St. Michael's CE (Controlled) Junior School

Inspired by Him, we serve the community of St Michael's by creating an inclusive learning culture where all differences are respected, where courage is shown to face and overcome adversity, and resilience is embedded in our journey to success so we can be the very best we can be.

Bereavement Policy

Last Review Date	July 2023
Distribution List	All Staff
Next Review Date	
Remarks No changes from the policy adopted in July 2022 Policy reviewed and adopted at the FGB meeting held on 13th July 2023	

St. Michael's CE (Controlled) Junior School aims to provide a caring Christian Community where everyone is valued and nurtured within a safe environment. All our policies take account of and reflect the distinctive nature of our Church of England School.

Aims and Ethos

By following our values and the Christian ethos of the school, our aim is to ensure that, in the event of a bereavement, all members of the school community feel supported and cared for. Where the impact of the grief is more complex, referral to more specialist support may need to be considered. Advice will be sought via the Family Support Worker (FSW), DSLs and, when appropriate, the ELSA team.

Additional information and resources can be found at: **www.childbereavementuk.org**

Policy Links:

PSHE and RSE Policy
Behaviour Policy
Equalities Policy

Rationale

1 in 29 pupils aged five to sixteen-years olds has been bereaved of a parent or sibling – that is one in every class. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, relative, friend or other significant person. Within a school community, there will almost always be some pupils who are struggling with bereavement – or sometimes the entire school community is impacted by the death of a member of staff or a pupil.

This policy provides clear guidelines to be followed after bereavement. The aim is to provide the support and care for both pupils and adults, and for staff to have confidence in their actions when bereavement happens. Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and this policy has been developed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances.

The emotional health and wellbeing of our school community is of paramount importance, which is reflected in our ethos and Christian values. We embed this in all aspects of school life, and provide a nurturing environment and curriculum that will support and prepare pupils for coping with separation or loss of a loved one, through either death or divorce.

Objectives

- To have a framework for all staff that gives guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately with the bereavement.
- To support pupils and/or members of staff before (where applicable), during and after bereavement.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between members of staff, pupils, the family/carers and the community.
- To identify key staff within school
- To have clear expectations about the way school will respond to a death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all.

Roles and Responsibilities

- In the case of the loss of a child: The Headteacher will take the lead and delegate care and support as appropriate
- In the case of the loss of a close family member of a child: The Headteacher will take the lead and delegate care and support as appropriate. A team will be formed to support the child.
- In the case of the loss of an extended family member of a child: The class teacher will liaise with the ELSA team or the FSW, depending on the circumstances
- In the case of a child experiencing the 'loss' of a parent through divorce: The class teacher will liaise with the ELSA team or the FSW, depending on the circumstances
- In the case of the death of a staff member: Members of SLT will take the lead, liaising with and taking advice from www.childbereavementuk.org and/or www.cruse.org.uk

Section 1: The Death of a Pupil or a Member of Staff

In the case of sudden or traumatic death of a pupil, the school may be called upon to be a part of a multi-agency review. The best person to liaise with the family may depend on the specific situation, relationship with the pupil/family and experience of the member of staff. The Headteacher will lead on this and delegate support and responsibility according to the situation and considering the wishes of the family.

The indiscriminate spread of news via social media may mean that some members of the school community hear the news before others.

Any news regarding the loss of a member of the school community will be communicated via a face to face staff briefing at the earliest possible time. This will be led by the Headteacher or a member of SLT when the Headteacher is unavailable.

If the news comes out of school hours and it is deemed by the Headteacher that it is urgent for staff to be informed, a telephone pyramid will be used to communicate, in the same way as emergency school closure.

The potentially negative impact of hearing the news via text message/social media/email must be considered.

When it is appropriate to deliver news to pupils, this will be done in smaller groups with a familiar adult (preferably within classes). Consideration must be made to the special circumstances, relationships and the particular needs of each pupil. If a pupil has died, news should be shared with their own class/year group first.

In a significantly distressing event, it may be appropriate to establish a safe place (See notes in the next section) to grieve for both pupils and staff. Pastoral support will be available from class teachers, ELSAs, FSW and members of SLT.

External bereavement support organisations may be contacted if external support is deemed necessary.

Support and information can be found on the Child Bereavement UK website www.childbereavementuk.org

If a pupil dies by suicide, Samaritans provide a Step-by-Step programme to support schools.
They can be contacted on: 0808 168 2528

Procedures

- Clarify information and the wishes of family/families.
- Share the news with staff.
- Prepare a script.
- Share news with pupils/parents/carers.

Script and Guidance

Some families will want to share information with the school community while others may not. A simple confirmation of the death may be required until more details are available, and/or the family consulted. As a school, we can help to prevent speculation and rumours, as well as be a source of support for the family and the school community.

Here is a script to follow when delivering news of a death with a child. Do not be afraid or surprised to show emotion; this is a human reaction.

(Let's sit down here.) I am afraid I have some sad news to share with you. …… has died. *(If known, and with the family's permission, explain briefly where and when the death occurred.),* **It happened……** *(If not known, say so, and that you will endeavour to find out. If rumours are rife, say which of these are definitely not correct, if known.)* **I do not know any details yet but I will let you know when I find out anything further.**

Do you have any questions? It is really important that we respect their memory and the wishes of the family so it isn't a good idea to share the news yet, especially on social media. Do you understand why? I know we will really miss…… but let's think about the great memories that we have and can cherish. We may be sad now and may feel sad for a little while to come and that is completely normal. You might also find that some people may not feel sad and that is completely normal too. We are here for you at any time. Who do you think you might want to talk to most if you do start to feel sad at any time?

- Start by acknowledging you have some sad news to give.
- Be honest. Give the news stating simple facts, use the words dead/died.
- If known, and with the family's permission, explain briefly where and when the death occurred.
- If not known, say so, and that you will endeavour to find out. If rumours are rife, say which of these are definitely not correct, if known. Where appropriate, remind pupils of their responsibilities and the impact when posting on social media.
- Talk briefly and positively about the person who died without eulogising them.
- Mention any arrangements already in place, including for those needing support.
- Acknowledge that not everyone will be feeling sad and that is OK.
- Allow a break in the timetable for pupils to process the news and take a little time-out.
- A template letter to parents/carers is provided (see examples at Appendices 2-4 attached). The https://www.childbereavementuk.org/ website provides information for parents to help them discuss a death with their children. They may also be directed to guided support from Child Bereavement UK's Helpline on 0800 02 88840 or Live Chat on the website, available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

The First Few Days

It may be appropriate for there to be adjustments in the curriculum and timetable. The responsibility for any changes will be between the Year Leaders and the Deputy Headteacher. This may be due to sensitive issues, staffing issues or indeed the need for some reflection time.

Space may need to be allocated for time out – this will be decided on a case by case basis, using The Snug, The Ark or The Nest as appropriate.

As appropriate, a book of condolence may be set up by the office staff and be made accessible to staff and pupils. The ideal location for this would be the meeting room. However, it will be decided at the time and the individual situation will be considered.

The family should have the opportunity to visit, if they wish to, or as a school we could take photographs to share with them later.

Staff will be consulted before removing any temporary tribute, giving notice to prepare them beforehand.

The Funeral

It is essential that the family be consulted to find out whether members of staff and/or pupils are welcome to attend.

Children and staff could be involved in choosing flowers or organising a collection. Again, this must take the family's wishes into account.

The Deputy Headteacher will be responsible for covering staff absence to allow those wishing to attend the funeral to do so. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to close the school. Procedures to be checked and established by the Headteacher.

If pupils are in attendance, this should ideally be under parental supervision. If this is not possible, SLT may need to look into arrangements to attend, supervise and support.

Support for Pupils

Internal:
SLT
Class Teacher and LSA
ELSA
FSW

Support for Staff

Training
Stress management
Reviewing Staff Welfare

Internal:
SLT
Work Colleagues
Governors

Remembering

The family of the person who has died must be consulted about any plans for a memorial, assembly or other tribute. A more permanent memorial may be appropriate and could be designed and chosen by the children (a tree, a special garden, a piece of artwork, a bench). This needs to be communicated following any changes in school leadership to ensure that, in the future, the removal, relocation or replacement will be managed sensitively.

Section 2: Supporting a Bereaved Pupil

In the event that a pupil loses a parent/carer or sibling during the school day, sudden or otherwise, members of the family will be encouraged to come into school to talk to the child:

- As soon as physically possible
- In a quiet, private room
- Supported by a member of staff known by the child (and family if possible).
- Supporting member of staff to be prepared to take the lead if needed.
- Be honest and factual using the words dead/died.
- Give the child the choice to go home/stay in school, whatever they want to do.

In the event that a pupil loses a close family member, there will be a team of staff who will support the child. Depending on the circumstances, this team may comprise of their class teacher, LSA, FSW, ELSA and a member of SLT. If the child has had time away from school, it is essential that the pupil and their family/carers can establish what has happened and to discuss their return to school.

The purpose of this meeting should be to:

- Acknowledge the death.
- Find out how the pupil would like to share their news.
- Organise a safe space for the bereaved pupil to go if they feel overwhelmed by their grief and need a 'time-out'. This will be personal to them. For example, a 'time-out' card, a non-verbal signal or message. Whoever is leading the bereavement team (Usually the class teacher or the FSW) should inform anyone who works with the child of any special arrangements that have been made for emotional support.
- Discuss as a team, with the child and the family, where necessary, whether to provide 'time-out' activities – journals, art and craft, books, screen time, memory boxes etc.
- Decide how you will communicate with the pupil, between members of staff and between home and school.
- Consider any support that may be needed for peers when they have a bereaved friend.

A short film is available on the Child Bereavement UK website:
www.childbereavementuk.org/for-teachers-when-a-pupil-returns-to-school-afterbeing-bereaved

In the event that a pupil loses an extended family member, parents should be encouraged to share this news with the class teacher or a member of SLT at the earliest opportunity so that the emotional wellbeing of the child can be monitored. If the child struggles with the loss then extra support will be considered from ELSA or the FSW.

In the event that a pupil experiences loss due to a separation or divorce, parents should also be encouraged to share this news with the class teacher or a member of SLT at the earliest opportunity so that the emotional wellbeing of the child can be monitored. If the child struggles with the loss then extra support will be considered from ELSA or the FSW.

Longer Term Support

The pupil will continue to experience grief for the rest of their life and may require ongoing support. **Significant dates or anniversaries, Mother's/Father's Day** etc. may be particularly difficult. Therefore, any significant dates must be logged and any children who may have sensitivities around particular celebration days must be flagged up. This information **will kept on Arbor and CPOMs as confidential but must form part of any handover or transition**. Regular contact with the family/carers and reviews with the pupil will help to build up an overall picture of how the pupil is coping. Where necessary, this will be led by the FSW.

The grief may affect the pupil's progress. Some pupils work hard and may put themselves under extra pressure to succeed, while others may find it difficult to focus in class and on their work. There may also be changes in their behaviour. Therefore, **any child who has had a significant bereavement, will have a Case Study in order to track their progress both academically and socially. Support from ELSA and/FSW may be considered at any time.**

Bereaved young people can find change difficult, so preparing them in advance may help them to voice their worries and ease the process. **Therefore, in times of transition, bereaved children will be included with other vulnerable children in receiving social stories and other extra transition visits and tasks to support them in times of significant change.**

Death, Grief, and Bereavement in the Curriculum and Whole School Worship

- The teaching of the topic of death, grief and bereavement will help pupils to understand feelings of grief and prepare them for the future.
- All Year groups have a unit of work designed to help children understand death and the emotions that will be experienced.
- Death is a topic that will be addressed through class and whole school worship, making links to bible stories
- Resources such as 'The Elephant's Tea Party' will be used in lessons, along with other age-appropriate reading material. These will be available to view, on request from parents.
- Parents or carers will be informed in advance of either worship or class teaching to help gather information about previous bereavements so that vulnerable pupils can be prepared for the lesson.
- Recently bereaved pupils may find it helpful if they are given the option to work elsewhere or step outside, if they think it would be too painful to attend.

Support for Staff

Being alongside anyone experiencing a loss can be emotionally draining, and supporting a bereaved pupil particularly so. At certain points in time, some members of staff may be more vulnerable due to circumstances in their own lives. Having a team to support a bereaved child will mean that the emotional weight can be shared. However, the Deputy Head and/or the Headteacher must monitor the team closely and provide access to external support where necessary and will provide details of support agencies for staff. A list of external agencies is attached at Appendix 1 to this Policy.

Further information about training can be found at www.childbereavementuk.org or contact Child Bereavement UK's Helpline on 0800 02 888 40 or **Live Chat** on the website, available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Useful Contacts

Child Bereavement UK
Helpline: 0800 02 888 40
childbeareavement.org

Simon Says
Helpline: 02380647550
https://www.simonsays.org.uk/

Winston's Wish
Support for children and young people after the death of a parent or sibling.
Helpline: 08088 020 021
https://www.winstonswish.org/

riprap
Support for a child whose parent has cancer.
http://www.riprap.org.uk/

Young Minds
Helpline: 0808 802 5544
https://youngminds.org.uk/

Grief Encounter Project
Support for bereaved children, young people and their families.
Helpline: 0808 802 0111
www.griefencounter.com

Cruse
Support for anyone who has been bereaved.
Helpline: 0808 808 1677
https://www.cruse.org.uk/

Bereavement Trust
Support for anyone who has been bereaved.
Helpline: 0800 435 455 6pm-10pm every evening
www.bereavement-trust.org.uk

Child Death
Support for anyone affected by the death of a child of any age.
Helpline: 0800 282 986
www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

The Good Grief Trust
www.thegoodgrieftrust.org
Enables anyone who has been bereaved to find their nearest local support organisation.

NSPCC
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/

Gingerbread
https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/

Hampshire: Services to support children and young people experiencing bereavement and loss

Appendix 1 to SJMS – Bereavement Policy July 2020

National Organisations

- **Child Bereavement UK**
Advice and support for children & young people, parents & carers & professionals. Variety of support available
Web: https://www.childbereavementuk.org/
Helpline: 0800 02 88840

- **Hope Again (youth website of Cruse)**
Advice and support for children & young people, parents and carers and professionals. Variety of support available
Web: https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/

- **Winston's Wish**
Advice and support for children & young people, parents & carers & professionals. Variety of support available
Web: https://www.winstonswish.org/
Helpline: 08088 020 021

- **Childhood Bereavement Network**
National hub for those supporting bereaved children. Advice, resources and signposting for children & young people, parents & carers & professionals
Web: http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/help-around-a-death/what-you-can-do/for-young-people.aspx

- **Grief Encounter**
Advice and support for children & young people, parents & carers and professionals. Variety of support available including support through social media
Web: https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/
Helpline: 0808 802 0111

- **Young Minds**
Advice and support for teenagers, parents & carers. Signposting to above organisations for direct support
Web: https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/grief-and-loss/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMImfuR1J3E6AIVBbTtCh2XlgcTEAAYBCAAEgL3rPD_BwE

- **NHS**
Advice and signposting
Web: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/children-and-bereavement/

- **APPS**
Grief: Support for Young People (Apple & Android)

Local Organisations

- **Simon Says**
Advice and support for children & young people, parents & carers, and professionals. Variety of support available
Web: https://www.simonsays.org.uk/
Support line: 023 8064 7550

- **Hampshire & IOW Educational Psychology (HIEP)** Support, guidance, and resources for professionals working with children and young people
North (Basingstoke): 01252 814 835
South (Havant): 02392 441 497
East (Rushmoor): 01252 814 729
West (Winchester): 01962 876 239
Isle of Wight: 02392 441 497
HIEP also provide ELSA training and supervision for Hampshire – contact your local office for further information

- **The Red Lipstick Foundation**
Support for families bereaved by suicide, targeted support available for children and young people
Web: http://www.theredlipstickfoundation.org/

- **Hampshire Connect To Support**
Signposting to local resources for death and bereavement
Web: https://www.connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk/

- **CAMHS**
Advice, support and guidance for children and young people, parent & carers, and professionals. Variety of support available including specialist mental health support where appropriate
Web: https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/issue/bereavement-loss/

Training and Resources

- **Winston's Wish**
Online bereavement training for schools
Web: https://www.winstonswish.org/bereavement-training-courses-schools/

- **Simon Says**
Telephone support line, training, and resources
Web: https://www.simonsays.org.uk/information-for-schools/

- **RADE Resource Centre (Hampshire only)** Books and resources to support staff discuss death with CYP for education professionals, KS1-2/

- **ELSA Support**
Books and workbooks EY-KS2
Web: http://www.elsa-support.co.uk/bereavement-resources-for-parents-and-school-staff/
Contact HIEP for local ELSA training and supervision

- **HCC Postvention Protocol for Schools and Colleges**
Web: https://www.hampshirescp.org.uk/resource-library/prevention-and-postvention-protocol-for-hampshire-schools-and-colleges/

- **Samaritans: Step-by-Step**
Advice, guidance and support for teachers and other education professionals when a student has been affected by suicide Helpline:0808 168 2528

Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Appendix 2 to
SMJS - Bereavement Policy

Dear

We are so very sorry to hear the sad news of <name's> death. There are no words to express our sadness and we can only begin to imagine the anguish you must be going through.

As a school community, we will miss <name> very much and we are doing our best to offer comfort and support to <his/her> friends, classmates and teachers. <name> was a member of our school family.

If we can do anything to help as you plan <name's> funeral, please let us know.

We will continue to keep in touch and will support you in any way we can.

With sympathy.

Headteacher
on behalf of St Michael's CE (Controlled) Junior School Community

St. Michael's C.E. (Controlled) Junior School

Church Lane East, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3SS
Headteacher: Mrs Jenny Jones

Inspired by Him, we serve the community of St Michael's by creating an inclusive learning culture where all differences are respected, where courage is shown to face and overcome adversity, and resilience is embedded in our journey to success so we can be the very best we can be.

Appendix 3 to
SMJS - Bereavement Policy

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am sorry to inform you that a <well-respected/long-standing/well-loved/popular/well-known> member of our staff, <Name>, died <suddenly/in hospital/after a short illness>.

The pupils were told today by their class teacher and many will be reacting to this news. When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal.

We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, visit the Child Bereavement UK website childbereavementuk.org

Our thoughts are with <Name's> family at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will celebrate/remember <Name's> life.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

St. Michael's C.E. (Controlled) Junior School

Church Lane East, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3SS
Headteacher: Mrs Jenny Jones

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Appendix 4 to
SMJS - Bereavement Policy

Dear Parents and Carers,

Your child's class teacher/form tutor/head teacher/head of year had the sad task of informing the pupils of the death of <Name>, a pupil in <Year>.

<Name> died <suddenly/in hospital/after a short illness yesterday/last week/over the weekend/during half term>.

<He/She> was a <valued/cherished/highly regarded/well-liked/popular/friendly> member of the <class/school community> and will be missed by everyone who knew <him/her>.

When someone dies, young people may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, visit the Child Bereavement UK website childbereavementuk.org

Our thoughts are with <Name's> family and friends at this time. We will be in touch with details of how our school will <celebrate/remember Name's> life.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Diocese of Guildford
TRANSFORMING CHURCH TRANSFORMING LIVES

"Love your neighbour as yourself" Luke 10:27
Telephone 01252 322933
Email: adminoffice@st-michaels-jun.hants.sch.uk
Website: www.stmichaelscejunior.co.uk