LANDKEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY ACADEMY

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE - CARING FOR ALL

Bereavement Policy

Date of Policy Issue: September 2025
Review Date: September 2026

Guidelines for supporting

These guidelines outline our commitment to supporting pupils and their families who have been bereaved.

Aim

This policy aims to support the emotional and physical wellbeing of bereaved pupils and their families, from the early days of a bereavement onwards.

It can be shared with bereaved families, to help explain what our school is trying to do to help, and how we will do that.

Objectives

We will have robust procedures that enable us to communicate with, and support, bereaved pupils and their families, both before, and after, a pupil's return to our school.

Our procedures will help bereaved children and young people:

- **Be safe –** with their welfare supported
- **Be involved –** be given information and choices
- **Feel connected –** with support from people they trust and can help
- **Understand, and be understood –** particularly regarding their reactions, feelings and thoughts
- **Be respected –** have their identity and family context acknowledged

All bereavements, in all families, matter to our school equally.

- Every bereavement is unique and results in different challenges.
- Every family is unique and their needs deserve to be understood and met.

<u>Responsible staff</u>

Bereavement Champion: Hannah Elliott (also SENDCo)

Head Teacher: Laura Kies

Deputy Head Teacher: Sophie Austen

Main Point of Contact: Hannah Elliott or Laura Kies in her absence

Procedures

If a pupil is bereaved, we will commit to supporting both them and their family in the following ways.

1. Establish a small group of staff responsible for communication and co-ordination of support offered. This should include a main point of contact.

2. In the days after the death, but before a bereaved pupil returns to education, a nominated person with experience and skills in listening and empathetic support, will contact the family to:

    a) Acknowledge the bereavement, offer the school's condolences, and listen to how the family are feeling

    b) Establish the family's initial wishes regarding what the child, wider school community, and media (if applicable) should be told about the death;

    c) Offer time for the family to reflect on information they may wish to keep private, and a future time to talk about it further, if necessary;

    d) Offer a point of contact and explain ongoing support the school can offer; and listen to the family's views on the pupil's emotional needs;

    e) Offer future availability, as required, to discuss anything the family may wish to in relation to the pupil's welfare, and explaining days and times available;

    f) Offer bereavement resources that are age-appropriate and signpost to online advice and relevant agencies (such as Families in Grief);

    g) Offer the opportunity, at a time and place agreed with the family, for a teacher (or other school representative who the pupil knows and trusts), to meet with the pupil directly, accompanied by any family member/s, to explain what will happen when the pupil returns to school, and who will support them in school;

    h) Make clear the names of anyone else who is available to communicate with the pupil's family, and find out who, within the family, wishes to liaise with the school.

3. In the days after the death, we will inform staff members and pupils. This will be done in an age-appropriate and sensitive way, considering confidentiality, potential stigma surrounding the cause of death and the family's wishes (as established with them).

4. When the pupil returns to school we will:

    a) Determine the date of that return in discussion with the family, reflecting on the needs of the pupil;

    b) Acknowledge their bereavement directly with them;

    c) Discuss with the pupil, family and our staff what we can do to best support them; and

d) Work to enable the pupil's re-integration into 'normal' school routines and create a safe and secure environment for them.

5. For a bereaved pupil's remaining time in our school we will:

   a) Ensure significant dates (such as death anniversaries, birthdays and culturally-significant dates such as annual festivals) are recorded and considered;

   b) Allow opportunities for reflecting on the death, through encouraging an ongoing and open dialogue with the pupil,

   c) Consider a pupil's bereavement when planning school activities that might trigger thoughts or feelings about the bereavement and engage the pupil and their family in discussions regarding the pupil's involvement, providing information and choice.

6. When helping a bereaved pupil we will:

   a) Ensure they know who they can reach out to for support and how to access this help in ways that are easy and discreet;

   b) Offer them opportunities to express their reactions, feelings and emotions about their bereavement, in ways they want to, safely and confidentially;

   c) Offer a safe and supervised space where a pupil can go if they need time out from a classroom or playground because of their bereavement;

   d) Use age-appropriate bereavement resources available to us from Families in Grief and from other child or youth-specific bereavement charities and review and update a list of resources are available on an annual basis;

   e) Be aware of the pupil's family circumstances, including their cultural background, and its relevance to their bereavement;

   f) Be on the lookout for changes in behaviour that may be a sign of a mental health condition, or other illness or risk to health and safety; and

   g) Signpost to support for the wider family, as well as the pupil, through the local authority, in order that the family unit work together where necessary.

7. To enable and support our staff, we will:

   a) Ensure staff involved in planning school activities and lessons are helped to:

      i. identify content that may be triggering for children/young people who have been bereaved; and

ii. consider whether to avoid this content or manage its delivery with care and sensitivity, in line with point 5 (c) above.

b) Provide bereavement training and refresher bereavement training, specific to supporting children/young people, and specific to sudden bereavement care and mental health; and

c) Give supportive HR management and peer support to staff who liaise with bereaved families.

8. If a bereaved child or young person is showing signs of suffering from a mental health condition, or other illness, or any indicators or risks of harm, we will ensure that information is shared with the family, appropriate agencies and managed appropriately.

9. We will, annually:

a) Review age-appropriate bereavement tools, such as websites, books and other resources, and ensure we have books and website lists we need;

b) Review a list we maintain of national and local age-appropriate services that help children and families who are suddenly bereaved, such as charities and mental health services, and understand what they do, so we can appropriately signpost; and

c) Keep these lists in an accessible place with this policy and procedures.