

# BEREAVEMENT POLICY

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## Document Control

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## Contents

Section		Page
1	Introduction and purpose of the policy	3
1.1	Background and rationale	3
1.2	Policy links	4
1.3	Purpose of the policy	4
2	Our charter for bereaved children and young people	5
3	Safeguarding, confidentiality and recording	6
4	Roles and responsibilities in dealing with bereavement	6
4.1	Role of the governing body	6
4.2	Role of the head teacher	6
4.3	Role of the safeguarding team	7
4.4	Role of all staff	4
4.5	Role of the local authority	4
5	Procedures	8
5.1	Pre-bereavement	8
5.2	Following a bereavement	8
5.3	Following a sudden and unexpected death - suicide	10
5.4	Following a sudden and unexpected death - homicide	11
6	Equality and inclusion, values and beliefs	11
7	Young asylum seekers and refugees	11
8	Supporting staff	11
8.1	Support for bereaved staff	11
8.2	Staff training	12
9	Curriculum	12
10	Additional information and links	12
10.1	National support services and support resources	13
10.2	Local support services	14
	Appendices	15

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background and rationale

Our school has a supportive, family ethos where everyone is encouraged to achieve their potential. We build positive relationships, celebrate diversity and promote tolerance. We believe good manners and respect for each other are of the utmost importance and expect the highest standards of behaviour. We work together in collaboration and are committed to furthering our learning. We believe that to unlock potential in all our children and all our staff our core objective is simply:

**TO CREATE A COMPELLING LEARNING EXPERIENCE.**  
We do this by believing in people and positive relationships.

Around 41,000 children are bereaved of a parent every year in the UK. That's nearly two children under 16 every hour. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, sibling, friend or other significant person<sup>1</sup>. As of Sept 2020 we have 63 children who are known to have experienced bereavement, which represents approximately 5% of our pupils.

Experiencing a bereavement can make children more vulnerable. Bereavement, whether it is an expected death because of illness or a sudden and unexpected death or suicide, is something that can impact on members of our school community at any time.

Our school is committed to the emotional health and well-being of its staff and pupils. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that supports pupils to cope with bereavement.

This policy is for all staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school. It provides guidelines and procedures as to how our school can best prepare for, and respond to, bereavement in the school community.

We recognise that members of the school community will be affected by a range of losses including separation and divorce. Some aspects of this policy may also be helpful in these cases.

This policy was based on an exemplar developed by the national charity Winston's Wish. It has included input from our staff, our governing body, our school nurse, parents and carers and pupils.

## **1.2 Policy links**

This policy also links to the following other policies we hold in school:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Compelling Behaviour Policy
- Equality & Community Cohesion policy

## **1.3 Purpose of the policy**

This bereavement policy supports us to provide effective support to pupils and staff before and after bereavement. It covers both expected and unexpected deaths.

Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some children and staff require. However, we also need to be prepared to call on more specialist support where there is a sudden and unexpected death, or where the impact of a bereavement is complex.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- enhance effective communication at a difficult time
- clarify the pathway of support between school, family, community and services

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<sup>1</sup> Winston's Wish <https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/facts-and-figures/>

- make best use of the support available in school, the Local Authority and the wider community.

## 2 Our charter for bereaved children and young people

To help us meet the objectives of this policy we have adopted the [Winston's Wish Charter for Bereaved Children](#) and will display this in appropriate staff areas and on our website.

<b>B</b>	<b>Bereavement support</b> Bereaved children need to receive support from their family, from their school and from important people around them. We will signpost them to specialist support if needed.
<b>E</b>	<b>Express feelings and thoughts</b> We will help bereaved children to find appropriate ways to express all their feelings and thoughts associated with grief, such as sadness, anxiety, confusion, anger and guilt.
<b>R</b>	<b>Remember the person who has died</b> We understand that bereaved children have the right to remember the person who has died for the rest of their lives. We will support them to share special and difficult memories.
<b>E</b>	<b>Education and information</b> All children, particularly bereaved children, are entitled to receive answers to their questions. They also need information that clearly explains what has happened, why it has happened and what will be happening. We will strive to enable children to have their questions answered, on an individual basis, working with parents and carers or through support services.
<b>A</b>	<b>Appropriate response from schools and colleges</b> Bereaved children need understanding and support from their teachers and fellow students without having to ask for it. We will provide training to staff within the Safeguarding, Pastoral and Additional Needs teams to ensure this happens.
<b>V</b>	<b>Voice in important decisions</b> We will work with families to encourage them to involve bereaved children in important decisions that have an impact on their lives such as planning the funeral and remembering anniversaries.
<b>E</b>	<b>Enjoyment</b> We will support the bereaved child's right to enjoy their lives even though someone important has died.
<b>M</b>	<b>Meet others</b> We will try where possible to enable bereaved children to benefit from the opportunity to meet other children who have had similar experiences.
<b>E</b>	<b>Established routines</b> We will endeavour, whenever possible, to enable bereaved children to continue activities and interests so that parts of their lives can still feel 'normal'.
<b>N</b>	<b>Not to blame</b> We will help bereaved children to understand that they are not responsible, and not to blame, for the death.
<b>T</b>	<b>Tell the story</b>

	We will encourage bereaved children to tell an accurate and coherent story of what has happened. We know this is helpful to them particularly if these stories are heard by those important people in their lives.
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### **3 Safeguarding, confidentiality and recording**

We follow our school's safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that the welfare of the child remains paramount throughout, and that all children are protected from harm.

It is important to maintain confidentiality throughout the handling of any incident or disclosure. However, pupils will need to be made aware that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

To retain the trust of pupils and parents and carers, we will ensure that the sharing of appropriate information is kept to a minimum. Sensitive information will only be disclosed internally or externally with careful attention to the rights and needs of individuals and in line with general data protection regulation.

If a child is suffering from trauma, we will share this as appropriate with staff, but not necessarily the details of their experience.

We will discuss with the bereaved child and their family which adults in the school community they would like to be the main point of contact for support.

We will use our usual school system (MyConcern) to record when a child has experienced a close bereavement, is at risk of suicide or has made a suicide attempt.

### **4 Roles and responsibilities in dealing with bereavement**

#### **4.1 The role of the governing body is to:**

- approve the bereavement policy and ensure its implementation
- ensure the policy is reviewed every three years or when national or local policy directs a change
- ensure that appropriate attention is given to how bereavement issues are addressed within the curriculum
- ensure that approaches to bereavement are respectful of religious and cultural values and beliefs
- ensure that staff are given appropriate opportunities for training, reflection and access to support if they need it.

#### **4.2 The role of the head teacher and senior leadership team is to:**

- lead a whole-school approach to the effective management of loss and bereavement including ensuring appropriate training and support provided for staff
- contact the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) (See Appendix 3) in the case of a sudden and unexpected death or suicide – key professionals would be expected to be involved – e.g.

Educational Psychologist, Education Welfare Officers, #Thrive and a network of other professionals across the borough

- be the first point of contact for family/child/staff directly affected by a bereavement
- record bereavements affecting children
- designate liaison and support to other trained members of staff when appropriate
- monitor progress in supporting those impacted by a bereavement and liaise with external agencies
- keep the governing body appropriately informed
- deal with media enquiries in partnership with the CIRT

#### **4.3 The role of the safeguarding team in our school is to:**

- access bereavement support training and cascade learning to other staff if appropriate
- know how to support a child when they are distressed and how to refer to specialist support if needed
- know how to access support for themselves, for other staff and for the family, if advice or information is needed

#### **4.4 The role of all staff in our school is to:**

- inform the head teacher at the earliest possibility if they hear about a death of someone in the school community
- know how to report a concern if the bereavement or sudden and unexpected death has placed a child at significant risk of harm
- know how to access support for themselves
- have a basic understanding of a child's needs when facing loss and change
- provide individual support as and when needed and in consultation with the head teacher and safeguarding team

#### **4.5 The role of the local authority**

Following a suicide in the school community, or a particularly sudden or difficult bereavement we would engage the support of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) (See Appendix 3).

Rochdale CIRT is led by the Educational Psychology service and is comprised of a network of professionals from across the borough who work with children and staff. The role of Rochdale CIRT is to:

- Liaise and plan directly with the head teacher or senior member of staff with responsibility to co-ordinate the response. Support the planning of practical arrangements for such things as supporting families directly affected, talking to school staff and pupils, informing all parents/carers and liaising with the communications department and media.
- Offer Psychological First Aid (PFA) sessions as a way of providing direct emotional support for groups of children and young people and / or school staff. PFA aims to reduce initial distress, normalise responses and promote coping strategies
- Deliver whole staff training around preparing for critical incidents and also around supporting children through trauma, loss and bereavement.

- CIRT can be contacted on 01706 926 400 to obtain advice and / or request their involvement.

## **5 Procedures**

### **5.1 Pre-bereavement**

In some situations, it is known in advance that a death is going to occur. This is usually because of a long illness.

In cases where this is an adult within the school community, individual conversations will be held with the head teacher in terms of support, information exchange and practical considerations and the head teacher will always provide time for the adult to spend time with loved ones prior to the bereavement.

When the expected death is of a child or a member of a child's family a nominated senior member of staff will:

- contact the family to confirm factual information and explore what support could be provided to them
- identify a key point of contact in school in terms of information exchange and to update when things change
- ensure that all relevant adults are clear about what information has and needs to be shared with the pupil
- keep lines of communication open to ensure that all information is received in a timely fashion
- explore the possibility of signposting to other organisations such as Winston's Wish or a local hospice
- look to involve faith or community leaders when appropriate and with the agreement of the family
- explore what support for the pupils affected might look like in practice
- arrange training for specific members of staff to ensure all involved are confident in their ability to support the pupil
- if appropriate, consider and reflect on how to communicate with the wider school community for example the pupil's class mates
- if appropriate, begin conversations around practical considerations in the events leading up to the death and following the death

### **5.2 Following a bereavement**

We will consider each individual situation carefully to ensure that the response from the school is sensitive, accurately reflects the gravity of the situation, and involves those affected as appropriate.

**As an immediate response we will:**

- contact the deceased's family with the aim to establish the facts and avoid rumours
- consider any religious beliefs that may affect the timing of the funeral or impact on other aspects of the bereavement process
- find out, if possible, how the family would like the information to be managed by the school



- allocate member(s) of staff to be the key point(s) of support for the affected child / young person or children / young people and ensure there is support in place for the staff members if required
- send letters or cards of condolence to families or individuals directly affected
- will prepare a press statement, with support from the council's communications team if required and with due regard to the family affected (head teacher)
- inform staff of the death before pupils are informed, recognising that some pupils may have found out through other means. Where possible, staff will be prepared to share information in age-appropriate ways to make sure all staff have the same version of the event. Where this has not been possible, staff will be supported to share the information.
- inform pupils who are most directly affected (such as a friendship group), preferably in small groups, by someone known to them and in keeping with the wishes of the family and expertise of the school
- inform the wider school community in line with the wishes of the family.
- make small changes to the school timetable to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of the child or children affected by the situation. However, we will aim for minimal disruption to the timetable as this can offer a sense of security and familiarity.

#### **For the funeral we will:**

- find out the family's wishes and follow these in terms of the involvement of members of the school community (or not)
- identify which staff and pupils may want to attend if invited by the family and the practicalities of issues such as risk assessment, staff cover and transport. In some rare circumstances it may be appropriate to close the school
- organise tributes such as flowers or a collection in line with family wishes and the wishes of staff and pupils
- be sensitive to religious and cultural issues which may require the bereaved to leave during the school day and at short notice to be able to attend the funeral

#### **After the funeral we will:**

- consider whether it is appropriate to visit the child and family affected at home and plan a return to school
- ensure friendships are secure – peer support can be particularly important for a bereaved child or young person
- continue regular contact with the family and show we still care about them and their child over time
- monitor the emotional needs of staff and pupils and provide listening time and ongoing appropriate support
- consider practical issues and make thoughtful and sensitive updates to parental and other contact details when needed
- continue to assess the needs of children most affected, and record and plan for support accordingly.

#### **Longer term we will:**

- be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a child throughout their school life. So, we will record information and share with relevant people, particularly at transition points. This could include ensuring significant dates and events for the child are recorded and shared with appropriate staff for future reference.
- signpost families to bereavement support including that provided by Winston's Wish <https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/>

### **5.3 Following a sudden and unexpected death – suicide**

Suicide is not just a really difficult event to deal with, it also presents the unique risk of potentially being the trigger for another suicide.

As described in section 4.3 we will seek advice from the Critical Incident Response Team. As a school community we will make a response to a sudden death within two school days

It is necessary to maintain the structure and order of the school routine, while facilitating the expression of grief, and reducing the risk of imitative suicide.

In the case of suicide, we will refer to The Samaritans Step by Step Guide. <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/step-step/>

Information provided to the school community in the immediate aftermath of a sudden and unexpected death will depend on the age of the pupils but should be based on and reinforce:

- facts (not rumours)
- an understanding that death is permanent
- an exploration of normal and wide-ranging reactions to sudden and unexpected death – expressions of anger and guilt are entirely normal
- an understanding that, with support, people can cope
- an understanding that fleeting thoughts of suicide are not unusual
- an awareness of suicidal warning signs and resources available to help
- an understanding of expectations around funerals.

When discussing any suicide that has occurred, we will ensure that the information given is age appropriate and:

- is factually correct but does not include detail of the suicidal act itself and does not romanticise, glorify or vilify the death
- does not include details of any suicide note
- does not include speculation over the motive for suicide
- takes care with the language used – for example using phrases such as 'died by suicide' or 'ended his / her life' rather than 'committed suicide' or 'successful suicide', and saying 'attempted to end his / her life' rather than 'unsuccessful suicide' or 'failed attempt at suicide'.

### **5.4 Following a sudden and unexpected death – homicide**

The Childhood Bereavement Network and Winston's Wish estimate that around one child every day is bereaved of a parent or sibling through murder or manslaughter in Great Britain.

Children may experience profound and lasting shock, enormous anger at what has happened, rage at the person who caused their relative to die, deep fear at the perceived insecurity of the world around them. Sadly, in many cases, the person who caused the death is also known to the child, resulting in great confusion and a double loss, for example, if one parent kills the other and is then imprisoned. In some families, the child may have to move to a new house, school, area – away from familiar and comforting places and routines.

Winston's Wish recommend taking an honest and consistent age appropriate approach to talking with children about what has happened. It is not possible to shield them from what has happened completely. Winston's Wish can provide support to families bereaved in this way and further information can be found on their website: <https://www.winstonswish.org/death-through-homicide/>

## **6 Equality and inclusion, values and beliefs**

We recognise that there is a range of cultural and religious beliefs, customs and procedures concerning death. It follows that bereaved children and families may have differing expectations.

Some of these may affect matters of school organisation. We will source training and guidance to develop our understanding of the range of beliefs to best support pupils. We will work closely with our community partners and Local Authority officers.

We will present a balance of different approaches to death and loss. We will make pupils aware of differing responses to bereavement, and that we need to value and respect each one of these.

## **7 Young asylum seekers and refugees**

Many young asylum seekers and refugees have experienced the death of family members or friends, often in traumatic circumstances. This, and further traumatic experiences and losses, can have a devastating effect on their emotional and physical health, behaviour, learning and relationships.

Sudden traumatic death complicates the process of grief and mourning, as usual ways of coping may be overwhelmed. We will consult specialist mental health services where appropriate.

## **8 Supporting staff**

### **8.1 Support for bereaved staff**

We are aware that staff also experience bereavement. When this happens, we will ensure they are provided with support to take care of themselves, and to know where they can go for additional help should they need it.

This could include: their GP; Cruse Bereavement Care <http://www.cruse.org.uk/>; or staff counselling, information and advice available through the Local Authority and School's HR.

We will work within our leave of absence policy and if necessary, with the Local Authority School's HR department to ensure staff are provided with appropriate leave and support at a time of bereavement.

Teachers who are dealing with their own bereavement are encouraged to speak with their line manager about any areas of the curriculum which they feel uncomfortable to teach or want support to teach.

## **8.2 Staff training**

We will ensure that regular training is provided to the Safeguarding Team to support staff in meeting their roles and responsibilities as identified in this policy. Winston's Wish offers [training courses](#) and also a [free online training course for school staff](#).

## **9 Curriculum**

We use assemblies to address aspects of death – such as Remembrance Day, Holocaust Memorial Day or commemorative occasions. We also observe national minutes of silence and explain the purpose of this.

When appropriate, we respond to a tragedy or serious incident by discussing this in class having discussed as a staff team the language we will use to respond to the incident.

We have developed form times as safe spaces for discussion and teachers are provided with training on how to deliver this sensitive area of the curriculum within a safe, learning environment. We also point parents and carers towards appropriate advice on how to talk to their children about these events when necessary.

We will answer any questions relating to loss or death in a sensitive, age-appropriate, honest and factual way. Children and young people will not be expected to disclose any personal experiences but will be signposted to support if they want it.

We give children opportunities to learn about and discuss cultural and religious issues around death and encourage them to express their own responses and feelings.

## **10 Additional support and links**

### **10.1 National support services and support resources**

As part of our safeguarding work we will also signpost to appropriate sources of support for pupils and adults in the school community.

**Winston's Wish:** [www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org) Support information and guidance for bereaved children, young people and for those caring for bereaved families.

**Cruse Bereavement Care:** [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk) Support for anyone who has been bereaved.

**Childhood Bereavement Network:** <http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk> Find childhood bereavement support in your local area.

**Hope Again:** <http://hopeagain.org.uk/> A website for young people who have been bereaved.

**Papyrus:** <https://papyrus-uk.org/> Support and advice for young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person.

**Samaritans:** <http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/supporting-schools> A range of guidance and support for schools.

## 10.2 Local support services

**#Thrive:** <https://healthyyoungmindspennine.nhs.uk/thrive/> Support with managing emotions including Bereavement Support groups

**Once Upon a Smile:** <https://www.onceuponasmile.org.uk/> Provide emotional and practical support to a family following bereavement

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Talking about death and dying with students in school

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 nosey, and we fear that by mentioning it we will upset them. But, as we often say, the worst thing that could happen...already has. You are unlikely to make it

worse and, in fact, acknowledging and validating the experience that a child or young person is going through is likely to be helpful and positive to them.

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. Here are some of the most common pieces of advice we give to those people supporting a bereaved child or family:

### **Be honest**

Death 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, many children and young people tell us that they really appreciate and respect adults who are honest about their experiences and feelings.

### **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 may 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.

### **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 student how they feel, rather than projecting feelings that you might expect them to have. Be mindful that other children may be affected by a death, for instance, because of a close friendship, because this is their first encounter with death, or because they have experienced other bereavements. Allow time and space for students to digest the news, find out the facts and discover exactly how they feel. For many, this will be their first experience of someone they know dying and it will have a huge impact on them.

### **Be prepared for children to move in and out of grief**

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 may catch us off guard, this is completely normal, so try not to worry about it or second guess them on it. It is helpful to be accepting and encouraging of the dual, and apparently opposed needs that most children have. On the one hand they need to be able to engage in ‘normal’ activities and be treated the same as everyone else, on the other they need to know their grief is acknowledged and accepted and allowance is made for things that may have changed or be difficult for them. Even when children appear to be getting on with things as they did before and outwardly appear to be unaffected, this does not mean they don’t need access

to ongoing support. In particular, it is important to acknowledge their loss, for instance at anniversaries or other significant dates, and let them know that the door is always open for them to talk about their loss and how it affects them.

### **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 unkind words are sometimes born out of fear. This does not, and should not excuse them, but may help us deal better with the students 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.

## **Appendix 2**

### **How age and stage can affect understanding and grief**

Children's experience of a death can differ from adults'. The following provides a guide to a developmental perspective of how a child may understand bereavement. For a child with SEND, his or her functional level of understanding (rather than actual chronological age) will be the biggest factor in how the child reacts to a death and what he or she will be able to understand.

#### **Key Stage 1 – Ages 5 to 7 – Years 1 and 2**

Children of this age are beginning to understand that death is permanent; however, some confusion may still stand. When first told of the death, younger children may be mainly concerned with the 'when' and 'where' of the death. They may express concerns about their own future such as: 'What will happen to me? Who will meet me after school? Will I still go to Cubs?' Giving reassurance about everyday activities and arrangements continuing as normal, or clear explanations about alternative arrangements, will be helpful for the child.

Children may become clingy or more reluctant to see parents and carers leave. There may be a need to stick close to their parent to protect them from the mysterious occurrence that made their dad disappear or at least to be with them if it happens again. 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 we feel things like sadness and worry in our bodies too.

They can also feel that in some way they were responsible for the death, e.g. 'I was angry with him and shouted at him when he left for work because he wouldn't fix my bike. I refused to give him a hug. And then he never came home again. It's my fault.' It can be worth saying something like: 'You do know, don't you, that nothing you said or did made this happen?'

## **Key Stage 2 – Ages 7 to 11 – Years 3, 4, 5 and 6**

As children begin to understand more about death and dying, a death in the family may make them anxious about the health and safety of surviving members of the family. They may feel very responsible for their parent(s) and younger siblings and feel the need to keep a close eye on their safety.

Children this age can find it difficult to talk about their bereavement and express their feelings behaviourally, such as withdrawing from others or showing increased aggression. They may experience difficulties in their interactions with their peers, particularly as 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 avoid clichés like "You're being so brave" as children can interpret this as they should not share their feelings. They may need a safe space or quiet area away from peers to calm down or express their emotions with an adult.

Children of this age also show curiosity about 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, factual explanations. Children can also think of death as something spooky, like a zombie, or a spirit that comes to get you. Normalising feelings, talking about or drawing specific worries and sharing bad dreams can be reassuring, giving children skills and confidence to feel more in charge of them.

By the age of 10, children will usually have all of the bits of the jigsaw puzzle of understanding. They will even understand that they are able to cause their own death. They will appreciate clear and detailed information – beyond 'when', 'where' and 'how' the death happened, they will be interested in 'why'.



### **Key Stage 3 – Ages 11 to 14 – Years 7, 8, and 9**

In this age range young people 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. They begin to move away from dependence on the family and they start to form important relationships with other young people, however the death of someone important can easily destabilise them, leaving them feeling unsafe and more dependent on the family. Some older children and teenagers may feel internal conflict as a result of feeling a pull towards being with their peers at the same time as their own need or an expectation that they spend time with their 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. It is important to find ways to build their self-esteem. Young people 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. Talking through these future events and exploring ways of including the person can be helpful.

### **Key Stage 4 – Ages 14 to 16 – Years 10 and 11**

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 their future. Young people 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. It is quite common for risk-taking behaviour to increase during adolescence as young people test the boundaries.

Although an adolescent's thought 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 care and support and to know that the limits you set are still enforced. As always, if you have any concerns about a young person's safety it is vital you take a pro-active approach and apply your safeguarding policies and procedures.

## **Appendix 3**

**Supporting Bereaved children and young people in Rochdale**  
Information pack for nurseries, schools and colleges.



9807.10\_Bereavement\_Leaflets\_A4\_Large

**Supporting children following a bereavement: a guide for parents and carers**



9807.10\_Bereavement\_Leaflets\_A4\_Smal