St Andrew's CE Primary School

At St Andrew's we **BELIEVE** all God's children should flourish in every area of their lives. Our broad and balanced curriculum **INSPIRES** the whole child with their unique talents, encouraging them to develop self-respect and high aspirations. We help them to **ACHIEVE** their full potential through active and creative learning that will develop their knowledge, skills and understanding with our supportive community.

'With God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26)

Bereavement Policy

Date approved April 2023

Date of review March 2026

Bereavement Policy

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" Matthew 5:4

At St Andrew's School we believe that all people are made in the image of God and unconditionally loved. Our school is a place where we love one another as God loves us. We want everyone to thrive, irrespective of whatever life faces them with. Therefore, we aim to prepare and support pupils and staff to cope with the stresses of life and respond to needs as they arise enabling pupils and staff to flourish. (See the *Church of England's Vision for Education, Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good* – Autumn 2016)

We are a primary Church of England school serving our local village community. Our Christian vision shapes all that we do.

School Background:
St Andrew's school is openly inclusive, welcoming all children from the whole community to a caring and happy environment where they can achieve to the very best of their abilities. We emphasise the development of the whole child, physically, intellectually, emotionally spiritually and ethically.

Rationale:
Every 22 minutes in the UK a parent of dependent children dies, leaving about 41,000 bereaved children each year. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, sibling, friend or other significant person, and, sadly, around 12,000 children die in the UK each year.
Within our school community there will almost always be some recently bereaved children who are struggling with their own situation –or sometimes the entire school community is impacted by the death of a member of staff or a pupil. We would hope to not encounter such circumstances, but the statistical inevitability of such an occurrence implies the necessity of having a Bereavement Policy in place in order that we might be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these sensitive situations. Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some children, families or staff require, though referral to more specialist support is always taken into consideration where the impact of grief is more complex.

Additional information and resources can be accessed at www.childbereavementuk.org where there is a School Information Pack including a fact sheet: Cultures and beliefs. Other additional information and support can be accessed at www.winstonswish.org
and …

- Cruse Bereavement Care
- RIPRAP – when a parent has cancer
- Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)
- Still Birth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS)
- Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM)
- Child Death Helpline
- Compassionate Friends
- Young Minds – For Children's Mental Health

Objectives:
We will encourage a consistent, yet flexible approach based on a belief in the wellbeing of the 'whole child'. We aim to reflect our Christian vision, including a belief in life after death, whilst being sensitive to various other beliefs and practices. This policy provides a framework within which all staff can work and give guidance on how to deal sensitively and compassionately in very difficult and upsetting circumstances.

The core intentions of the policy are:
•To support pupils and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after bereavement.
•To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.
•To identify key staff within school, the Local Authority, and Diocese to clarify the pathway of support.

The role of the governing body
•To approve policy and ensure its implementation, to be reviewed in three years.
•The Governing Board is aware that the Diocese provides training on working with pupils and staff on loss and bereavement issues and can also arrange bespoke training for school staff.

The role of the head teacher

•To contact the school's incumbent, the LA School Communications Team and Diocesan Office.
•To monitor the situation and liaise with external agencies, if appropriate.
•To respond to media enquiries.
•To be first point of contact or nominate someone to be the first point of contact for the family/child.
•To keep the governing body fully informed.
•To advise and support staff. Consider referral pathways and identification of complex grief, i.e. Diocese of Chelmsford School Adviser for Bereavement, spiritual advisors, school counsellors or mentors.
•If a pupil dies by suicide, ensure that staff know that the Samaritans provide a step-by step programme to support schools. They can be contacted on: 116 123
•To have bereavement support training and cascade learning to other staff.
•To refer to other relevant policies such as the school's Critical Incidents Policy, Mental Health and Well-Being Policy and /or the Church of England's Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach as required.

Procedures:

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Headteacher or nominated person and their wishes respected in communicating with others.
2. All staff should be informed including part-time and peripatetic staff 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. Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate. The school's Critical Incident Policy will be used – as appropriate.
6. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial school closure in some circumstances. The Headteacher will inform all relevant parties (Governing Body, Local Authority and Diocese) of any closure.
7. Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Headteacher.

8. At an appropriate time, planning for a whole school community reflection and celebration of the child or staff member's life.

Points to note:

Factual information is essential so people do not make assumptions avoiding rumour and any confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations.

All staff should be made 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

The school 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. This is particularly important on the age of the pupils affected by the bereavement and on transition from one school to another of the bereaved pupil/s.