



Bereavement Policy

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2. Version control

Date	Version	Revision	Owner
01/07/19	1.0	New Policy	Future Generation Trust Policy Team
16/05/23	2.0	Scheduled review	Future Generation Trust Policy Team

3. Introduction and Aim

For the purpose of this policy the term 'Family Professional' will refer to the post of Family Liaison Officer, which exists in some FGT academies, or a designated teacher/member of the administrative team who fulfils liaison responsibilities.

The Children's Act 2004 aimed to ensure that the welfare of the child was paramount, working in partnership with parents to protect the child from harm.

The Children's Act 2004 supplemented the 1989 Act and reinforced the message that all organisations working with children have a duty in helping safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All intentions of this policy endorse that aim as we endeavour to counter any adverse effects of bereavement and maintain pupils' emotional well-being.

The first point of contact with regard to bereavement will often be the Academy Office. They will then direct all communication to either the Family Professional and/or Headteacher.

4. Objectives

The core objectives of the policy are:

- To support pupils and/or staff after a bereavement and/or after a diagnosis of incurable illness of any person related to or impacting on a pupil or member of staff;
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between the academy, family and community, identifying key relevant staff;
- For families to recognise the impact of death and dying within the family or community and to promote open communication with school;
- To create an open and transparent culture regarding death and dying. To encourage all members of the school community to talk openly, according to need, about their experiences of loss and grief.

5. Procedures in the event of sudden death of a child

- Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Family Professional (may delegate to Headteacher or relevant staff) and their wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.
- Although pupils may have been made aware through other means such as social media, Future Generation Trust's procedure is to inform staff before pupils.
- Staff will be informed before pupils and be prepared (through prior training) to share information with pupils in age appropriate ways as agreed for each individual circumstance.
- Pupils who are affected will be informed, preferably in year groups, by someone known to them
- A bespoke letter relevant to the specific circumstances should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed to parents/carers.

- The 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 and pupils affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate (see *Appendix 1*).
- In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial Academy closure in some circumstances.
- Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Headteacher and CEO. The Chair of the Trust Board and Local Governing Body will be kept informed.
- The 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.

6. Procedures in the event of sudden death of a member of staff

- Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Headteacher (may delegate to Deputy or relevant staff) and their wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.
- Although pupils may have been made aware through other means such as social media, Future Generation Trust's procedure is to inform staff before pupils.
- Staff will be informed before pupils and be prepared (through prior training) to share information in age appropriate ways as agreed for each individual circumstance.
- Pupils who are affected will be informed, preferably in year groups, by someone known to them.
- A bespoke letter relevant to the specific circumstances should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed to parents/carers.
- The 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 and pupils affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate (see *Appendix 1*).
- In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial Academy closure in some circumstances.
- Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Headteacher, and CEO. The Chair of the Trust Board and Local Governing Body will be kept informed.

7. Procedures in the event of sudden death of a family member or friend

- Office staff or the Class Teacher may be the first point of contact in the event of the Academy being notified of a child experiencing the sudden death of a family member or friend. Once they have been made aware they should notify the Headteacher and Family Professional at the earliest opportunity.

- Contact with the family should be established by the Family Professional or Headteacher depending on the wishes of the family. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.
- Family Professional to make regular contact with the family taking into consideration their wishes. This should be accommodated to meet the individual needs of the family.
- Family Professional to discuss the family support available in school. E.g. nurture intervention
- Family Professional to liaise with relevant agencies supporting the child / family or refer the family to supporting agencies at the wishes of the family.
- Family Professional to share the wishes and feelings of the family with key members of staff and update them accordingly.
- Staff will be supported through training and resources to complete nurture sessions for pupils to manage their own wellbeing.

8. Procedures in the event of an anticipated death

- Contact with the family should be established by the Family Professional or designated person (this may be delegated to the Headteacher) and their wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.
- Family Professional or designated person to make regular contact with the family taking into consideration their wishes. This should be accommodated to meet the individual needs of the family, the Academy, and pupils. Therefore, can take place in school, or at the family home (Two appropriate members of staff to attend.)
- Family Professional or designated person to discuss with the family support available in school e.g. nurture intervention.
- Family Professional or designated person to liaise with relevant agencies supporting the child/family e.g. hospice care / Macmillan.
- Family Professional or designated person to share the wishes and feelings of the family with key members of staff and update them accordingly.
- Staff will be supported through training and resources to complete nurture sessions for pupils and to manage their own well-being.

9. The role of the Headteacher

- To ensure the effective implementation of this policy at their Academy.
- To liaise regularly with the Family Professional as required.
- To respond to media enquiries.
- To keep the CEO, Chair of the Trust Board and the Local Governing Body informed accordingly.
- To implement bereavement support training and ensure ongoing training is available to all staff.

10. To monitor staff awareness, wellbeing and confidence levels ensuring staff are fully supported as necessary.

The role of the Family Professional under the direction of the Headteacher, to ascertain family wishes when death related news breaks (including diagnosis of incurable illness).

- To maintain contact with the family both by telephone and in person as is appropriate.
- To monitor progress and liaise with external agencies and seek outside support as required.
- To support a bereaved child's transition back into school.
- To work closely with the family and key staff to identify and manage significant dates e.g. fathers day, mothers day.
- To sign post families to relevant support networks.

11. Monitoring & Review

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the designated Family Professional at each academy.

This document will be reviewed every three years by the Future Generation Trust Board.

Policy adopted on: 16 May 2023

Review date: May 2026

Signed: Fliss Dale

Designation: Chair of Trust Board



Coping with Bereavement

Where to seek further support We are here to help

FREEPHONE NATIONAL HELPLINE:

Winstons Wish – Parents/Carers and professionals can call the National Helpline for free on **08088 020 021** for ongoing support and advice Monday – Friday 9am- 5.30pm.

ONLINE

For parents and professionals visit – www.winstonswish.org

For young people visit www.help2makesense.org

EMAIL SUPPORT

Anyone requiring support and advice can email ask@winstonswish.org

ONLINE

CHILD BEREAVEMENT UK – www.childbereavementuk.org

Support for if a child is facing a bereavement – supports families

FREEPHONE NATIONAL HELPLINE

Child bereavement UK – 0800 02 888 40

Supports families who are facing a bereavement

CHILD BEREAVEMENT NETWORK

The hub of all organisations offering support to bereaved children and young people.

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Books and Resources

The Huge Bag of Worries – by Virginia Ironside and Frank Rogers

A story to encourage primary aged children to talk about and share their worries

Stepping Stones Postcards – available from The Childhood Bereavement Network

These cards for young people offer suggestions and prompts on how to let others know how you are feeling when someone important is seriously ill.

There is no such thing as a Dragon – By Jack Kent

A simple and effective story for younger children about the importance of talking about challenges facing a family before they become overwhelmingly large.