### Parkhill Secondary School



# Bereavement Policy 2025-26







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#### **Definitions**

- Loss is the experience of being deprived of some-one or something of value.
- Grief is what you feel; the reaction you have to any loss in your life
- Bereavement is what happens to you
- Mourning is what you do to express your loss

The <u>Management Critical Incidents Glasgow City Council policy</u> to be followed alongside the following:

#### Introduction

Many young people experience bereavement. This can be due to loss of a parent, sibling, grandparent, other family members or a friend. Young people can experience loss of a pet or loved animal which can equally be as painful to a loss of a family member.

At Parkhill we understand that loss is wider than experiencing a bereavement. That key events that are negative or include loss can have a grief reaction, for example, loss from divorce, parental or family member imprisonment and illness. We also recognise that bereavement is unique to each set of circumstances and this policy includes a planned, open and considered approach to ensure that our school community is cared for so that their emotional well-being is supported.

"Statistically many children experience bereavement in the UK 41,000 children lose a parent before the age of 18. Every 22 minutes on average, a parent dies in the UK. 1 in 29 children and young people have experienced the death of a parent or sibling – that's at least one in every classroom."

It is almost inevitable that at some time our school will have to deal with death that impacts our whole community. Whilst this is not an easy subject to discuss, or think about, we are often not prepared when this happens. This policy is a commitment to develop our level of understanding about bereavement in school settings and acknowledging that we have a duty of care to support anyone in our school community who maybe experiencing a bereavement or loss.

Sometimes a member of our school community may need to look again at what happened to an important person that died as they grow older. We understand that all young people mature differently and their understanding of bereavement changes as do their responses and this can be based upon life experience and chronological developmental age. This is not unresolved grief, that different feelings can surface at different points and we are committed to adjusting our responses to support our whole school community.

As staff it is important to understand that grief and loss can be for life, so this policy aims to provide a framework rather than a list of actions. This will outline ways we can support in caring for the wellbeing of our school community.

#### Aims and Objectives of the Bereavement Policy

- To provide a framework for all staff, teaching and non-teaching, and to give guidance in how to support sensitively and compassionately in upsetting circumstances.
- To give clear expectations about how we at Parkhill will respond to the death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment that follows Glasgow's nurturing principles.
- To support our young people and/or staff before, during and after a bereavement.
- To meet the needs of all our young people and staff.

• For individuals in our school community to have the opportunity to talk about this bereavement, express their feelings, share their memories and develop coping strategies.

#### **Guidelines for Staff**

A death can affect the school community and depends on a range of circumstances:

- The role the deceased person had in school
- How well they were known by the community
- Circumstances surrounding the death sudden, suicide or violent deaths.

#### Different types of Grief

Type of Grief	What is it?	What am I grieving?	Some Signs
Anticipatory Grief	<ul> <li>Feel a loss that has not yet occurred.</li> <li>Typically felt when someone is suffering from an illness.</li> <li>Sense of grief when thinking of the future and imagining worst case scenarios</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Loss of life.</li> <li>Loss of connection.</li> <li>Loss of normal routine.</li> <li>Special plans or events that have to be cancelled.</li> <li>Worries about the future.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Feeling on edge and not knowing why.</li> <li>Re-experiencing feelings of past grief.</li> <li>Trouble focussing.</li> <li>Getting angry or upset at little things, especially things you can't control.</li> </ul>
Disenfranchised Grief	<ul> <li>Grief that is         experienced when the         loss is not         acknowledged or         validated by society.</li> <li>The loss is often         minimised or not         understood by others.</li> <li>More difficult for         grieving people to         process.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>May occur in losses such as the death of a pet or loss of a favourite toy.</li> <li>When the loss is not a death e.g foster care or adoption.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Trouble sleeping.</li> <li>Shame.</li> <li>Physical symptoms like stomach pains or body aches.</li> <li>Lowered self-esteem.</li> <li>Falling out with friends or family members.</li> </ul>
Complicated Grief	<ul> <li>Intense feelings of grief persist over time.</li> <li>Constantly thinking about the loss.</li> <li>Trouble separating from parents/ carers on arrival at nursery or school.</li> <li>Overwhelming emotions.</li> <li>Avoidance or keeping busy in nursery or classroom.</li> <li>Regularly wanting to talk to an adult about their loss.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Circumstances of the loss.</li> <li>The relationship with the person who died.</li> <li>Other losses, especially at an early age.</li> <li>The child's ability to cope with difficult events.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>It is not the same as anxiety or depression.</li> <li>You can support children to talk to a key person in their life about how they feel.</li> <li>Access support networks.</li> <li>Plan ahead for special events or anniversaries.</li> </ul>

When schools are affected by death adults and children will benefit from being kept informed. Death is an important topic to discuss and should not be avoided as this can have long term damaging effects. Young people have a healthy curiosity and if not informed of the circumstances or feel unable to ask questions this can cause issues during the normal grief process.

- Where possible, discussion with the bereaved family and the Headteacher should take place
  to ensure any wishes are respected before decisions are made in relation to the school and
  its community.
- Any cultural or religious must be considered and advice sought.
- All staff must be informed as soon as possible. We must insure part time staff and absent staff are informed over the telephone if necessary.
- A factual explanation of the death will be given and if applicable the circumstances.
- Senior Leadership Team will be on hand to support staff once they have been given the
  news. People may connect the death to their own experiences of bereavement, feelings of
  previous bereavement may need to be discussed. This is perfectly natural and time will be
  given to staff to process their feelings.
- Supply cover will be organised if necessary.
- The Headteacher will be the main contact for the family to ensure accurate information to and from school.
- Bereavement support and counselling will be made available to all members of staff as necessary.
- If appropriate a school community condolence will be arranged as part of a collaborative arrangements.
- How to inform classes will be discussed and it will be agreed exactly what is said, alongside how it is done. Absent pupils and staff must be identified and informed.
- If appropriate a special assembly, class or memorial service or memorial tree, or garden will be agreed collectively.
- All Senior Leaders will be on hand for a debrief at the end of the working day for staff. A meeting will happen to reflect on the days events and what further action needs to be put in place.
- Where possible staff requesting to attend the funeral or memorial will be released, however, this is dependent on staff ratios and class cover.
- All staff to read Appendix 1 How children can understand death at different ages?

#### In the days after the death

- Any cultural or religious must be considered and advice sought.
- The Senior Leaders will be available to support staff and children.
- Supply cover organised if necessary.
- An allocation of a quiet place for young people and staff to go if necessary will be identified. This will vary for different groups and their individual needs.
- Some flexibility to the timetable maybe required.
- All staff will work together to support people who need emotional help and support.
- The Headteacher who is the key family liaison with the individual family will ascertain their wishes about the school's involvement in the funeral if any.

In line with the families wishes, the practical issues listed below should be considered.

- Sending flowers to the home or to the funeral, making a collection for a charity etc...
- Who will attend the funeral?
- Cover arranged for staff members who may be going to the funeral
- Informing the parents of young people who will be involved.
- Possible closure of the school.

For a summary of information refer to the bereavement flowchart Appendix 3

#### Guidelines for a supporting a bereaved child return to school.

Teachers dealing with loss and bereavement issues in school should use this guide alongside, Managing Critical Incidents Document Chapter 3.

- Ask the family how they would like the school community to be informed about the death.
   Some children can feel anxious about everyone knowing and would like just their close friends to know.
- There may be sensitive issues around how the person died and what the family would like to be shared. Where possible include the family to ask their views.
- Approaches will differ widely and we at Parkhill will cater to each young person's individual need.

#### On the first day back at school (Extract from Winston's wish) Parkhill will:

#### 1. Welcome them back

The students Year Head will meet the student with a friend at the start of the school day, and escort the student and friend to class.

#### 2. Speak to the rest of the class if appropriate

Talking to the students about the bereavement before the return or while the student is present will depend on the individual needs. For example: "We have Alfie back with us today. As you know, Alfie's mum died last week. She had been ill for a long time but it's still a huge shock for Alfie and his dad. Alfie has asked me to say that he's really grateful for all the kind messages people have been sending him but it's still a bit hard for him to talk about it. So, do include him in stuff but also give him a bit of space to find his feet, ok?"

#### 3. Be sensitive to changes in their behaviour

It is normal for bereaved children to find it difficult to concentrate after someone has died. They may also become overwhelmed and then 'jump' back to laughing with a friend. They may want everything to be as normal as possible. Or they may need people to acknowledge regularly that things have changed forever.

#### 4. Be aware of any other bereaved children in your school

When a child is bereaved and the school community becomes aware, it can be difficult for other children who have previously been bereaved. It may re-awaken their own grief or prompt new questions. It is helpful if staff can be alert to all those who have been bereaved.

Things to consider:

- Do not be afraid to use the words dead or death "I was very sorry to hear of the death of your..."
- Children and young people need honesty. Although sometimes difficult, it is better to answer awkward questions truthfully.
- Recognise the full tragedy for the child. Do not try to comfort with comments such as "at least it is not as bad as..." You might think this is helpful, it is not.
- Reassure them that they are not responsible. If this is an issue (it may not be for all children and young people), reassure them that the death was not their fault.

Whether a pupil is returning to school quickly or after a period of absence, staff should ensure that there are systems in place to support them, for example:

- Time out cards should be arranged if needed. An appropriate place to go to.
- Support the young person to express their grief if appropriate.
- Access to a quiet space for time out and reflection if required.
- More intensive support from the counselling staff team
- Access to a school counsellor when appropriate.
- Grief is a very personal experience; every child and young person will experience it differently. Give them space to deal with their feelings in their own way.

Be aware of the Scotland Bereavement Charter – Launched in 2020

This policy should be reviewed annually, in combination with current research and legislation.

Review Date 1st May 2025

#### Appendix 1

#### How children can understand death at different ages?

As Parkhill is an Additional Support for Learning provision some of our young people will be at different stages of developmental age that does not coincide with their chronological age. The following information is not a whole size fits all, children do not move abruptly from one stage of development to the next, and some characteristics can overlap. Developmentally a child can respond differently to loss and this will impact the different types of support they will need.

Age	Information	Key points
0 – 2 years	Children are not able to understand death but will experience loss as a separation from someone they may have an attachment with. Children may express their loss in other ways. They may become withdrawn, crying. The emotional state of people around them may also affect them. Sticking to routine and normality is important.	<ul> <li>Have no understanding of death.</li> <li>Awareness of separation and will grieve the absence of the person they may have an attachment with.</li> <li>May react to the absence with increased crying, decreased responsiveness, and changes in eating or sleeping.</li> </ul>
2-5 years	Children believe that death is reversible. They may be convinced that it was something they said or did which caused the death. Abstract concepts are not easily understood. It is important to use concrete language to support the child to make sense of that has happened. You may have some questions over and over again.	<ul> <li>Are curious about death and believe it is temporary or reversible.</li> <li>May see death as something like sleeping – the person is dead but only in a limited way and may continue to breather, or eat after death.</li> <li>Understand the world as a mix of reality and fantasy.</li> <li>Are naturally egocentric and see themselves as the cause.</li> <li>Often feel guilty and believe that they are responsible for the death, perhaps because they were 'bad' or wished the person would 'go away'.</li> <li>May think they can make the deceased come back if they are good enough.</li> <li>Will worry about who will take care of them and about being abandoned.</li> <li>Still greatly effected by the sadness of surviving family members.</li> <li>Cannot put their feelings into words and instead react to loss through behaviours such as irritability, aggression, physical symptoms, difficulty sleeping, or regression (bedwetting or thumb sucking).</li> </ul>
6-12 years	Children develop the understanding that death is irreversible and something that happens to all living things. They may understand death is something that is 'spooky', may display something that seems to be an unhealthy curiosity in the more morbid aspects of death. Children at	<ul> <li>Understand that death is final but see it as something that only happens to other people.</li> <li>May think death as a person, or a spirit like a ghost, angel or a skeleton.</li> <li>Understand that death is universal, unavoidable, and will happen to them (10 years).</li> </ul>

this age may complain of headaches, tummy aches or other issues. These are called 'somatic' complaints and are generally physical manifestations of emotional pain. Behaviour may change, it is important to encourage children at this age to express their feelings and understand that what they are feeling is perfectly natural.

- Often interested in specific details of death and what happens to the body after death.
- May experience a range of emotions guilt, anger, shame, anxiety, sadness, and worry about their own death.
- Continue to have difficulty expressing their feelings and may react through behaviours such as school avoidance, poor performance in school, aggression, physical symptoms, withdrawal from friends, and regression.
- Still worry about who will take care of them and will likely experience insecurity, clinginess, and fear of abandonment.
- May still worry that they are to blame for the death.

#### Teenagers

At this stage young people are developing their own ideas about who they are and what is important to them in their lives. They are more aware of their future. Death may cause them to reflect on the meaning of their life, or they may not want to reflect and hide their feelings. As adults we need to reassure them that we are here to talk if they need to talk. The grieving process at this age is like adults, teenagers are still developing emotionally, and need support. They are much more aware than the finality of death and the impact this will have on them. The death may make them feel different at the time they might want to be the same as everyone else. They are aware of the longer impact of their loss, when future milestones will not be shared with the person who has died. Relationships with others are increasingly important, any loss can lead to severe distress and anger.

- Has an adult understanding of the concept of death, but do not have the experiences, coping skills, or behaviour of an adult.
- May 'act out' in anger or show impulsive or reckless behaviours, such as substance misuse or fighting in school.
- May experience a wide range of emotions, but not know how to handle them or feel comfortable expressing them.
- The reality of death contradicts a teenager's view of himself as invincible, and teenagers may question their faith of their understanding of the world.
- Developmental issues of independence and separation from parents can interfere with the ability to receive support from adult family members.
- Coping strategies may create tension with family members, as adolescents may cope by spending more time with friends or by withdrawing from family to be alone.

### Appendix 2 How can Teachers apply their understanding of how children comprehend and react to death at different ages?

Teachers can apply their understanding of how children comprehend and react to death at different ages by adopting tailored approaches that meet the emotional and developmental needs of their students. Here are some strategies for each age group:

Age	Key points
0 – 2 years	<ul> <li>Maintain Routine: Stick to regular schedules to provide a sense of security and normalcy.</li> <li>Provide Comfort: Offer physical comfort like hugs and hold the child when they are upset.</li> <li>Observe Behaviour: Watch for signs of distress such as increased crying or changes in eating and sleeping patterns, and respond with patience and care.</li> </ul>
2 – 5 years	<ul> <li>Use Simple Language: Explain death in concrete terms, avoiding euphemisms that can confuse young children (e.g., "Grandma has died" instead of "Grandma has gone to sleep").</li> <li>Reassure and Repeat: Be prepared to answer the same questions multiple times and reassure the child that they are not to blame for the death.</li> <li>Encourage Expression: Allow children to express their feelings through play, drawing, or storytelling</li> </ul>
6-12 years	<ul> <li>Provide Honest Information: Give clear and honest explanations about death, appropriate to their level of understanding.</li> <li>Encourage Questions: Create an open environment where children feel safe to ask questions and express their feelings.</li> <li>Monitor Behaviour: Be aware of changes in behaviour such as school avoidance, aggression, or physical complaints, and provide support as needed.</li> <li>Support Emotional Expression: Encourage children to talk about their feelings and provide activities like writing or drawing to help them process their emotions.</li> </ul>
Teenagers	<ul> <li>Respect Independence: Recognize their need for independence while offering support and being available to talk when they are ready.</li> <li>Encourage Open Communication: Foster an environment where teenagers feel comfortable expressing their emotions without judgment.</li> <li>Provide Resources: Offer access to counselling or support groups if needed.</li> <li>Acknowledge Their Feelings: Validate their emotions and experiences, and help them find healthy ways to cope with their grief.</li> </ul>
General strategies for all ages	<ul> <li>Create a Supportive Environment: Ensure the classroom is a safe space where students feel comfortable expressing their grief.</li> <li>Be Patient and Understanding: Recognize that grief is a personal and ongoing process, and be patient with students as they navigate their emotions.</li> <li>Involve Parents and Caregivers: Communicate with parents and caregivers to understand the child's needs and provide consistent support both at home and school.</li> <li>Use Resources: Utilize books, activities, and external resources designed to help children understand and cope with death.</li> </ul>

#### **Bereavement Flow Chart**

Headteacher to lead the communication team



Contact with family made via phone call, card or letter of condolence organised and sent, depending on the bereavement that has happened.



Headteacher to discuss with the family and child who they want their story shared with and the support that is available to them.



Members of the SLT will Inform all staff, families and children as agreed with the bereaved family.

An appointed member of the SLT will act as the point of contact with the family.



An appointed member of the SLT will arrange to see the child at home or in the setting to assess their needs and level of support required at this time.

An appointed member of the SLT will liaise with child and support their return to the school.



The students Year Head will continue to assess the needs of the child through observation, discussions with significant people, including the child regarding their concerns or worries, and outside agencies if required.

Year Head to ensure friendships are secure as peer support can be very important.



Year Head will ensure significant dates and events for the child are recorded and shared with all staff for future reference (birthdays, anniversaries).



Staff to continue regular contact with the family to show that still care about them and their child.

#### Appendix 3b Bereavement Flow Chart Quick Steps for different situations

**Death affecting the school community:** This flowchart outlines the steps to take immediately after being informed of a death affecting the school community. Step:

- 1. Notification of Death
- 2. Contact Family for Details
- 3. Inform Senior Leadership Team
- 4. Staff Briefing
- 5. Inform Students and Parents
- 6. Provide Immediate Support
- 7. Arrange Memorial/Condolence Activities
- 8. Ongoing Support and Monitoring

**Support Process for Bereaved Students -** This visual aid shows the process of supporting a bereaved student from the initial notification to ongoing support.

- 1. Notification of Bereavement
- 2. Initial Meeting with Family
- 3. Develop Individual Support Plan
- 4. Inform Relevant Staff
- 5. First Day Back at School
- 6. Regular Check-ins with Student
- 7. Access to Counselling Services
- 8. Long-term Monitoring and Support

**Communication Strategy** - This flowchart details the communication strategy following a bereavement.

- 1. Notification of Death
- 2. Contact Family for Preferences
- 3. Draft Communication Message
- 4. Inform Staff
- 5. Inform Students and Parents
- 6. Provide Support Resources
- 7. Follow-up Communication

**Age-Appropriate Support -** This visual aid helps staff understand how to support children of different ages.

- 1. Age 0-2 Provide Routine and Comfort, Monitor Emotional State
- 2. Age 2-5 Use Concrete Language, Reassure and Answer Questions
- 3. Age 6-12 Encourage Expression of Feelings, Provide Honest Information
- 4. Teenagers Respect Need for Independence, Offer Emotional Support.

#### **Immediate Actions Post-Death**

This flowchart outlines the immediate actions to take within the first 30 minutes of being informed of a death.

- 1. Receive Notification
- 2. Check Relevant Policies
- 3. Identify Support Team
- 4. Contact Family for Accurate Information
- 5. Arrange Staff Briefing
- 6. Identify Vulnerable Individuals]

#### **Communication friendly resources**



#### Coping with Death



When someone close to us dies, we experience grief.



Grief is like the shadow of love.



Grief is what is left when someone we love is no longer here.



We still love the person,



but we also experience other emotions when someone dies.



#### We may feel



























It is okay to feel these emotions.



This is called the grief process.

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#### When a person dies



Sometimes when people get sick





their heart might stop.



When this happens the person is dead.







Their body no longer works. They are not breathing.



They don't feel anything.

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They can't hear.



They can't speak.



We might feel sad and miss the person who has died.



We might want to talk about how we feel.







We might want to collect some things like photographs and clothes that remind us of the person who has died. This can be a 'memory box'.



### Explaining Death



Everyone dies.



Sometimes if someone is really sick, the doctors will tell them how long other people who have the same illness lived.



Sometimes something happens and someone dies.



We might feel sad or angry or confused when someone dies.



When people move into a house, it becomes a home. If no one has moved in, it is just a building.



Our bodies are like that. When we are alive, we have thoughts and personality. When we die, our body stays but our thoughts and personality aren't there any more.

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### Understanding Death





Everyone is born and everyone will die at some stage.

Sometimes we have time to prepare ourselves.



Sometimes we don't.





When someone dies, we might feel sad or angry.





We might feel scared or frustrated.

We might feel relieved, if they have been sick.

It is important that no matter how we feel, we talk about it with someone.



We might start to think more about death and worry about our family or friends.

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It can be hard, but if we spend all our time thinking about people dying, we don't get to enjoy them living.





When someone we love dies, we can't hug them or touch them.





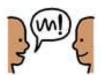
We can remember them and imagine what they would say to us.







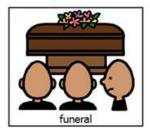
We can look at their pictures and think about happy memories we had with them.



We can talk about them to other people.



### What to expect at a funeral



When someone dies we have a funeral to celebrate the person's life.









The funeral might be in a church with a priest or a minister who will lead the funeral service.





Some people might tell stories about the person who has died and there might be singing.



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Inside the coffin will be the body of the person who has died.







Some people will look sad or cry because they miss the person who has died.









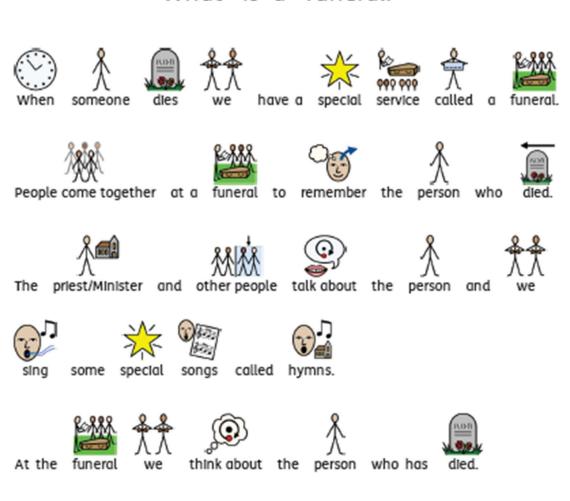


Afterwards some of the people might meet up to chat, have some food and drink.



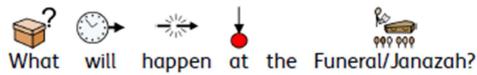
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## ? What is a funeral?





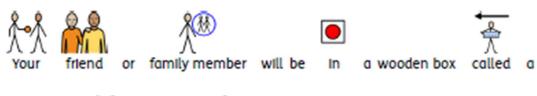
We think about their

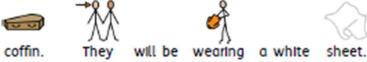




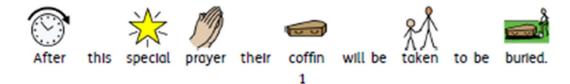


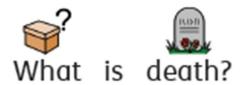
























When a person dies they stop being alive.































body has stopped working.



The person who has died has gone forever.

























#### Appendix 5a Managing a sudden death in the school community

	It is likely that you will be feeling shocked yourself so give yourself time to process the information		
The first 30	you have received.		
Minutes	Check any relevant policies you have, such as Critical Incident Policy or Bereavement Policy     Identify a team that can halp you.		
	Identify a team that can help you     Contact the family to ensure you have correct and up to date information		
	Arrange a staff briefing, remembering absentees and part-timers		
	Identify any vulnerable staff members or pupils who may be particularly affected.		
	When the news of a death has been received by the school, the senior management team need to		
	decide on their strategy and pathway forward. It is important to contact the family/families and		
	clarify the situation and their wishes and preferences should be taken into consideration, wherever		
Breaking	possible. Announcing the news to the school community can be challenging and it is important that		
bad news	it is handled sensitively and effectively. There are some important differences in the approach you		
	might take, depending on what has happened and who is involved.		
	Resources for children and young people		
	Explaining to young children that someone has died		
	Explaining miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn baby to a young child		
	Children's understanding of death at different stages		
	There is no right way to react to death. Anger, confusion, and sadness are among the many different		
	reactions that bereaved pupils may have. How they're feeling may not be immediately obvious, so		
Supporting a	it's unhelpful to interpret their behaviour. It's much more important to observe and listen to them.		
bereaved	Each pupil will deal with their grief in their own way. As they grow older, children's understanding		
	will increase, but so will their needs for information to try to make some sense of what has		
family	happened. This may result in lots of questions.		
	Resources for children and young people		
	Understanding and 'owning' their feelings may help children. A book or leaflet which they can fill in		
	can help them to express and understand feelings, build memories and feel less alone.		
	My Dad and me – blank memory book  My base against a discount design.		
	When someone special dies: under 7      When someone special dies: 7, 11		
	When someone special dies: 7 - 11     When someone special dies: young people		
	When a death occurs that affects a pupil or whole community it can be a very emotional and		
	potentially stressful situation for you and your staff too. Making decisions, giving information and		
Supporting	supporting others who may be stressed or emotional can be challenging. It is very important that		
the School	you ensure you look after both yourself and your staff team to ensure you are able to best support		
staff	your pupils and their families.		
	When death happens suddenly and unexpectedly there may be a huge rush of events all happening		
Traumatic	at once. Children and young people can find it very scary, particularly if they have directly witnessed		
	the events themselves or heard others talk about them. In addition, children and young people may		
deaths	be exposed to others' emotional reactions and everything can feel upsetting, uncertain and unsafe.		
	Resources for children and young people https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-		
	help/schools/step-step/		
Social media	Child Bereavement UK Website link: http://bereavement.lgfl.org.uk/section_six.html		
and media	Glasgow City Council Managing critical incidents found here:		
	Grief just doesn't go away. It just changes over time. Therefore, bereaved pupils may continue to		
Looking to	need further support throughout their schooling, although the nature of that support may change		
_	over time and in accordance with each pupil's individual needs. Children and young people may		
the future	revisit their grief as their understanding of the world changes over time. Grief can also be		
	compounded by other major changes in their lives such as moving house, changing school or		
	financial difficulties. The death of a close friend or relative is a life changing experience.		

https://www.whitehillsprimary.northants.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Bereavement-Policy-2022.pdf (Page 6).

#### Appendix 5b Quick guide to managing a sudden death in the school community

The first 30 Minutes	Process the Information: Allow yourself time to process the news.  Check Policies: Review relevant policies, such as the Critical Incident Policy or Bereavement Policy.  Identify a Support Team: Assemble a team to help manage the situation.  Contact the Family: Ensure you have accurate and up-to-date information from the family.  Staff Briefing: Arrange a briefing for all staff, including absentees and part-timers.  Identify Vulnerable Individuals: Note any staff members or pupils who may be particularly affected.
Breaking bad news	Strategy and Pathway: The senior management team should decide on a strategy and pathway forward.  Family Wishes: Contact the family to clarify the situation and respect their wishes and preferences.  Sensitive Communication: Announce the news to the school community sensitively and effectively, considering the specific circumstances.
Resources for	<b>Explaining Death</b> : Provide resources for explaining death to young children, including miscarriage, stillbirth, or the death of a newborn.
Children and Young People	<b>Understanding Death</b> : Offer materials that explain children's understanding of death at different stages.
	<b>Expressing Feelings</b> : Provide books or leaflets to help children express and understand their feelings, build memories, and feel less alone. <i>Examples</i> : "My Dad and Me" (blank memory book), "When Someone Special Dies" (for different age groups).
Supporting a bereaved family	Observe and Listen: Recognise that there is no right way to react to death. Observe and listen to bereaved pupils, as their feelings may not be immediately obvious.  Individual Grief: Understand that each pupil will deal with their grief in their own way and may have
	many questions as they grow older.
Supporting the School staff	<b>Emotional Support</b> : Recognise that a death affecting the school community can be very emotional and stressful for staff. Ensure you look after yourself and your team to best support pupils and their families
Traumatic deaths	Immediate Response: When death happens suddenly and unexpectedly, there may be a rush of events. Children and young people may find this very scary, especially if they witnessed the events or heard others talk about them.  Emotional Reactions: Be aware that children and young people may be exposed to others' emotional reactions, which can feel upsetting and unsafe.
Social media and media	Glasgow City Council Managing critical incidents policy Child Bereavement UK. Website link: <a href="http://bereavement.lgfl.org.uk/section_six.html">http://bereavement.lgfl.org.uk/section_six.html</a> Samaritans: Samaritans Step by Step
Looking to the future	Ongoing Support: Grief changes over time, and bereaved pupils may need continued support throughout their schooling. Their needs may change as they grow and as their understanding of the world evolves.  Life Changes: Grief can be compounded by other major life changes, such as moving house, changing school, or financial difficulties. The death of a close friend or relative is a life-changing experience.

#### Resources

 $\frac{https://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/blog/guide/growing-through-grief-activities-and-ideas/}{file:///O:\Parkhill\All%20Staff\Bereavement\Childhood%20Bereavement%20Network%20postcards.}{pdf}$ 

https://www.yoursupportglasgow.org/media/36360/glasgow-bereavement-leaflet.pdf

#### References

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https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=4b13d694-2038-4918-90b3-13c06100aafb

 $\frac{https://www.whitehillsprimary.northants.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Bereavement-Policy-2022.pdf$ 

https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/1E-Child-Bereavement-UK.pdf

https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources-for-covid-19/resources-for-covid-19-families/resources-for-families-supporting-childrenyoung-people-with-additional-support-needs/

https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/public/glasgowpsychologicalservice/uploads/sites/458 7/2021/11/02165414/Managing-critical-incidents.pdf

https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/communicationfriendlyenvironments/funeral/