RAVENSCOTE JUNIOR SCHOOL

BEREAVEMENT POLICY
2025 - 2027

Date of Approval		**Date of Review**	
November 2025		November 2027	
Signed	Amy Wells **Headteacher**	**Signed**	Emily Gibson **Chair of Governors**



Ravenscote Junior School

Bereavement Policy

Safeguarding Statement

At Ravenscote Junior School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all staff and pupils. We make every effort to provide an environment in which children and adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to talk if they are worried, believing they will be effectively listened to.

Well-being Statement

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

1. Rationale

Within a school community there will almost always be some pupils and staff who are struggling with bereavement; or sometimes the entire school community is impacted by the death of a member of staff or a pupil.

Pupils and staff need to be supported when they experience bereavements and other significant losses in the course of their lives while they are at school. This policy will provide **guidelines** to be followed after a bereavement. The aim is to be supportive to both pupils and adults, and for staff to have greater confidence and be better equipped to cope when bereavement happens. 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.

2. Aims

We aim:

- To support pupils and/or members of staff before (where applicable), during and after bereavement.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between members of staff, pupils, the family/carers and the community.
- To identify key staff within school and the Local Advisory Committee/EEEA Academy Trust to support this policy.
- To have clear expectations about the way school will respond to a death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all.
- To discern what support will be offered to staff/pupils if they have been bereaved.
- To ensure that all staff members are trained and able to recognise common symptoms and behaviours associated with grief.



3. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Liaising with the family of the deceased, along with the FLW.
- Where appropriate, communicating details of a death to pupils and staff as set out in this policy.
- Responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death, or appointing a member of staff to undertake these duties.
- Leading reintegration meetings for pupils or staff returning to school after a bereavement.
- Arranging for monitoring and support of any individual staff members who are supporting bereaved pupils or staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Submitting referrals to appropriate agencies to gain support for bereaved pupils.
- Alongside the Headteacher, participating in any multi-agency reviews as requested.
- Ensuring that all relevant information is recorded on the pupil's CPOMS records and shared with relevant staff members.
- Ensuring that relevant information is shared during transition periods, either within school or when a pupil transitions to a new school.

Family Link Worker

The Family Link Worker will be responsible for:

- Providing direct support to bereaved pupils.
- Signposting external support and resources available to bereaved pupils and families (see Appendix 2 and 3).
- Organising safe spaces for bereaved pupils to take a time out.
- Providing additional support during significant transitions e.g. when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school.

Local Advisory Committee

The Local Advisory Committee will be responsible for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy, and supporting the headteacher.
- Undertaking regular monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them.
- Assisting the headteacher, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death.

4. Supporting a bereaved pupil

Most grieving children do not need a 'bereavement expert' they just need people who care. Schools, just by carrying on with their usual day-to-day activities while being aware of bereavement, can do a huge amount to support a grieving pupil (childbereavementuk.org, 2020).



When the school are notified of a child having suffered a bereavement, communication with the family is vital (please see Appendix 1 for the RJS response when supporting a pupil following a bereavement). The Headteacher or a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team will contact the parents/carers to access accurate information, understand what the pupil has been told and to reassure those caring for the child. A discussion around what support may be needed for the child in school will also take place, this can be in the form of a safe place for the child to have in school or one to one sessions with trained staff.

Pupils who are bereaved through suicide, violent death or may have witnessed a death, will be particularly vulnerable. These pupils may experience PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and are likely to need skilled help and support which the school is able to access, but the informal support of familiar adults is still important. These children will be identified by the Headteacher and Lead DSL. Once identified a referral to supporting agencies will be made to offer counselling to these pupils.

School 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.

5. The death of a pupil or member of staff

Breaking the news to staff, pupils and families

- News of the death of a pupil or member of staff must be passed to the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team who will immediately try to obtain factual information, avoiding unnecessary rumour or assumption, which could only lead to further distress.
- Where possible the Headteacher will liaise directly with the family and agree exactly what information should be passed on to staff and pupils. All staff will be informed as soon as possible, ideally before the pupils, remembering staff that may not be in school that day.
- The staff team needs to be united and space should be given to anyone who is badly affected by the news.
- Discussions must take place with the affected family and their wishes considered before any information is given to the pupils.
- Pupils should however, be told as soon as possible to avoid rumour and uncertainty. If the family agree, this is best done via letter to parents/carers who can share the news themselves and provided appropriate support. If that is not possible, pupils should be informed in-familiar groups by someone they know, probably their class teacher, again remembering the pupils who may not be in that day. A large assembly is not usually ideal, particularly for young children. Opportunity should be given for pupils to ask questions and respond to the news.
- Guidance and support will be offered from the Senior Leadership Team.
- Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Headteacher.



The first few days

- As far as is possible, it is best to have as little disruption as possible in the school community.
- 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.
- If it is a teacher who has died, the class should be covered by another teacher from the school whom the children know well and feel comfortable talking to.

Beyond the first few days

- Following the death of a member of the school community a special assembly or remembrance service may be held as a way of saying 'Goodbye' and as a celebration of their life. This may take many forms, but will always be in accordance with the wishes of the bereaved family.
- If it is appropriate, discussions will take place with the family regarding attendance at the funeral, flowers and donations, being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.

6. The death of a pupil in school or on a school trip.

If a pupil dies in school:

- An ambulance shall be called immediately if not already alerted.
- Once the ambulance team reaches the pupil the pupil becomes the responsibility of the ambulance team and they will direct any subsequent actions.
- The Headteacher will ensure that the parents are contacted immediately.
- Staff must not impart shocking or worrying news to a parent if they are travelling in a car alone.
- A member of staff will be appointed to travel to the hospital either in the ambulance or in their own transport. The purpose of this is to be a familiar face to the pupil's family on their arrival at the hospital. This person will remain in regular contact with Headteacher.
- The steps outlined above in this policy should then be employed.
- The school will notify the Local Authority (LA) if there is a death in school, at the earliest opportunity. All press enquiries are to be directed through the Headteacher.

If a pupil dies on a school trip

- The adult with the pupil or the teacher in charge should telephone for an ambulance first and then contact the school to inform the Headteacher.
- RJS Emergency Plan "Operation Duke" procedures will apply/be followed.
- The school will then take the responsibility of contacting the parents.



- Once the ambulance team reaches the pupil, the pupil becomes the responsibility of the ambulance team and they will direct any subsequent actions.
- The steps outlined above in this policy should then be employed.
- The school will notify the LA, at the earliest opportunity.

7. An Expected bereavement / terminal illness

The death of a terminally ill pupil or member of staff should be planned for with full support being given before the actual event. Open discussion and realistic language should be encouraged. Once the pupil or member of staff dies then it is important that all emotional support is given and the need to mourn is recognised.

8. The impact of the death of a pet

The school should also be aware of the emotional impact the death of a family pet might have on a pupil or a member of staff. Emotional support should be offered and pupils and staff should be encouraged to be honest with their emotions and talk about their memories of their pets. Whilst much of this policy deals with the death of people we should not underestimate how important the death of a pet can be to pupils and staff.

9. Cultural and religious behaviours

The school will keep in mind the cultural attitudes and behaviours relating to a death and will make sure these needs are taken into consideration when putting support in place for those affected.

Appendix 1 - Supporting a Pupil Following a Bereavement

Action to be taken	By who	Completed
Immediate actions		
• Notify Mrs Wells (Mrs Brookes in her absence) upon receipt of e-mail/phone call regarding the bereavement.	Office Team	
• Reach out to the family via e-mail to express condolences. Within the e-mail – ➢ Explain that Mrs Morgan will reach out via phone over the next few days. ➢ Ask if they are comfortable with the news being shared with parents of the child's class via a letter.	Amy Wells	
• Notify relevant school staff (SLT, FLW, class teacher and any other staff who support the child)	Amy Wells	
• Notify the parents of the child's class via letter (if the family are comfortable with this).	Amy Wells	



• FLW to reach out via phone call. Within the phone call – ➢ Check when the child would like to return to school, be guided by the child/family. ➢ Provide signposting to services who can support the child and family. https://www.jigsawsoutheast.org.uk/ https://www.childbereavementuk.org/ https://winstonswish.org/	Sara Morgan	
• If the child is off school for an extended period of time, consider sending a card to them to maintain contact.	Class Teacher	
• Provide support/signposting to any staff who have been affected by the bereavement. ➢ Employee Assistance Programme ➢ https://www.mindmattersnhs.co.uk/ ➢ Acknowledging loss in education settings ➢ Mental Health Crisis Helpline on - ➢ 111 and select the mental health option ➢ Or 0800 915 4644	Amy Wells Zoe Tunney	
• Signpost staff to bereavement training/resources to enable them to support the child appropriately. https://winstonswish.org/bereavement-training-courses-schools/ https://www.childbereavementuk.org/ https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/traumatic-bereavement	Natalie Butcher	
• Plan how to respond to any questions from other children.	Class Teacher with support from Sara Morgan	
• Provide appropriate support for other children within the class who may have been affected (well-being adult check-in).	Class teacher Well-being adult	
• Record all information on CPOMS to ensure comprehensive and accurate records.	All staff	
• Consider the appropriateness of staff attending the funeral – consult with the family.	Sara Morgan to discuss with family.	



	Amy Wells to decide who will attend.	
• Add child to the monitored children list.	Natalie Butcher	
Actions for when the child returns to school		
Meet with family and child to prepare a support plan, including: • Safe spaces and an identified adult to talk to • Modified schoolwork expectations if required • Reduced timetable if required • Time out card (or similar) to utilise when feeling overwhelmed in a situation.	Class teacher Sara Morgan	
• As far as possible maintain normal routines in school.	Class teacher	
• Child to be welcomed back to school on the first day by class teacher and FLW.	Class teacher Sara Morgan	
• Check in with family and keep updated on how the child is doing in school (the frequency of this will depend on the circumstances).	Class teacher Sara Morgan	
• Well-being adult to check in regularly with the child (as required).	Well-being adult	
• Be alert to signs of distress or withdrawal, such as: ➢ Changes in behaviour or mood ➢ Decline in academic performance ➢ Peer relationship issues If these concerns exist, speak to a member of the DSL team.	Class teacher Well-being adult	
If required, submit a referral to Mindworks for further support.	Natalie Butcher	
On-going support		
• Be aware of significant dates that might affect the pupil, e.g. date of death, birthdays, Christmas, anniversaries. • Don't be afraid to acknowledge these potentially difficult times with the pupil if appropriate.	Class teacher Other staff working with child	
• Review the curriculum each term identifying any possible topics/books etc which could be a trigger for the child. Discuss with the adults how these difficulties might best be managed.	Class teacher	



• Pass on all relevant information to the next class teacher and ensure it is recorded on the transition spreadsheet.	Class teacher	

Appendix 2- Bereavement Support

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us
Winston's Wish	Helpline: 08088 020 021 https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/
CRUSE Bereavement Care	Helpline: 0808 808 1677 https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us
Hope Again (Youth site for CRUSE)	Helpline: 0808 808 1677 https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/
Mind	Helpline: 0300 123 3393 https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/
Place2Be	Helpline: 02079235500 https://www.place2be.org.uk/
Anna Freud Centre	https://www.annafreud.org/resources/children-and-young-peoples-wellbeing/
Grief Encounter	Helpline - 0808 802 0111 https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/
Kooth	https://www.kooth.com/
Child Bereavement Network	https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/
Childline	Helpline: 0800 1111 https://www.childline.org.uk/
Samaritans	Helpline: 116 123 https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/
Young Minds	https://www.youngminds.org.uk/



Jigsaw	Helpline: 01342 313895 https://www.jigsawsoutheast.org.uk/
Seeds of Hope Children's Garden	Helpline: 01483 547880 www.seedsofhopechildrensgarden.co.uk.

Appendix 3 – Suggested books

Death and grief	
Title	**Author**
Always and Forever	Alan Durant
A Shelter for Sadness	Anne Booth
Badger's Parting Gifts	Susan Varley
Goodbye Mousie	Robie H Harris
Lifetimes	Bryan Mellonie
Hamza attends a Janaza	Shabana Hussain
Michael Rosen's Sad Book	Michael Rosen
Rabbityness	Jo Empson
The Invisible String	Patricia Karst
The Memory Tree	Britta Teckentrup
What Does Dead Mean? - A Book for Young Children to Help Explain Death and Dying	Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas, OBE
Love will never die	Clare Shaw
Remembering	Dianne Leutner
Someone I know has died	Trish Williams
When dinosaurs die - A guide to understanding death	Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown
The Hare-Shaped Hole	John Dougherty
When someone is not expected to live (pre-bereavement)	
As Big as it Gets	Julie Stokes and Diana Crossley
Cuddles are Forever	Justin Brown
Ida, Always	Caron Levis
Golden Flowers for Little Dragon	Ffion Jones
The Window	Laura Gehl
The Secret C: Straight Talking About Cancer	Julie Stokes
Only one of me - A love letter from Dad	Lisa Wells, Michelle Robinson and Tim Budgen
Only one of me - A love letter from Mum	Lisa Wells, Michelle Robinson and Tim Budgen
For children with additional needs	
Finding Your Own Way to Grieve	Karla Helbert
I Have a Question about Death: Clear Answers for All Kids, including Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other Special Needs	Arlen Grad Gaines and Meredith Englander Polsky



When Somebody Dies	Hollins and Sireling
When Mum Died	Hollins and Sireling
When Dad Died	Hollins and Sireling

