



Dowson Primary Academy

GRIEF AND LOSS POLICY

March 2023

Review Cycle – 2 Years

Date Agreed by Local Governing Body:

Signed Principal:

Signed Chair of Governing Body:



Michelle Ashley,

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SUPPORTING PUPILS, FAMILIES AND STAFF WITH GRIEF AND LOSS

At Dowson the wellbeing of our pupils, families and staff is of paramount importance and we recognise that children and adults may need support at different times in their life due to grief and loss. We strongly encourage families to share all important events in their lives with school staff and this is especially important regarding loss.

Context

Loss can be experienced by an individual, their immediate family, wider family, friends, local community, the entire school community, the local community, nationally and internationally.

Everyone experiences loss during their lifetime and we as a school intend to support those who are grieving as a response to any event that has had an impact on the wellbeing of either our pupils, parents or staff.

Grief is an emotional response to the change or end of a relationship, routine or circumstance.

We may experience grief as a reaction to many kinds of losses including death of a person or pet, illness, family breakdown, school move, house move, job loss, loss of safety or trust, friendship changes, local and national events. It is believed that in our lifetimes we usually experience more than 40 types of loss.

At the time of originally writing this policy in May 2020, we were in a national lockdown due to the threat of Covid-19. The number of losses experienced by every individual, family, community, and the country were immense and unmeasurable. Losses such as death, social isolation, school closures, changes in working arrangements, job losses and the change in our normal everyday lives was a reality for us all and are possibly still being felt and may be for longer.

Many losses remain unresolved for people and can mount up. This can sometimes result in a deterioration of health, concentration, emotional wellbeing and behaviour.

Consequently, we as a school are committed to addressing the far ranging aspects of grief and loss in a variety of ways.

Recognition and Response

In some cases we will be fully aware of the loss; however it is important for parents to inform us of a loss their child has or will be likely to experience in order for us to work collaboratively to meet their need.

Grief and loss is not limited to death- parents are encouraged to tell us of any change of circumstances that may be affecting their child's emotional or physical wellbeing, in order that we can support them in any way necessary.



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It is important to recognise that reaction to loss is specific to an individual and their relationship with a person or knowledge of an event. In some cases, loss may have a profound effect across a number of people within our community, for example a terrorist attack, or death of a pupil.

We recognise loss as having an effect at 3 levels:

Level 1 – a loss experienced by an individual or family

Level 2 – a loss experienced by a larger group within school community, this may be due to a number of losses or an individual loss impacting on a number of children and families

Level 3 – a loss impacting on the school community and possibly at local or national level

This is not to say that we compare losses or respond differently to individuals based on how many people are experiencing the loss. In all cases a loss will be experienced by the individual in their own way. We will not assume how someone is feeling, we will ask. Children respond to loss in different ways to adults and in a different way to each other and therefore, the responses at the levels will be a carefully planned and considered to meet needs appropriately.

As a general guide:

Level 1 responses will be directed by the needs of the individual. This will be different for each pupil/family and may include teacher support, Grief Recovery support within school or referrals to other Bereavement support or Wellbeing services. Where a child is not in school for whatever reason, a personalised letter may be sent to the child at home (see appendix 1 for an example).

Specific individualised support is available for families who are facing the terminal illness of a parent or child. This support endeavours to assist the family practically and emotionally in the immediate and long term. The death of a parent or sibling is a life changing event regardless of whether it is expected or sudden. Ongoing support including family liaison, funeral attendance and longer term emotional support for the child and family will be offered, regularly considered, reviewed and shared at points of transition e.g., class and school changes.

Level 2 and 3 school responses may be directed as above, within groups or across the entire school community. This may also include accessing support from the wider community including the Trust, the Local Education Authority, Children's Social Services, NHS, Public Health, representatives of our local faith organisations and local and national charities.

School may also consider whole school activities such as assemblies, remembrances and curriculum changes in their response.



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Courses and workshops may also be offered within school to develop confidence in adults to deal with experienced loss or even understand loss and grief in order to be proactive in their approach to helping themselves and others in the future.

Named staff

Parents can discuss any concerns with their child's class teacher or the Pastoral Team.

The Pastoral Team consists of:

The Principal - Mrs Thornburn

Vice Principal - Mrs Lawrence

Assistant Head/SENCo - Mrs Douse

Pastoral Manager - Mrs Bradley

Inclusion Coordinator - Mrs Ashley

The named School Link is Mrs Mel Bradley

Monitoring and Review

Supervision and staff support is provided by the Pastoral Team. Support is reviewed at the time of need and on an individual basis, this is recorded for future reference.

The policy will be reviewed on a two year cycle or at the time of a specific event.

Further Resources

Helpline telephone numbers:

Winston's Wish

(08088 020 021)

Child Bereavement UK

(0800 02 888 40)

Further resources, telephone numbers, contacts and details of websites are available from the school link Mrs Bradley, Mrs Ashley, Mrs Garside and Mrs Thornburn.



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Appendix 1

A sample letter to a child who has suffered a loss/bereavement.

Dear _____,

I am so sorry that your grandma has died.

I am wondering how you are feeling. It might be a strange and confusing time for you. All feelings are normal and OK. There is no right way to feel when someone has died.

I am thinking about you. Mr/Miss/Mrs _____ are thinking about you too. I will be thinking about your kindness, because I've noticed how caring and helpful you are to the younger children on the playground. I will also be thinking about your wonderful singing voice. At the moment, you might feel like singing sometimes, and sometimes you might not. I am looking forward to hearing you singing in assembly when we are all back together in school.

I plan to phone you and your family, to find out more about how you are doing. You can choose whether you would like to speak to me.

Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Best Wishes