

The Holmesdale School

Bereavement Policy

PERSON RESPONSIBLE	Head of School
DATE LAST REVIEWED	June 2024
DATE NEXT REVIEW	June 2025
DATE LAST APPROVED BY LGB	10/07/2024

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as socio-economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

Supporting our students and families through bereavement

At The Holmesdale school, we believe that bereavement and loss are an inevitable part of living and growing. We provide opportunities within our school for students to develop their own appropriate range of emotional, spiritual and intellectual responses to manage these experiences.

Bereavement affects everyone in different ways and for different periods of time. There is no right or wrong reaction to death. Whatever the level of understanding about bereavement, we have a duty to help support anyone in the way that best meets their needs.

At The Holmesdale school we aim to achieve the following:

- To deal sensitively and compassionately with difficult and upsetting circumstances.
- To meet the needs of all our students and staff and provide much needed support.
- To work with outside agencies as appropriate.
- For staff to be aware of the needs of the students, as well as their own.
- For students to express their feelings, share their memories and develop coping strategies with the support of sensitive staff.
- To provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all.
- To provide emotional and practical support for families where appropriate.

How The Holmesdale School can support students and their families during a Bereavement

When The Holmesdale school is informed of a bereavement that is linked to a school student e.g. a family member, a close family friend, a pet:

- We will ask parents/carers how the school can be involved to support their child and family.
- We will explain how THS can provide resources to support the child.
- We will monitor any changes in the child's behaviour and share any information with parents/carers.

How The Holmesdale School provides support when there is a death in the school community

Telling staff:

- Where possible discussion should take place with the family and their wishes taken into account before decisions are taken on how and what to tell the staff in school.
- All staff should be informed of a bereavement as soon as possible.
- The Senior Leadership Team will be prepared for reactions to this news including visible upset and feeling of anger/guilt. People may connect the incident to their

own personal experience of bereavement, so feelings about past bereavements may need to be discussed. This is a perfectly natural response.

- Members of the Senior Leadership Team will be available to talk things through with a member of staff, parent or student if they are finding the situation particularly hard. Advice for families will also be provided of support services available to them.
- Bereavement support or counselling should be available for anyone who requires it.

Telling students:

- Students in the same class should be told, in small groups with adults they know.
- A letter should go to the family within school the same day if possible.
- Staff will be provided with guidelines as to how to inform students.
- Students will be given time and space as required to talk and reflect.
- Staff will be as honest as possible about their own feelings and experiences and talk about their relationship with the person.
- Resources to support students will be available.

The family, students and staff will be given an opportunity to celebrate the life of the student/teacher with a special assembly held in school at an appropriate time.

Support for families:

Winston's Wish

Winston's Wish 08088 020 021

<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-supporting-bereaved-children-and-youngpeople/>

Coronavirus: information and guidance for supporting bereaved children and young people.

<https://www.winstonswish.org/telling-a-child-someone-died-from-coronavirus/>

Information and scripts to use if someone the child knows has died from Covid-19.

<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-funerals-alternative-goodbyes/>

Saying goodbye when children cannot attend the funeral.

Grief Encounter

<https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/professionals-schools/>

Support for bereaved children and their families. Includes downloadable documents at the bottom of the webpage on the following:

- Children's concepts of death by age
- Supporting a grieving child in the classroom
- Informing the school community of a death
- Download grief talk posters
- Preparing students for the return of grieving classmate

Child Bereavement UK

Child Bereavement UK 0800 02 888 40

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=bc9f3d7d-7b43-421a-8ed4-4335f9c23b35>

Downloadable information sheet with tips for supporting bereaved children through difficult times.

CRUSE

<https://www.cruse.org.uk>

Support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies. There's a section for schools <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-schools>

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy

www.bcap.org.uk

A directory of registered counsellors and some advice on coping with the coronavirus epidemic.

Not Too Young to Grieve is a film created with Childhood Bereavement Network and explores how very young people respond to loss

<https://www.leedsanimation.org.uk/films/15>