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**St Michael's**  
Catholic Academy



A Proud Member of  
**BISHOP  
HOGARTH**  
Catholic Education Trust

Head Teacher: Clare Humble

16 January 2024

Dear Parent and Carers,

It is with a heavy heart that I write to you today to let you know that yesterday St Michael's was deeply saddened to learn of the death of one of our students in Year 9.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team and I have now formally spoken to all students at school. I would encourage you to let your child know that you have received this letter from school and that you are aware that one of our students has sadly died.

Of course, the death of a young person can evoke an array of emotions for everyone, and we understand that this news will come as a big shock to our students, staff and parents and we want to reassure you that we are on hand to provide support.

Both students and staff have been involved in assemblies today to pray for her and her family at this time. Our Chapel will be constantly open throughout the day, to all our children and staff will be on hand to support them. We have engaged additional counselling services from Kooth, a children's mental health charity and we are awaiting confirmation of extra support from Alliance. Please remember that we also have our School Counsellor, Karen Stephenson, in school to provide additional support.

Our staff will listen and respond to all student concerns and there will be a dedicated team coordinating emotional and practical support for students. We would like you to direct any specific questions to our safeguarding team, either by phone or using their school emails found on our school web site. The safeguarding team are: Mrs. C Carey (ccarey), Mrs. V Abbs (vabbs), Mrs. K Stephenson (stephensonk) and Ms. H El Sherif (helsherif).

We will continue to provide routine and continuity for all students throughout the coming weeks. We will liaise with the family regarding our own memorial and will write again with more information in due course.

We have urged the children to be especially sensitive when using social media and to respect the family's privacy at this very sad time.

Professionals have given us the following advice and guidance for you when talking to your children and we hope this will be helpful:

- Children can react very differently to news of a death, some may appear to carry on almost without reacting, while others may cry and be completely overcome by their feelings. It is good to remember that there is no right or wrong way to grieve and no rule book to follow.
- Be honest when talking about the death and use sensitive but honest language.
- Try not to overwhelm your child with information or give more information than asked for.

***Act Justly, Love Tenderly and Walk Humbly with your God***

- Children may when receiving news of a death, ask a few questions at a time to process the information. Children may need to ask the same questions repeatedly.
- Avoid speculating on anything related to the death, especially on social media.
- Reassure your children that you are available to listen and talk about the death.
- If your child is concerned and upset by how they are feeling it can help to know that other people often feel shocked, numb, angry, sad and overwhelmed by the death.
- Encourage your child to ask for support in school if needed.
- If you are concerned about the emotional and mental health of a child or adult contact a professional. If not school, contact your GP.
- If they or you are worried about them harming themselves, ask them direct questions, such as “sometimes when people feel like you do, they think about suicide and harming themselves, is that what you are thinking about”?

### **Sources of support outside of school**

- YoungMinds 0808 802 5544 (Parents Helpline) 85258 (Crisis Messenger for young people – text the letters YM) [youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)
- Childline 0800 1111 [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)
- Emergency services on 999 if you believe a child is at imminent risk.

At this time of great loss and sadness, our thoughts and prayers are with everyone in our school family.

Yours sincerely,



**Mrs. Clare Humble**  
**Headteacher**

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