

## **Ravenswood Community Primary School**

### **Loss and Bereavement Policy**

The death of a pupil, sibling or parent of a pupil, teacher, member of staff or governor will have a significant impact not only on the bereaved, but also on the remainder of the school community. A considered, planned and organised response is more effective than acting on impulse when one may be shocked and emotionally charged. It is vital that the school maintains a shared course of action that respects, at all times, the wishes of the bereaved family.

Although we are aware that preparing children fully is impossible, the school believes it is important to give children the opportunity to discuss feelings and explore various aspects of 'loss' appropriate to their age and experiences. From this, they will start to develop points of reference from which to begin, when trying to understand feelings associated with loss, change and bereavement. These feelings may include worry, anxiety, helplessness, panic, desperation and despair. The school recognises that there are many situations which trigger these feelings such as: death of a family pet; moving house; separation or divorce; loss of a cherished toy.

#### **Aims**

This loss and bereavement policy is intended to reflect our positive ethos and contribute to the caring community we wish to nurture. The main aims are:

- To ensure that all members of our community, faced with loss and bereavement are provided with support;
- This support includes the opportunity for the bereaved to express their feelings in a safe environment, to be given time to come to terms with their loss and access to specialist support if required;
- To be sensitive to the needs of the bereaved and to be respectful of their belief and customs;
- To equip the school to be able to respond to a bereavement in a practical way, including the allocation of roles and training for staff;

#### **Procedures**

- Once the school has been informed of bereavement the following actions will be taken:

- The Headteacher or in their absence the Deputy Headteacher should be informed immediately;
- Formal communication to all staff will be made by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher after consultation with the Chair of Governors;
- A staff meeting will be held to make staff aware of the situation. Time will be given for staff to come to terms with what has happened before pupils are told. Confidentiality is essential. An honest and open approach as to the cause of death will be taken to avoid rumour etc. If a death happens during the weekend or school holiday, the Headteacher will in consultation with the Deputy Headteacher and Chair of Governors, decide whether to contact other members of staff;
- Contact will be made with the family by the Headteacher or in their absence the Deputy Headteacher to ascertain the facts and offer support;
- The Leadership Team will agree, in consultation with the family, how pupils will be informed;
- Internal support mechanisms will be put into place, this may include for example: a named person to offer support to pupils or staff; a member of the church providing help. It is essential to allow pupils to articulate their thought and feelings. Sharing their grief in a supportive environment can help to facilitate this process. If necessary, the school may need to consider engaging a professional bereavement counsellor to work with the school community;
- Pupils will be informed in the agreed way;
- If appropriate a press statement will be prepared by the Headteacher and a strategy for dealing with the media agreed with the family. Advice may be sought from the LA Media Management Team;
- Discussion will take place concerning attendance at the funeral and any memorial service in accordance with the wishes of the family;
- A reintegration programme for a bereaved pupil returning to school will be set up by the Headteacher and the child's class teacher, in liaison with the family. The child will be asked which member of staff they would like as their first point of contact.
- Where appropriate a commemoration will be discussed with the family and school community. The involvement of the bereaved child and other pupils in the decision making process may help with the grieving process;

- Members of the Leadership Team will regularly review the management of the bereavement;

## **Implementation**

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all members of the school community, under the leadership of the Headteacher.

The PSHE Subject Leader is responsible for ensuring that the PSHE curriculum deals with issues of loss. They will provide advice and appropriate resources for lessons. They will also be the lead person in providing appropriate CPD for staff on bereavement and for providing resources to assist in supporting a bereaved child.

Specialist support for the child, family and other members of the school community will be accessed as required from the appropriate LA support teams or local hospice.

We recognise that all members of the school community have needs in dealing with bereavement.

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and PSHE Subject Leader will carefully monitor the bereaved child to ensure that their continuing needs are met.

## **Access and Entitlement**

At Ravenswood CP School we want all children to enjoy an education which helps them to fulfil their potential, discover their talents and instil in them a life long love of learning. We also want children to become independent and to be able to make a positive contribution to the community. Alongside this, we believe that developing children's self esteem and confidence is fundamental to their learning. We are committed to ensuring that every child, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability, achieves the highest possible standards.

Matters relating to loss or death are explored through the RE, PSHE and science curriculum. These issues are also addressed during collective worship.