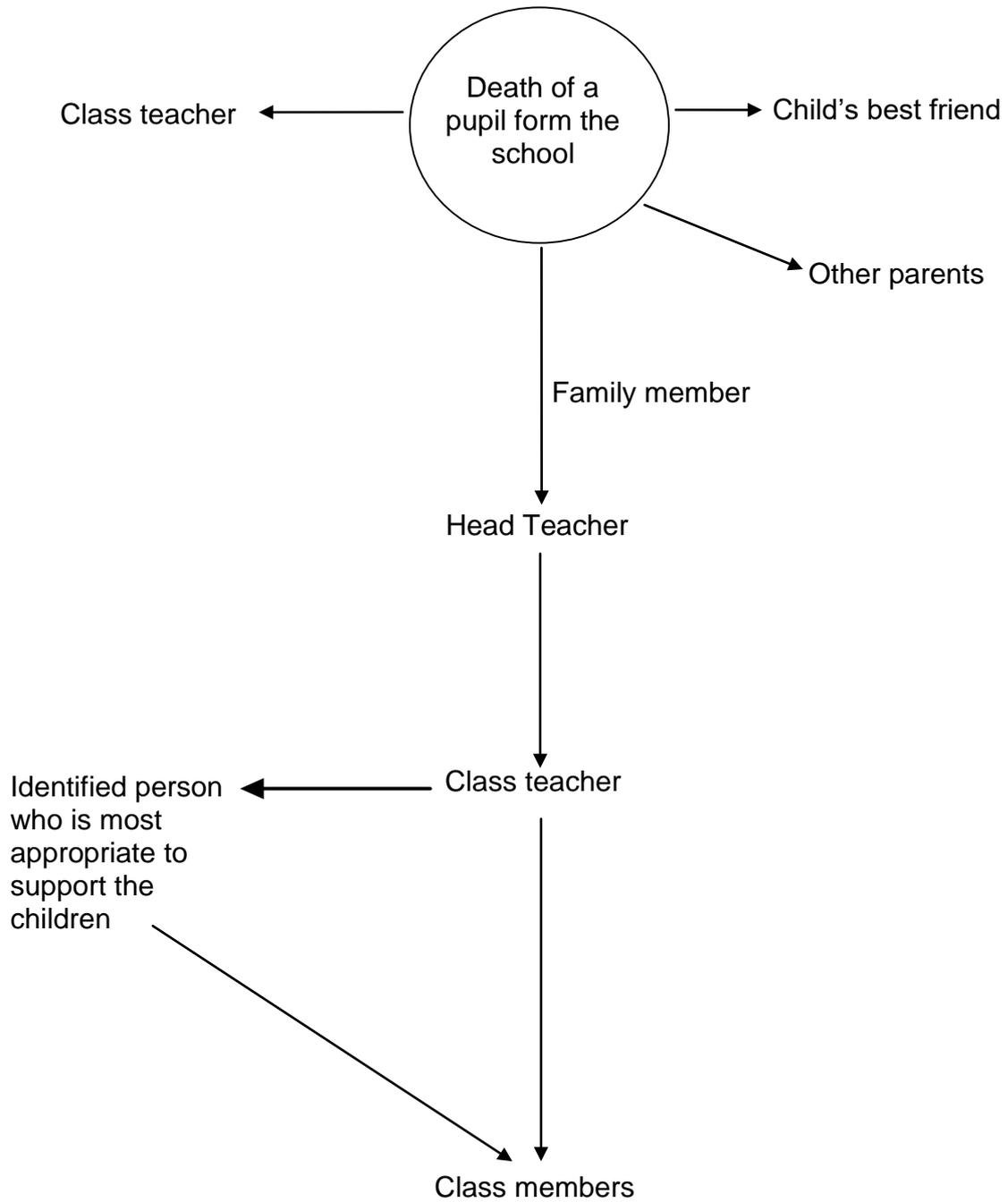
Information Sharing Pathway Following Death of Headteacher



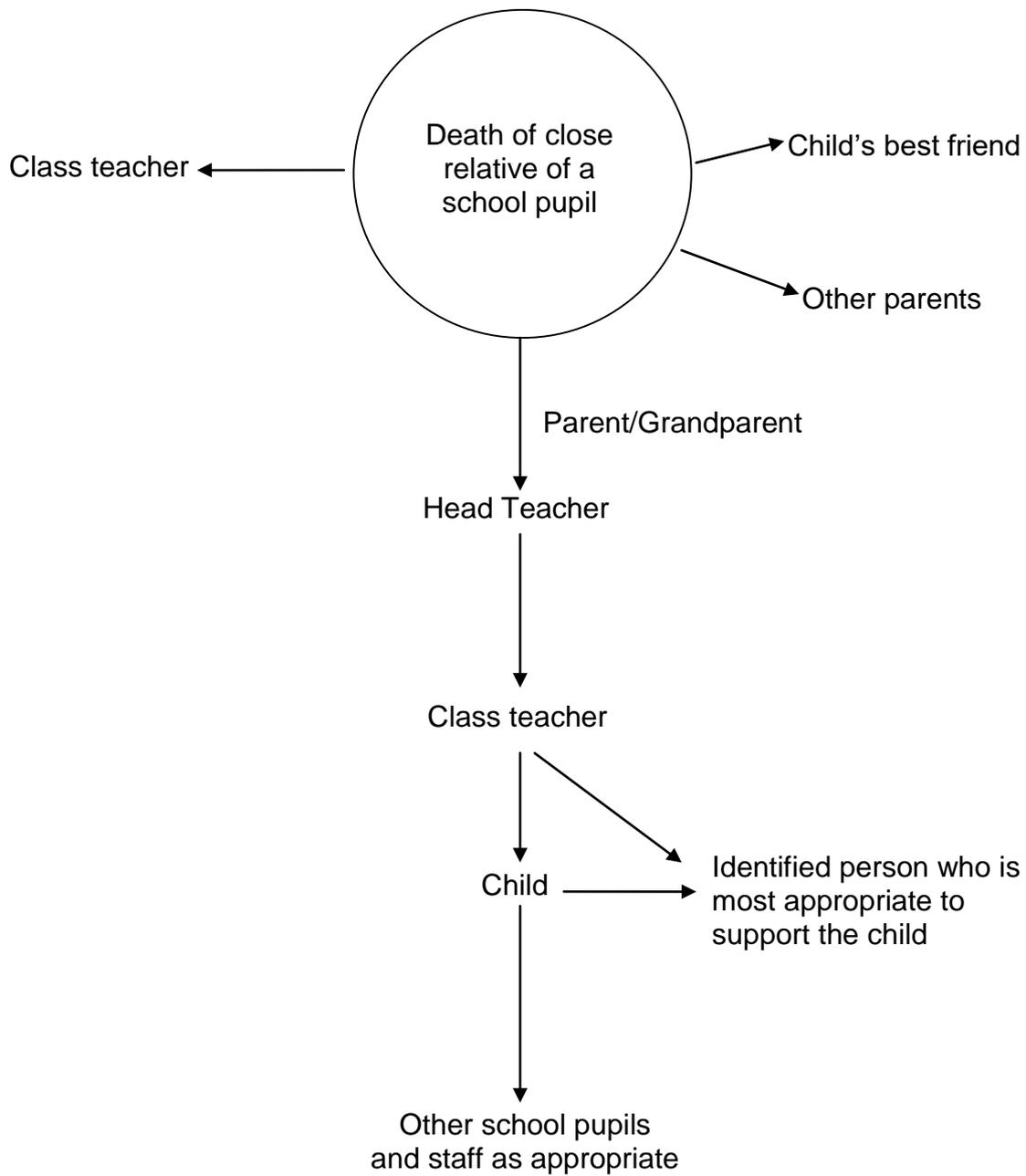
Information Sharing Pathway Following Death of a Staff Member



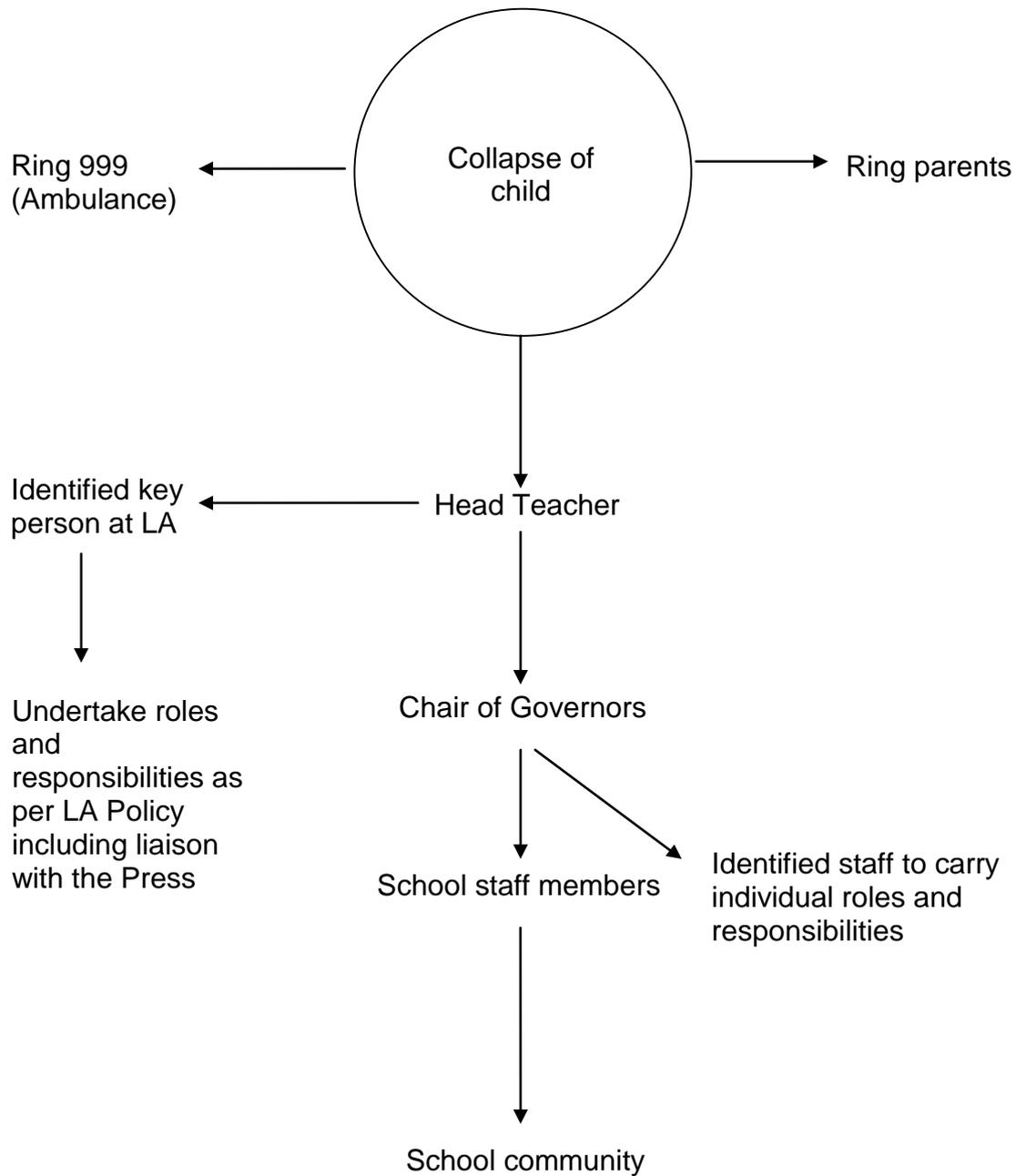
Information Sharing Pathway Following Death of a Pupil



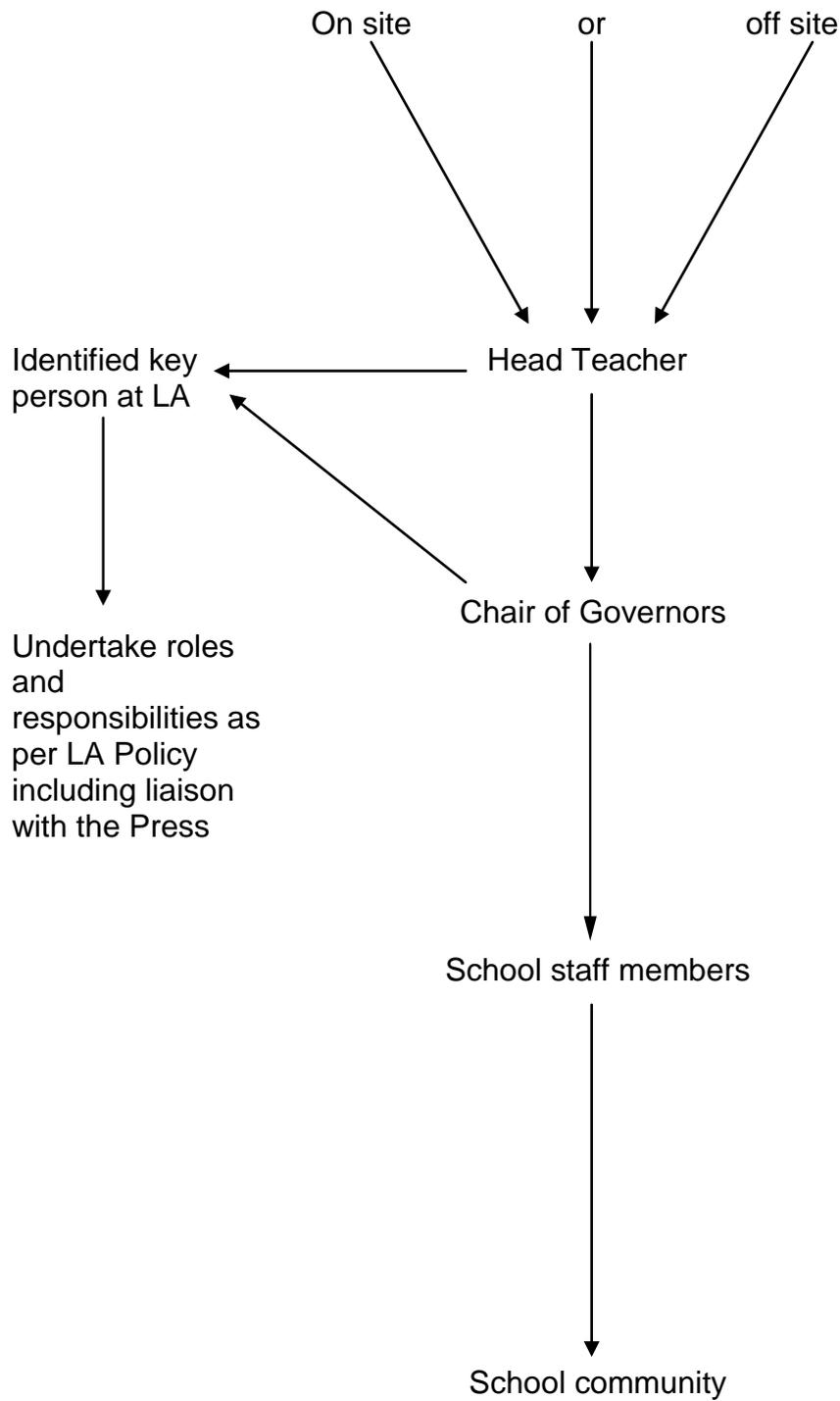
Information Sharing Pathway Following Death of Close Family Member of School Pupil



Information Sharing Pathway Following Death of a Child in School



Information Sharing Pathway Following Major Incidents



Template of a letter informing parents of the death of a member of staff

Date

Address

To all parent/carers

Dear Parents/Carers

Your child's class teacher/form tutor/head of year had the sad task of informing the children of the tragic death of <Name> who has been a teacher at this school for a number of years.

Our thoughts are with <Name>'s family at this time and in an effort to try to respond to his/her death in a positive way, all the children have been informed.

When someone dies it is normal for family and friends to experience many different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion, and children are likely to ask questions about the death that need to be answered honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.

The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try and answer their questions at school but if there is anything else you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to ring the school office and we will be more than happy to help you.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

Head Teacher

Template of a letter informing parents of the death of a pupil

Before sending a letter home to parents about the death of a pupil, permission must be gained from that child's parents.

The contents of the letter and the distribution list must be agreed by the parents and school.

Date

Address

To all parent/carers

Dear Parents/Carers

Your child's class teacher/form tutor/had the sad task of informing the children of the death of <Name>, a pupil in <Year>.

<Name> died from an illness called cancer. As you may be aware, many children who have cancer get better but sadly <Name> had been ill for a long time and died peacefully at home yesterday.

He/She was a very popular member of the class and will be missed by everyone who knew him/her.

When someone dies it is normal for their friends and family to experience lots of different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion. The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try to answer their questions at school but if there is anything more that you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to ring the school office and we would be more than happy to help you.

We will be arranging a memorial service in the school in the next few months as a means of celebrating <Name.. 's> life.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

Head Teacher

Guidelines for breaking news about a death to staff and Governors

- Arrange a staff meeting which should take place as soon as possible.
- Impart factual information. Never make assumptions or repeat what has been said by rumour.
- Give news sensitively and empathetically, being aware that people may react in different ways. Be cognisant of the relationships staff may have had with the person who has died.
- Ensure that there is someone responsible for telling people who are unable to attend the staff meeting, i.e. part time staff, peripatetic staff, lunch time supervisors. Consider the best way of imparting the information to those absent, e.g. by doing home visit, by telephone, text or e-mail etc.
- Identify individual members of staff who feel able to:
 - a) support members of staff
 - b) support groups of children

The most appropriate person to support the children should be well known to them and trusted.

- Identify a member of staff who will liaise with the individual's family, to deal with staff condolences and any funeral arrangements (if necessary).
- Identify an appropriate member of staff who will take 'phone calls and/or direct them as appropriate. Try to establish a "protected" telephone line to ensure free flow of accurate information.

Telephone line providers may provide an additional line if the situation requires one.

- Identify a member of staff who will provide a newsletter for parents (see examples of letter templates) which should be sent the same day.
- Arrange a staff meeting at the end of the day to ensure staff are coping with the situation. Identify any unresolved problems or ongoing issues.

Ensure that those staff who live alone have contact numbers of friends in case of need.

- Identify sources of advice and support to access for help in coming to terms with the bereavement (see bereavement toolkit).

Guidelines for breaking news of the death to the children/young people

- Inform the children/young people as soon as possible about the death.
- Where possible, the pupils should be informed in small groups, i.e. class or tutor groups.
Identify those children who had a long term and/or close relationship with the person who has died so they can be told separately.
If appropriate, a special assembly could be held at a later time in the day to remember the person who has died.
- Allow the children/young people to ask questions and answer them honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.
- Allow the children/young people to verbalise their feelings.
- Allow the children/young people to discuss the situation and share their experiences of death.
- Be honest about your own feelings and talk about your relationship with the person.
- Avoid using euphemisms.
- Those children/young people who have had more involvement with the person should be given the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences either within the group or on a one-to-one situation.
- Ensure the children/young people understand that the death is nothing to do with anything they have said or done. It is in no way their fault.
- Reassure them that not all people who are ill or have had an accident will die and that many people get better.
- Put an appropriate time limit on the discussion. It is preferable to resume normal school activities as soon as possible thus ensuring minimal disruption within the school.
- Conclude the discussion with a prayer or special poem to remember the person who has died and their family.
- Be available for any child/young person who needs additional help and support.
- Refer to the bereavement toolkit for further guidance.

Things to consider in the days following the news of the death

- It is important to consider any cultural or religious implications and seek advice if necessary.
- Ensure nominated staff, with responsibilities for supporting staff and children, are available to do so.
- It may be necessary temporarily to provide staff cover for their normal activities.
- Identify an allocated quiet place where children, young people and staff can go if necessary.
- It is preferable for there to be minimum disruption to the timetable but some flexibility may be required.
- Try to engender an awareness of when people need help and support, particularly those who worked closely with the person who has died and secretaries/administrative staff who are taking telephone calls, dealing with parents etc.
- Through the nominated staff member who has responsibilities for liaising with the individual's family, ascertain their wishes about the school's involvement in the funeral, if any.
- Consider practical issues like:
 - putting an obituary in the paper, sending flowers to the home or to the funeral, making a collection etc.
 - who will attend the funeral, making a collection etc.
 - cover for any staff who may be going to the funeral.
 - transport to and from the funeral.
 - informing the parents of those pupils who will be involved.
 - possible closure of the school. If this is the case remember to tell lunchtime supervisors, site manager etc. in advance.

B. Winston's Wish School Information Pack

Introduction

Death is a subject that nobody ever wants to address. It is almost inevitable though, that at some point in every teacher's career, the school community will be affected by a death in some way or another. This might include the death of a pupil, the death of a staff member, the death of a pupils' family member, or the death of a key member in the school community such as a governor or popular visitor to the school.

The following pack has been designed by teachers, for teachers. It draws on the experiences of school staff and the input of Winston's Wish. The hope is that you will never have to use this pack. If however you do, it will give you confidence and plenty of ideas for how to deal with the subject in lessons, tutorials and assemblies, as well as on an individual basis.

Contained over the following pages are;

- Aids for speaking with a pupil about a death in their family
- Tips for speaking with pupils about death
- Learning ideas for classroom activities with National Curriculum references
- Assembly and whole school communication ideas
- Ideas for memorial activities

As you read the pack, make sure that you remain aware of your own feelings and emotions. Many of us will have to read these either having been affected by recent events ourselves, or having memories of past personal experiences.

For more help, advice or ideas please ring the Winston's Wish Helpline (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) on **08452 03 04 05** (<http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/>) and speak to our experienced practitioners.

How do I talk about it?

"My mum died and my life changed forever, it was the biggest thing that ever happened to me. My teacher never mentioned it."

Sometimes our natural reaction to death is not to talk about it. We assume that the bereaved person will not want to, that they will view us as nosy, and we fear that by mentioning it we will upset them.

The worst thing that could happen...already has! Most bereaved children will at some point be very glad to have the chance to talk about what has happened, and will appreciate that a teacher cares enough to ask about them and their feelings. Although the teacher involved with the quote above had acted with the best intentions, and had not wanted to upset their student, what the pupil perceived from their actions was that the teacher did not care. This only added to their hurt.

Following are some simple tips for speaking with young people about death.

- **Be honest.** It is not an easy subject for anyone. If you are upset too – do not be afraid to admit it. Model the fact that difficult feelings are ok, and totally normal. A recent post on our website from a school pupil said this; *"Miss B showed us this website, she wrote down some things about her Nan, and she started to cry when she told us that her boyfriend never met her Nan, and her Nan would love him"*

- **Use clear language.** Trying to avoid the death by using phrases such as “your loss” and “gone to a better place” can frustrate older children and confuse younger ones. A six-year-old who hears that her Dad has been lost will try to find him, because that is what you do when someone is lost. Simply use language which is real and clear; “I was really sorry to hear that your Dad died last week, how are you feeling?”
- **Expect questions,** but don’t feel pressured to provide immediate answers. Death often throws up many questions for us all. Some of these may seem straightforward and obvious under the circumstances, such as ‘How does smoking cause cancer?’ to the more complex ‘Why do some people die so young without warning?’ If there are questions that you are unable to answer, feel able to say so, and promise to look into providing an answer at a later point. There may be other questions where you have to admit total defeat...this is ok too.
- **Recognise** that every death and every reaction to it is unique. The way in which a child reacts to a death is dependent on their relationship with the person who died, the time of death in that child’s development, the nature of the death (was it expected after a long fight against an illness or was it sudden?), the child’s understanding of death, their support network and many other factors.
- **Don’t assume** anything. Ask the pupil how they feel, rather than projecting feelings that you might expect them to have. Also, expect that other children in a class might be affected by a death in an immediate family other than their own.
- **Allow time** and space for pupils to digest the news, find out the facts and discover exactly how they feel. For some, this may be their first experience of someone they know dying.
- **Moving on** - expect children (especially younger ones) to ‘move on’ fairly quickly. As adults we tend to remain in a feeling or thought for a lot longer than children. If we are sad and reflective, we may be so for many hours. Children may be distraught one moment and then the next, need to ask what is for lunch, or express annoyance that it is raining outside. Although this sometimes shocks us, this is completely normal, so try not to punish it.
- **Act early** to prevent rumours from spreading, or gossip being spread around the school. Our response to death is often something that we mask when in public. Some people mask it with humour. Among children this humour can be less tempered by social graces and so can be very hurtful, as can rumours about a death or an individual. Try to prevent these at all times, but remember that nasty words are sometimes born out of fear. This does not, and should not excuse them, but may help us deal better with the pupils concerned.
- **Try to normalise** the feelings that a bereaved young person shares with you. They are probably very worried that they are the only person who has ever felt this way. Assure them that feelings of anger, fatigue, fear, worry, stress, sadness, exhaustion, guilt, anxiety, frustration, loneliness, lack of focus etc are all a normal reaction to grief.
- **Acknowledge** that some days will be better than others. A bereaved pupil may arrive for registration one morning and seem totally fine. The next day, for an obvious reason, or for no apparent reason at all, they may seem completely different.

What are they feeling?

Children under 2 years old

Very young children and babies are not able to understand death. However, if a death occurs in the life of a child in this age group they experience the loss as a separation from someone they have an attachment to. And although children at this age do not have much language to express their loss they will react to it. They may search for the person who died; they may cry inconsolably or be withdrawn.

Children this age will also be affected by the emotional state of other important people in their lives. It is important that as normal a routine as possible is maintained for the child. They will respond to a steady, loving, interested environment which will enable them to continue to thrive. As the child grows, so will their ability to understand and use speech to express themselves and so there will be opportunities to talk about the person who died and help them build their own story. When a child this young experiences the death of a parent it is particularly important they are helped to know about the person as it is an integral part of their history.

Children aged 2 to 5

Children aged between 2 to 5 years think that death is reversible and that people who have died can come back. Their thoughts are characterised by what we call “magical thinking”. Children can be convinced that it was something they said or did or thought that caused the person to die. The flip side of this thinking is that they can believe their words, actions or thoughts can bring the dead person back. They need to be reassured repeatedly that the death was not their fault. Children’s thinking in this age range is also concrete – they cannot grasp abstract concepts or roundabout ways of saying things. Instead use specific concrete words such as “Mummy has died” and give specific explanations about why the person died. Don’t be afraid to be honest and tell your child if you don’t have an answer.

It is not unusual for children of this age to revert to behaviour patterns they had when they were younger such as bed-wetting, use of a security blanket or thumb sucking. Try to be tolerant. In time, these earlier behaviour patterns will probably disappear again, once family life resumes.

One of the most difficult aspects of a child’s grief at these ages is how they ask the same questions over and over again in an effort to begin making sense of their loss. Children are naturally curious and they want to make sense of what is happening in their world. Their repeated questions are not a sign that your explanations aren’t good enough - it is just the way they do things at this age. Reading books on death and loss, playing, drawing and giving them opportunities to identify and talk about worries and feelings will all help them deal with the loss. When they experience a death in this age range they are at their most helpless and are most dependent on adults to regain their balance.

Children aged 6 to 9

In this age range the child begins to develop an understanding of death as irreversible and something that will happen to all living things but they may be confused about it. It is not uncommon for children to think of death as something spooky, like a zombie or a spirit that comes to get you. It is important that their specific worries are spoken about, that they share bad dreams and are told that what they’re feeling is normal. Children are reassured by having their worrying and negative thoughts talked through, giving them skills and confidence to be in charge of them.

Children may display what you feel is an unhealthy curiosity with issues such as what a dead body looks like and what happens to a body after a person has been dead for some time. This curiosity is natural and they will benefit from clear explanations. They may worry about how the person who has died will eat, breath and keep warm. It is important to give them information and tell them that once someone has died, the body doesn't feel any more and they don't get hungry.

Children at this stage may complain of a sore tummy, headaches or just generally not feeling well. These are what we call 'somatic' complaints, where unexpressed feelings and emotions can lead to physical symptoms or discomfort. Somatic complaints are normal but it is important that routines are maintained while gently acknowledging when someone important dies.

Children this age may have difficulty expressing feelings verbally and may retreat into themselves. In dealing with their feelings of helplessness, you may notice increased aggression. It is important to avoid clichés such as "You're such a brave boy/girl". Children will interpret this that you want or need them not to share their feelings. They need you and other important people in their lives to show them that it's OK to express their feelings.

Children aged 9 to 13

In this age range children are much more aware of the finality of death and the impact the death has on them. They are able to understand death as both concrete and abstract.

Children may experience difficulties in their interactions with their peers. The death of someone important can make them feel different at the very time they want to be the same as everyone else.

It is important to find ways to build their self-esteem. Children at this age are beginning to think of the longer term consequences of the loss of the relationship. They are aware of the loss they feel in the present but also of the losses they will experience in the coming months and years when they encounter certain important milestones or occasions and realise that they won't be able to share these with the person who has died.

At this age, children are beginning to move away from dependence on the family and they start to form important relationships with other children. The death of someone important can easily destabilise them, leaving them feeling unsafe and more dependent on the family. Their ability to manage their feelings may be disrupted and lead to mood swings or more definite up's and down's in their feelings. Big emotional releases (such as anger or distress) are not uncommon but can be scary for children at this stage. They will benefit from your willingness to listen and your assurances that the feelings are normal.

Adolescents

Friends and peers are increasingly important as young people develop their ideas of who they are and what is important to them. They want to be accepted by other important people in their lives. Their bodies are changing, they are aware of all sorts of possibilities for themselves and are more aware of the future - their future. It is quite common for risk-taking behaviour to increase during adolescence as young people test the boundaries.

They may struggle to make longer term plans as the death of someone important causes them to reflect on "the meaning of life" and ponder on the question "what's the point?" Or you may find that they are so busy with different activities they don't stop to reflect. This can be an effective way of keeping intense feelings under wraps if they are worried about losing control of their emotions.

If you notice a teenager who is withdrawing, acting very matter of fact and detached, or angry and protesting, then remain available for them - but don't push. Your job is to remind them that you're there and if they'd prefer to speak to someone else you'll help them find peers or other trusted adults to support them. Although an adolescent's growing process is most like an adult's they are still going through important emotional development at this age and are not ready to manage adult responsibilities even if at times they think they are adult. They need to be reassured of your love and support and to know that the limits you set are still enforced.

A Death in the Family

Many of the ideas contained within this pack for assemblies and lessons are only appropriate when the school community as a whole has experienced a death, for example a teacher, a pupil or another staff member.

Perhaps a more common experience for teachers and LSW's is that of a pupil experiencing the death of a parent. Whole school or class activities will not normally be appropriate in this situation, but the needs of that individual pupil still need careful consideration. These hints, tips, and ideas will help you to engage with an individual pupil in such an instance. Remember, they may want to do all, some or none of these. They may want to talk straight away, or not for several months. Knowing that you are available, honest, understanding and trustworthy will be a great comfort to the pupil concerned.

The death of a parent or sibling is often a shocking thing. Even if a long-term illness has meant that the death was expected, no amount of preparation can make someone numb to the experience, nor should it.

What should I expect?

Often a pupil may be off school for a few days after the death. Immediately after the death the prospect of them ever coming back to school again can seem impossible for them to comprehend. Or, it may be the very thing that they want so that they can "experience normality" again and "take their mind off things". It is impossible to know quite how a pupil of yours may react. A simple phone call home can be a great way of determining this and also letting the family know that you care. No pupil has ever failed to be impressed by a teacher who went out of their way to make a tough phone call. A quick visit to the family home can also be especially helpful, and help you to get some idea of the family's frame of mind.

How should I tell the class?

Before they return to school, ask the pupil if they would like you to explain to other friends or classmates what has happened. They may like you to do it, or for you to do it together, or not at all – make sure the decision is theirs. During this chat though, it is good to remain confident in the fact that it is usually best if peers at school are told. They will find out at some point anyway, and so controlling the manner in which they do find out is often better than rumours circulating.

They may like to get straight back into things and be treated almost as if nothing has happened. The chances are that they will have been surrounded by grieving family members for days and all they want is a break from it. Equally they may want to answer questions from their classmates – this can help some children cope. Again, make sure the decision is theirs and that you are available to support them the whole time.

What can I do to make their return to school as easy as possible?

Whilst the pupil is off school, you may like to ask them if it is ok if you tell the rest of the class what has happened. If so, get the class to write letters or cards to them, assuring them of how sorry they are to hear the news, but also how much they are looking forward to them coming back and helping them with the school play, playing football, going to the shops together. This will be a great parcel for you to deliver to the family home, and will make the return to school much easier.

Keep the pupil informed about what is going on. Include what the class have been studying, but also some other news; who has been told off, who is going out with who and who fell off their chair in French! This simply keeps the bonds between you and the pupil strong, as well as keeping them up-to-date with their school life; they will probably be quite worried about falling behind.

Organise their first day back to be not quite normal. Get them to come in at break time, this way they can talk to who they want to rather than be subjected to all kinds of questioning before school. Maybe have some of their best friends meet them and chat together in the staffroom for a bit – make them feel special.

Will their behaviour have changed?

Maybe. This won't be a permanent thing, but immediately after the death they may not seem their 'normal' self. They may:

- Have less concentration.
- Be a lot more tired and therefore irritable.
- Have a heightened sensitivity to comments and remarks.
- Be so wrapped up in their own feelings that they fail to take the feelings of others into account, which can result in arguments and fights.
- Could have a lot of un-vented anger and frustration that their parent has died.

It is important that you recognise that some, or all these things may happen, and that you are ready to be patient and understanding. It is also important though that normal rules and expectations of behaviour are maintained. This can feel harsh in some circumstances, but a routine actually helps, and a lack of it will cause more problems within the class and amongst peers.

How long will it take before they are over it?

Nobody ever 'gets over it'. Their life has changed forever. Of course they will not always feel as emotional as they may do right now, and their life will return to a less shocked state, but it will be different for ever.

There is no hard and fast rule for grieving. Some people are hit by their feelings right away, others seem fine for months and then it suddenly strikes them, others manage to keep it very much under their control. Your pupil will appreciate being given a little time to come to terms with what has happened and be thankful of your patience.

Since his Dad's death he has been really difficult, but I struggle to tell him off as I feel bad – piling my problems on top of ones he already has.

Following the death of someone close to them, a child's behaviour may well be intermittently affected by their grief. They can sometimes sense a lack of control over their emotions, and may react in some situations in a way that you might not expect, or which is unpredictable.

If a bereaved pupil displays behaviour that needs to be challenged and punished it is right that this is done. Do not be afraid to use standard punishments for bad behaviour (detentions for not doing homework in the week of the funeral may not be appropriate but a detention for punching a peer would be). It is important though that your student understands exactly why they are being punished. Also, avoid using phrases such as

“What would your Dad say? Is this the way in which he would want you to behave?” This piles an enormous amount of false guilt, shame and emotion onto the young person, and is not fair.

They don't seem to be getting much support at home, what can I do to help them remember the person who has died?

There are many things that you could do with the pupil in order to help them remember the person who has died. You could help them to create a book of memories filled with photos, stories, cards and letters; you could suggest they make a memory box and talk with them about what they might include; you could hold a small candlelight ceremony with them; have a balloon release and let their messages rise to the sky; help them create a calendar of important dates and ways in which they could mark them; plant some bulbs in a pot which will become flowers dedicated to the memory of the person who has died.

You could also talk about a First Aid Kit, a collection of things that make them feel better on bad days.

Jack's Mum died last year. He is currently being very unsympathetic to another child in the class whose grandparent died last month. Jack says it is not as important to lose a grandparent. What do I tell him?

It sometimes seems natural to us, that a whole year after a death, a child should have learned what their feelings are, and be able to manage them. This is not the case though. Our emotions do not run in yearly cycles and it may take many months before a child experiences a thought or emotion for the first time. The death of a friend's grandparent may bring Jack's own feelings and thoughts to the surface, possibly for the first time.

Some children also automatically impose a hierarchy of death onto all situations. They may feel that the death of a parent is worse than the death of an uncle, and the death of an uncle more important than the death of a great grandparent, and the death of a friend somewhere in the middle. This may seem a natural thing to conclude, but it is not always true. As stated earlier, the relationship that the child had with the person who died is the determining factor, not the name given to that relationship. Some second cousins may in actual fact be a lot closer to a child, and do a lot more of their 'parenting' than their real parents – this may not seem obvious to an onlooker.

Encourage Jack (or your pupil in the same situation) to realise that their classmate is feeling very similar things to them a year ago. What could Jack suggest that would help them now?

C. Useful Helplines, Support Groups and Agencies

- **The compassionate friends.** National support group for families who experience bereavement. Will also offer resources 'on loan' to schools.
Helpline: 08478 683313
www.allianceofhope.org
- **Cruse.** National organisation that supports the bereaved.
Cambridge helpline: 01223 633536.
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk
- **Centre 33.** Voluntary organisation aimed specifically at 'young adults', defined as those under 26. Can provide information, counselling and support with bereavement & loss. Tel: 01223 316488.
www.centre33.org.uk
- **CAMHS.** Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
Brookside Clinic, Cambridge 01223 746001
Huntingdon 01480 415300
Peterborough 01733 777939
- **Childline.** National helpline for children and young people experiencing distress.
Emergency Helpline 0800 1111.
- **AICH.** Advice, Information, Counselling Huntingdonshire. A registered charity, which provides free, independent and confidential counselling to young people (aged 14 – 25) in the Huntingdon area: 01480 435061
- **The children's hospice for the eastern region:** Milton, Cambridge 01223 815100.
- **The Samaritans.** Tel: 08457909090
www.samaritans.org.uk
- **Winston's Wish.** Provides support for bereaved children up to 18, plus their parents and carers.
Family line: 084 5203 0405
www.winstonswish.org.uk
- **National Children's Bureau.**
Tel: 020 7843 6000
- **The Refugee Council.**
Tel: 020 7346 1134
- **The child bereavement trust.** Support and counselling for grieving families.
Tel: 08000288840
www.childbereavement.org.uk
- **Marie Curie.**
8 Wakeley Street, London, EC1V 7QE
Tel: 08000 902309 www.mariecurie.org.uk