



Bereavement Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy covers student and staff deaths, for staff members who lose a family member there is specific guidance relating to this in our special leave policy.

From time to time every college experiences the death of a student, member of staff or an extended family member. Students and staff need to be supported when they experience family bereavement and other significant losses in the course of their lives whilst they are at college/work. The trauma of bereavement can have a profound effect on the college community. It is important for our Trust to reflect upon an appropriate response to bereavement and to develop flexible contingency plans that reflect how the Trust and its colleges could or should respond in a tragic situation.

As a Trust we understand that the communication of any death within our community must be planned and handled with great sensitivity. Whilst recognising the need to act quickly, we will ensure that the family of the deceased have been consulted prior to any wider communication through the colleges.

The trust and its college are committed to the emotional health and wellbeing of its staff and students and we work towards this all aspects of college life and to provide an ethos and environment that supports and prepares students for coping with separation or loss of a loved one.

2. Guidelines

To be followed in the event of a death of a student or former student;

We will ensure that staff are prepared to receive the news of a death within each of the colleges and respond in an appropriate manner. Should we receive the news of a death in ALL cases the person receiving the news will;

- Confirm the information, and check all details have been taken down accurately
- Share the news as soon as possible with the Principal/SLT/CEO
- CEO contacts the chair of the Board of Directors and Advisory Group ASAP

Within each of the colleges the AP/VP with pastoral responsibility will be the primary point of contact.

- The principal should be notified immediately by whoever has received the information, in the absence of the principal this should be fed down to the Vice Principal. It is essential that the principal or designate clarifies that this information is correct and accurate before taking any further action. Once clarified the Principal or Vice Principal will then inform the Board of Directors.
- The Principal or designate will then contact the family of the student to offer their condolences.
- The Assistant Principal/Vice Principal with pastoral responsibility will then contact Student Services /MIS to notify them and ensure records are updated.

- If the death is of a current student, the principal will email all staff and students to make them aware. Support available will be outlined in the email
- If the circumstances of the student's death is likely to attract attention from the press then all information will be handled by the principal.

The following support will be offered to the college community;

- Drop-in counselling session will be offered to support students
- Progress Tutors and Senior Progress Tutors will be available to provide one to one support should any student require this.

3. In the event of a student suicide

The above will take place with the addition of the below;

- Samaritans will be contacted by the AP/VP where appropriate to offer support for staff
- AP/VP will contact the Educational Psychologist should students require further help and support.
- Close friends of the deceased should be identified by teachers and progress tutors. Direct contact will be made to these students outlining the support available both internal and external to the college.

4. The sudden death of a parent or close relative (students only)

In the case of a death of a family member of a student, if the death happens whilst the young person is still at college then the wishes of the family should be strictly adhered to in terms of next steps and notifying the student.

Following the death of a family member, it can be expected that the bereaved student may have reduced capacity for college work. The bereaved student/member of staff may need extra help at a later time, when working capacity becomes normal again.

5. The death of a member of staff

We acknowledge that if such a death occurs it is doubly traumatic for the staff supporting the students but also grieving on a personal level for a colleague. Should we receive the news of the death of a member of staff, the Principal will consider the following alongside carrying out the above mentioned actions;

- Informing all staff
- Allow time for grieving
- Allow staff to share about how they feel about what has happened

6. The death of a member of the wider college community

The approach taken will be tailored to meet the needs of the individual circumstances.

- Upon receipt of information that a member of the schools wider community had died, the Principal should be informed immediately. In their absence the Vice Principal.
- The Principal will seek to verify the accuracy of the information received before informing the relevant members of the college community such as senior staff.
- The Principal will arrange an appropriate condolence message to be sent to the next of kin/organisation on behalf of the college. The Principal may also choose to attend the funeral or ask a member of the senior leadership team to represent the college where it would be appropriate to do so.

7. Funerals procedures

When a funeral has been planned for the deceased, it is essential that the college is sensitive to the family's culture and abides by the family's wishes. The family may welcome involvement of members of the college community but equally may wish to keep the funeral private. The Principal will identify which staff and students may want to attend and the practicalities of issues such as staff cover.

8. Return to college

It is essential that all staff are mindful of students who are bereaved especially on their return to college and as long as necessary thereafter, particularly around anniversaries and other significant dates.

9. Managing an anticipated death and the terminally ill (students only)

The Trust and its colleges will ensure that appropriate communication has taken place and is ongoing with the family to support those likely to be most affected before and after the death. We see it as our responsibility to support adults, children and young people within our community who have to face the painful reality that a parent or someone close to them is terminally ill. When supporting children and young people who are experiencing anticipatory grief we will;

- Confirm the facts concerning the students sick relative or friend
- Communicate the information as appropriate
- Never give the young person false hopes
- Discover what the student has been told of the illness
- Allow the student to talk freely about the person concerned in an appropriate setting
- Be honest, if we do not know the answer we will say so
- Not inform the student about any progression concerning the illness unless the family have given permission to do so.

Appendix A

Child Bereavement UK – www.childbereavement.org.uk A bereavement support service for children who have suffered loss

Wintons Wish – www.winstonswish.org.uk A useful website offering practical ideas for helping those bereaved in the family and college community.

Cruse Bereavement Care – www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk – An organisation offering local bereavement support to both adults and children

Child Bereavement – www.childbereavement.org.uk A bereavement support service for children who have suffered loss

Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) – www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk - CBN supports professionals working with children and young people that are bereaved.

Hope Again – www.hopegain.org.uk Support for young people to cope with a bereavement

Facing the Future – www.facingthefuturegroups.org Support groups for young people who have been bereaved by suicide

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) – www.uk-sobs.org.uk Aims to provide a safe confidential environment in which bereaved people can share their experiences and feelings.

Support After Suicide Partnership – www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk A network of organisations including PAPRYUS, that support people who have been bereaved or affected by suicide.

HopelineUK – 0800 068 41 41 – Support for young people with suicidal thoughts