



Bereavement Policy

'Death neither obeys the school timetable nor appears on it.....
it enters the classroom without knocking'

Winston's Wish

Notre Dame is fully committed to the emotional health and well-being of our students. We are passionate about providing an ethos, environment and curriculum that can provide support to all during difficult times, including a time of death or dying. By talking about these issues, children and young people will become more resilient and develop into emotionally accessible adults, so they are better prepared for life's challenges.

Notre Dame is committed to the Compassionate School Programme has signed up to the Compassionate City Charter for End of Life.

Aims and Objectives

- To enable students to become more resilient and develop into emotionally accessible adults, by openly talking about life challenges including death, loss and bereavement. To provide different opportunities across the curriculum to support this development.
- To create a compassionate school where all those who are affected by death, loss and bereavement feel supported and have access to compassionate friends, so they do not feel alone.
- To ensure affected pupils have support which is tailored to their individual needs.
- To identify key staff within school that can offer support and ensure they have appropriate training.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community in times of school tragedy e.g death of a teacher, pupil.

Promoting a Compassionate School

1. Death and loss will not be a taboo subject in our school. Through a whole school approach and different curriculum opportunities students will become more resilient to the impact of death and dying and develop into emotionally accessible adults as well as developing an understanding of bereavement, death and dying.
2. There will be named staff who will be Compassionate Friends and Champions. These staff will be able to recognise signs and behaviours associated with grief and understand what support can be offered to staff / students if they have been bereaved and where to signpost for support, especially in school holidays.
3. Pupils will be encouraged to become compassionate buddies so they know how best to support pupils who are affected by loss, death and bereavement.
4. The school will have quiet, safe places to talk and have supportive literature which is age appropriate and bereavement resources containing information for children and young people of all ages to use when they have been bereaved.
5. When a child is known to be affected by living with someone with a terminal illness or suffering from loss, death and bereavement there will be appropriate support given. If a Child has been bereaved it is important to involve them in decisions about how the school manages issues relating to their loss. Talk to the child about their preferred way of informing their peers and other staff about what has happened and about the support they need.
6. Children will have access to various tools that will help them during the school day e.g bereavement 'time out cards' and stickers and/or communication books which alerts teachers to the fact that the student's work may be affected as they try to cope with their situation and helps promote discussion between teacher and pupil.



Notre Dame Plymouth

When a Pupil of the school dies Procedures:

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Head teacher 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.
2. Staff should be informed before pupils and be prepared (through prior training) to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance.
3. Pupils who are affected should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them.
4. A letter to all school families affected should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed.
5. The school 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.
6. Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate.
7. Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Head Teacher

Notre Dame is aware that the impact of a significant bereavement follows a child throughout their school life so information should be recorded and shared with relevant people, particularly at transition points and trigger times such as birthdays and holidays.

RESOURCES TO HELP:

Local Resources

Jeremiahs Journey - <http://jeremiahsjourney.org.uk/>

Children from Plymouth and the immediate surrounding area can be referred by contacting the charities first Steps Advisory line, which can be accessed Monday to Friday between 12pm & 1.30pm. Telephone 01752 424 348. Bereavement support and pre-bereavement support if a parent has a terminal illness).

Patches <https://www.stlukes-hospice.org.uk/patches/>

For those children aged 2-19 who have loved ones that are under the care of St Luke's Hospice there is a pre bereavement service called 'Patches'. St Luke's has a dedicated support worker who works with children and families. For more information view the website

St Luke's Education Team www.stlukes-hospice.org.uk/plymouth-a-compassionate-city

National Resources

Cruse UK <https://www.cruse.org.uk/for-schools/bereavement-policy>

The Hope Again Website <https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/>

This is a youth website of Cruse Bereavement Care. It is a safe place where they can learn from other young people, how to cope with grief, and feel less alone.

Child Bereavement UK <https://childbereavementuk.org/>

They offer support for all families to have the support they need to rebuild their lives, when a child grieves or when a child dies.