

Delivering sad news

A guide to help education professionals, parents and carers tell a young person that someone has died

- **Prepare** - Take time to prepare what you will say to a young person; it is best to start by saying that you have some sad news. Find a safe space away from any distractions and consider how the young person might react to the news, being prepared to be led by them.
- **Explain** - Tell the young person who has died, giving details of where and when, if this is known.
- **Check understanding** - Make sure that the young person has understood what you have told them.
- **Acknowledge** - People react differently to hearing the news that someone has died; they may feel very shocked, upset or numb. Tell them that whatever they are feeling is OK.
- **Answer questions** - Offer an opportunity to ask questions or talk about what happened. If you do not have the answers, say so. Take time to discuss their questions with open and honest conversations.
- **Share feelings** - It's okay to show your feelings; becoming emotional in front of a child or young person shows you are human and helps to let them know that is normal to feel upset and sad. Reassure them that you are okay but are feeling very sad because the person has died. Encourage the young person to share their feelings, memories, and any worries they may have.
- **Consider next steps** - Talk with the young person about what they might do next. This might include giving them additional information as it becomes available, spending time with family, or doing something in memory of the person who has died.
- **Discuss support** - Talk to the young person about who can support them such as their extended family, school and friends. You could also talk to them about resources and support organisations which can help them to manage their grief, or provide further support if needed.

Child Bereavement UK's free national Helpline provides confidential support and information for professionals and families. We can respond to emails and Live Chat via our website. Our website also provides a range of resources for schools and families:

Helpline: 0800 02 888 40

Live Chat via childbereavementuk.org

Email support@childbereavementuk.org

9am-5pm, Monday-Friday (except Bank Holidays).

**For large print version
call: 0800 02 888 40**

To give feedback on our information, email
support@childbereavementuk.org