



# Castle Donington College

## Bereavement Policy

Date agreed by the Full Governing Board

12<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Date for review

May 2023

Signed by Chair of Governors

*This College follows Guidance and Advice given by the Local Authority and Government when writing policies; in light of this, changes may need to be made after the adoption of this policy and prior to the review date.*

# Contents

1. Introduction and Aims of Policy
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Procedures:
  - a. Death of a Pupil or Former Pupil
  - b. Death of a member of Staff or Former member of Staff
  - c. Death of a Governor or other member of the community
  - d. Supporting a bereaved Pupil
  - e. Supporting a bereaved Staff member
4. On-going support and care
5. Supporting a pupil/staff member who has experienced significant loss or change
6. Training
7. Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy

## Appendices

1. Poems to help bereavement.
2. Activities for allowing children to express grief.
3. Beliefs of different faith traditions regarding death and the afterlife.
4. Local charities and support networks.
5. Bereavement Cycle.

# 1. Introduction and Aims

## 1.1 Introduction

First and foremost, Castle Donington College is dedicated to the well-being and care of all members of its community.

When this policy refers to bereavement it is referring to someone who experiences a sudden significant change, loss or death; this could include the divorce of parents or carers, a move to a new area or the loss of contact with a close friend or family member.

Bereavement will affect each person in a different way and this policy does not attempt to provide the perfect approach for all those affected by death. What this policy presents are guidelines to ensure that all those who experience a bereavement are treated with respect, compassion and sensitivity. This policy is to ensure that all pupils, families and staff have the opportunity to express their grief, as well as receiving all their necessary support and information they may need.

Bereavement is a normal part of life and should be treated in this way; it is not an illness or an end that to be avoided. Therefore, within the curriculum of Science, Religious Education and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) the process of life cycles and the reality of death and loss should be approached and explored; though great sensitivity should be given to those who are recently bereaved in these lessons.

Useful resources that can aid those implementing this policy may be found here:

- *Supporting Children and Young People with Bereavement and Loss* produced by Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service
- *Managing a Bereavement: Resource Pack* produced by the Nottinghamshire County or Nottingham City Council's Educational Psychology Service
- RAINBOWS [www.rainbowtrust.org.uk](http://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk) and
- CRUSE [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk).

## 1.2 Aims

The main aim of the policy is to provide all members of our communities who experience bereavement with adequate and appropriate support. Such support should include:

- A safe environment for them to express their feelings and respond as they wish to their individual circumstances.
- Opportunities for the life of deceased members of the community to be celebrated and remembered.
- Space and time for the person to come to terms with their loss
- Immediate and on-going pastoral support for the bereaved.
- Access to specialist advice and support.

The policy also includes procedures and practices that should be implemented for these aims to be carried out. Though this will be a painful and difficult time for all involved, it is hoped that this policy will encourage our communities to be safe and caring environments for all affected.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 2.1 The member of staff who will carry out the particular roles in managing the bereavement may vary. It may be the Principal, members of the leadership team, members of the pastoral team or other trusted adults in College depending on circumstance.
- 2.2 The governing board is responsible for making sure this policy is implemented, reviewed and to support the Principal where appropriate.
- 2.3 The Principal of the College, in conjunction and with the support of its governing board, will have the overall responsibility for support and management in the event of a death or traumatic/significant loss. If they are not able to carry out this task a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will take on the role.
- 2.4 The Principal, or member of the SLT, is responsible for ensuring the appropriate procedure (as detailed in 3. Procedures) are carried out appropriately, and in particular that:
  - a. There is a first point of contact for the individual and/or the family.
  - b. The necessary levels of support are in place for the individual within the College.
  - c. There is a network of support for the wider College community.
  - d. Any relevant external agencies and third parties involved are involved and kept informed.
  - e. All media enquiries are responded to appropriately.
  - f. That the progress of those affected are monitored and any concerns responded to in a timely fashion.
- 2.5 Those nominated by the Principal or those fulfilling their responsibilities as stated in 2.3 and 2.4, to carry out the pastoral care of an individual affected, should ensure that all necessary information is fed back to their line manager and the person responsible for managing the bereavement. It is important that all involved are kept informed of the care and support being given and of any changes that is felt necessary to make.

## **3. Procedures**

- 3.1 Below are the procedures that should be implemented for the management of bereavements that may have different impacts on the College community. As stated previously, each death, loss or significant change is an individual tragedy and each person should be given the opportunity to grieve in whatever way feels natural to them; some may need help discovering this.
- 3.2 The procedures set out below are designed to be guides to guarantee that each case is managed professionally. When these procedures refer to the Principal, they also refer to whoever is managing the bereavement in their place if the Principal is unavailable.

#### A. The Death of a Pupil or Former Pupil

- a. The Principal should be informed immediately by the person who has received the information; the source of the information should be given.
- b. Upon receiving this information the Principal should verify the information is correct and accurate before taking any further action. This may include contacting the source of the information, members of the College community who may be have more information or any appropriate third party/external agency.
- c. When the information has been deemed accurate the Principal should contact the family to offer the College's condolences and offer support, particularly for any siblings in the College.
- d. The Principal should then inform members of staff who are pastorally responsible for the pupil i.e. heads of year and form tutors plus any relevant SEND staff
- e. The Principal will then arrange for all other staff to be notified as appropriate; this can take the form of verbal communication through staff briefing or phone call or in written communication.
- f. If the pupil is still on roll, all other pupils who SLT feel is appropriate, will be notified. During term time this will be done through the SLT.
- g. The pupils who are in the same tutor group or class of the deceased, the tutor/teacher should be notified by the SLT.
- h. Parents and carers of informed children will receive notification of the event via phone, text or written communication – the form of communication will depend of the circumstances of the case.
- i. If the pupil is not on roll but has left the College quite recently it may be appropriate to follow the procedure given above in paragraph 3.A.fg.
- j. If the circumstances of the pupil or former pupil's death will draw the attention of local or national media, the Principal should arrange for an agreed statement to be written outlining the College's response to the death and some details of their time at the College.
- k. A home visit by an appropriate member of the College staff may be deemed appropriate by the Principal.
- l. The Principal should offer the family the opportunity of a memorial ceremony, act or event in the College and co-ordinate the College's involvement, if welcomed, at the funeral including representation.
- m. If welcomed by the family, the Principal might arrange for a memorial to be placed in the school grounds e.g. a tree, a bench, plaque etc.

#### B. The Death of a member of Staff or former member of Staff

- a. The Principal should be informed immediately by the person who has received the information: who has died and the source of the information.
- b. Upon receiving this information the Principal should verify the information is correct and accurate before taking any further action. This may include contacting the source of the information, members of the College who may be have more information or any appropriate third party/external agency.

- c. When the information has been deemed accurate the Principal should contact the family to offer the College's condolences and offer support; particular for any children of the deceased within the College.
- d. The Principal should then inform members of staff who worked closely with the deceased such as the line manager and other members of the department.
- e. The Principal will then arrange for all other staff to be notified as appropriate; this can take the form of verbal communication through staff briefing or phone call or in written communication.
- f. If the deceased was still employed by the College pupils will be notified (when considered appropriate to do so). During term time this will be done through the SLT. For the pupils who were in the tutor group or class of the deceased this should be done by the Principal or a member of the SLT.
- g. Parents and carers of informed children will receive notification of the event via phone, text or written communication – the form of communication will depend of the circumstances of the case.
- h. If the deceased was not employed by the College but had left quite recently it may be appropriate to follow the procedure given above; paragraph 3.B.f-g
- i. If the circumstances of the member of staff or former member of staff's death will draw the attention of local or national media, the Principal should arrange agreed statement to be written outlining the College's response to the death and some details of their time at the College.
- j. The Principal should contact the family which could include personally visiting the family with the offer of support where appropriate.
- k. The Principal should offer the family the opportunity of a memorial in the College and co-ordinate the College's involvement, if welcomed, in the funeral including representation.
- l. The Principal may deem it necessary to close the College so that members of staff may attend the funeral. However, if the member of the staff had left the College quite a long time ago this may not be deemed necessary. Current staff wanting to attend the funeral should be given the opportunity to do so and the necessary procedures for staff absence followed.
- m. If welcomed by the family the Principal should arrange for a memorial in school grounds e.g. a tree, a bench, plaque where appropriate.

C. The Death of a Governor, former Governor or other member of the College community

- a. The Principal should be informed immediately by the person who has received the information and the source of the information.
- b. Upon receiving this information the Principal should verify the information is correct and accurate before taking any further action. This may include contacting the source of the information, members of the College who may be have more information or any appropriate third party/external agency.
- c. When the information has been deemed accurate the Principal should contact the family to offer the College's condolences and offer support; particular for any children of the deceased within the College.

- d. The Principal should then inform other Governors and members of staff who worked closely with the deceased.
- e. The Principal will then arrange for all other staff to be notified as appropriate; this can take the form of verbal communication through staff briefing or phone call or in written communication.
- f. If the Principal deems it necessary the pupils should be informed. During term time this will be done by a member of SLT.
- g. Parents and carers of informed children will receive notification of the event via phone, text or written communication – the form of communication will depend of the circumstances of the case.
- h. If the circumstances of the deceased’s death will draw the attention of local or national media, the Principal should arrange an agreed statement to be written outlining the College’s response to the death and some details of their time at the College.
- i. If deemed appropriate the Principal should contact the family which could include personally visiting the family with an offer of support. The Principal should offer the family the opportunity of a memorial in the College and co-ordinate the College’s involvement, if welcomed, in the funeral including representation.
- j. The Principal may deem it necessary to close the College so that members of staff to attend the funeral. However, if the deceased was no longer an active member of the College community it may not be deemed necessary. Staff wanting to attend the funeral should be given the opportunity and the necessary procedures for staff absence followed.
- k. If welcomed by the family, the Principal should arrange for a memorial in school grounds e.g. a tree, a bench, plaque etc
- l. If the deceased is a wider member of the College Community, such as a pupil or teacher in another local school or College, the College’s MP, local clergy etc. the Principal should arrange for a letter of condolence to be written and sent to the relevant institution on behalf of the College.

D. Supporting a Bereaved Pupil (Death)

- a. The member of staff receiving the information of pupil losing a loved one should pass the information to those who have pastoral responsibility for the pupil and the SLT.
- b. Teaching staff should be informed. All staff will be asked to be extra supportive and considerate to the pupil during this time.
- c. The Principal should contact the family and pass on the College’s condolences. They should all inform the family of what support is available, particularly access to a quiet space for reflection.
- d. When the pupil returns to school, particularly if they are returning very soon after the death, they should be met by a member of staff known to the pupil. They will then offer the pupil the various support structures available within the College.
- e. The progress of the pupil should be monitored over the coming months, this will include academic, social and general attitude.

- f. Bereavement will affect pupils in different ways; some will be able to work through at first but then be hit by the reality of the loss later on; others may have a sudden yet short traumatic response, while with others this could be sustained.
  - g. When supporting a number of pupils, it might be an idea to create a group that can meet regularly to discuss their feelings and develop strategies to express grief while carrying on with life.
  - h. If any member of staff has a concern for a pupil's mental or physical well-being they must record their concern in the normal manner through the CPOMS system.
- E. Supporting a Bereaved Staff Member (death)
- a. The person receiving the information of a member of staff losing a loved one should pass the information to the Principal and the person's line manager. Teaching staff should be informed.
  - b. The Principal or Line Manger should contact the member of staff to pass on the College's condolences. They should all inform them of what support is available.
  - c. Requests for compassionate leave of absence, including requests to a funeral, should be made on the completion of a leave of absence form where it is practical/possible to do so. The Vice Principal will liaise with the Principal and Assistant Principal in supporting the person through their bereavement.
  - d. The College, if welcomed by the individual, will send representatives to the funeral. Staff who wish to attend should complete a leave of absence form following the usual procedure.

#### 4. On-going Care and Support (death)

- 4.1 Paragraph 4.2 & 4.3 are in regard to pupils who have suffered a bereavement; 4.4 is in regard to members of staff and 4.5 & 4.6 to both.
- 4.2 The Class Teacher/Form Tutor will have daily contact with the pupil and should act as the primary source of support and link to the pupil's family. As and when they feel it is appropriate, they should keep the family informed of how the pupil is coping with the loss in school and can be informed by the family of the pupil's home life as well. Any concerns of continuous problems and need for further support should be raised with the SLT/SENDSCO; parents must be kept informed of any issues and support arising from these. This support must be considered on individual level and be as and when it is required; the pupil must have access to this whenever they require it. CAMHS may also be involved. A record of all communication should be kept as a matter of good practice on G4S or, where more appropriate, CPOMS.
- 4.3 The Pastoral Team might also be involved in offering support. This could involve offering a quiet place reflection as well as directing the pupil through activities that can be found in Appendix 2 of this policy.
- 4.4 The Line Manager of a bereaved staff member should be the first point of contact for them. They should liaise with SLT to ensure that appropriate support structures are in place for allowing the member of staff to take a break from, return to or carrying on with their work within the College. They should closely monitor how the bereaved

person is adapting to this loss and raise any concerns they have if they believe the individual is not coping well.

- 4.5 Bereavement Counselling may be offered initially or if deemed necessary over a sustained basis. The right path of counselling for the bereaved must be sort after, this may be within the College life, or it may involve outside agencies.
- 4.6 Significant change or loss: the College is aware that a significant change in a person's life such as divorce, separation or movement, evoke a form of bereavement. The affected person can demonstrate all of the distressing signs of bereavement. Paragraphs D and E's procedures may become applicable and the relative support must be offered.

## **5 Training**

- 5.1 It is important that all involved with the implementation of this policy feel comfortable and able to do so, therefore there should be adequate training provided for those who wish to access it.
- 5.2 For most staff this training will take the form of general awareness raising, ensuring members of staff know their responsibilities and who they should contact in given situations.
- 5.3 For staff particularly concerned with the management of a bereavement, they should be given the opportunity to undertake relevant training.
- 5.4 The charity CRUSE provides regional training on a regular basis their details can be found in Appendix 4.

## **6 Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

- 6.1 The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- 6.2 It will be reviewed every three years.

## Appendix 1

### Poems to help with bereavement

#### Look for me in Rainbows

Time for me to go now, I won't say goodbye;  
Look for me in rainbows, way up in the sky.  
In the morning sunrise when all the world is new,  
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.  
Time for me to leave you, I won't say goodbye;  
Look for me in rainbows, high up in the sky.  
In the evening sunset, when all the world is through,  
Just look for me and love me, and I'll be close to you.  
It won't be forever, the day will come and then  
My loving arms will hold you, when we meet again.  
Time for us to part now, we won't say goodbye;  
Look for me in rainbows, shining in the sky.  
Every waking moment, and all your whole life through  
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.  
Just wish me to be near you,  
And I'll be there with you.

Conn Bernard (1990). Vicki Brown

#### Do not stand at my grave and weep.

Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glint on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you wake in the morning hush,  
I am the swift, uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circling flight.  
I am the soft starlight at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and weep.  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry.  
I am not there, I did not die!

Mary Frye (1932)

### **Turn Again To Life**

If I should die and leave you here a while,  
be not like others sore undone,  
who keep long vigil by the silent dust.  
For my sake turn again to life and smile,  
nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do  
something to comfort other hearts than thine.  
Complete these dear unfinished tasks of mine  
and I perchance may therein comfort you.

Mary Lee Hall

### **Epitaph on a Friend**

*(Good for a teacher)*

An honest man here lies at rest,  
The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
The friend of age, and guide of youth:  
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,  
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd;  
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there is none, he made the best of this.

Robert Burns

## **Appendix 2**

### **Activities for allowing children to express grief.**

#### **A Writing a letter to the deceased/parted:**

Often a bereavement can come unexpected and leaving the child unprepared. They may feel like there were things that were left unsaid, if left unaddressed this could cause harm to the child, maybe leaving them with a strong sense of guilt or frustration. Encourage the child to write everything they want to say in a letter to the deceased, this could include feelings of: sorrow; anger; thankfulness or just an opportunity to say goodbye. This can also act as an on-going coping mechanism allowing the child to express different emotions as they move through the different stages of the grieving process

#### **B Drawing a picture:**

This can be particularly effective for younger children and those who feel less able to vocabularise their feelings. The opportunity to draw allows the child to gain control again of the situation and also allows those supporting the child to be aware of what the child is thinking.

#### **C A memorial space:**

This could be particularly helpful for a group of children who are grieving together. The space should be accessible to the pupils and marked clearly, maybe with a photograph, they should be able to place here flowers, pictures, prayers, candles etc. as signs of expressing this grief. After the funeral this should be carefully removed by informing the children beforehand and asking them to help plan a lasting memorial such as a tree, bench or plaque.

## Appendix 3

### Beliefs of different faith traditions regarding death and the afterlife.

What is presented here is not meant to be an in-depth exploration of the beliefs of all major religions. Rather it is a short overview of the religious beliefs of the majority of the members of the College communities.

**Buddhism:** Buddhists do not believe in a God, so remembrances would not mention a deity. They believe in the concept of rebirth, after the person dies the Karma (the accumulated effects of a person's actions) will direct their next standard of life. Buddhist funerals are dignified but not sad events, and the body is usually cremated

**Christianity:** Christianity is focused on the promise of eternal life that is entered into after death, thanks to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Cremation or burial of the body is permitted. Most funerals will take place in a Church; Catholics Funerals can either be a similar service or a Mass. Depending on the denomination these funerals can be celebrations of life or solemn and reflective; flexible in content or a set liturgy. Catholics believed that it is important to pray for those who have died as this can aid in the soul's journey into heaven. Most protestant will not pray for the dead as they believe what happens to the soul after death is determined by their life and faith while on earth.

**Hinduism:** Hindus believe in reincarnation; they believe this is because it is the soul's desire to return to the Supreme Spirit (creator). To do this it must be clean and the purification takes a number of life times. Post-mortems are prohibited and adults must be cremated; though infants and young children may be buried. This should be done as soon as possible preferably the same day. White clothing is a sign of mourning.

**Islam:** The Islamic Faith has very particular funeral rituals. They believe the soul leaves the body at the moment of death and the body then belongs to God. Cremation is not allowed as it believes it will prohibit the soul from returning to God. Muslims prefer to bury the body within 24 hours, women do not attend funeral services and men wear white clothing as a sign of respect.

**Judaism:** The Jewish scriptures do not make many references to the afterlife and there are divided thoughts upon it. Cremation is not permitted and it is disrespectful to delay the burial it should take place within 24 hours. There are four stages

of mourning for Jews: the first is between the death and the funeral when the mourners should be released from all other obligations; the second is the week after the funeral when the mourners stay at home and receive fellow Jews to pray with them; the third is the first month which allows for gradual return to normal life; the final period last eleven months when male mourners are required to recite the Kaddish prayer every morning.

Secular Humanists: Do not believe in a God or afterlife but highly value human life and personality. Humanist funerals remember and honour the person who has died while facing the finality of death with courage.

Sikhism: Hold similar burial rites and beliefs as Hindus; bodies are cremated not buried. White is the colour for mourning.

## Appendix 4

### Local charities and support networks/ available resources

- Childhood Bereavement UK help children and young people (up to age 25), parents, and families, to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. They also provide training to professionals, equipping them to provide the best possible care to bereaved families. National Helpline **0800 02 888 40** (Freephone. Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm) <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>
- The Compassionate Friend- Nationwide network for bereaved parents and families; Tele: 0345 123 2304 [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)
- Cruse Bereavement Care- local support for children and young people, including practical and financial matters; 1:1 counselling: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/> Free helpline: **0808 808 1677**
- Winston’s Wish Family Line- information; guidance; residential weekends 08452 030405; [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)
- Care for the Family- support for bereaved parents; organised and ran by those who have experienced a loss: [www.cff.org.uk](http://www.cff.org.uk); 029 2081 0800;
- Samaritans: (0)20 8394 8300; <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/>
- The Laura Centre- support for those who have lost a child; or school aged children who have lost a parent: 01162 544341; [www.thelauracentre.org](http://www.thelauracentre.org)
- Nottingham Bereavement Trust: 0800 435455 <https://www.bereavement-trust.org.uk/>
- Rainbows <http://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk> Telephone: 01372 363438
- Speech mark – ‘Helping children with Feelings’ [www.speechmark.net](http://www.speechmark.net)
- A series of books produced by Speechmark called Helping Children with Feelings goes through many different situations providing activities and guidance for children.

# GRIEF WHEEL

