



The Khalsa Academy Wolverhampton – A Khalsa Academies Trust School

Bereavement & Loss Policy

This policy is applicable to Khalsa Academy Wolverhampton

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“At The Khalsa Academy Wolverhampton, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community. We pursue this aim using our universal Sikh values, of Sat (Truth), Santokh (Altruism), Daya (Compassion), Dharam (Service), Himmatt (Courage), Chardi Kala (Resilience) and Pyaar (Love). In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health, by developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective procedures to promote a safe and stable environment for students and staff affected both directly and indirectly by ill mental health.” **TKAW Mental Health Statement**

1. Aims & Objectives

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how The Khalsa Academy Wolverhampton (TKAW) will respond to a death in our school community
- Set out a plan for communicating deaths in a timely manner that balances our school community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased
- Identify best practices for supporting students and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the governing board
- Provide a roadmap and framework for students or staff returning to school following bereavement

The core objectives of the policy are:

- To support students and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after bereavement
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.
- To identify key staff within school and the Local Authority and clarify the pathway of support
- The Children Act 1989 aimed to ensure that the welfare of the child was paramount, working in partnership with parents to protect the child from harm (http://www.careandthelaw.org.uk/eng/b_section2). All intentions of this policy endorse that aim as we endeavour to counter any adverse effects of bereavement and maintain students' emotional well-being.

2. Roles & Responsibilities

The school will respond in a planned and agreed manner, so that all staff know what is expected and can contribute in a way that is consistent with the ethos of the school. The Principal will co-ordinate the school's response and be vital in creating an appropriate atmosphere. They will be the first point of contact and will liaise with

all parties concerned and affected. In addition, a small group of staff will be identified to keep in touch with the family, such as:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mental Health First Aider
- SENDCO

2.1 The Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for delegating any responsibilities under this policy to other members of staff.

The Principal will:

- Liaise with the family of the deceased
- Where appropriate, communicate details of a death to students and staff as set out in this policy, or activate communication teams
- Respond to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Participate in any multi-agency reviews as requested
- Lead reintegration meetings for students or staff returning to school after a bereavement
- Arrange for monitoring and support of the pastoral support team or any individual staff members who are supporting bereaved students or staff

2.2 Pastoral Staff

The Pastoral Team has responsibility for monitoring and supporting bereaved students and staff members (including before their bereavement, where relevant – for example, in the case of terminal illness).

The Pastoral Team will:

- Provide direct support to bereaved students and staff
- Signpost to external support available to bereaved students and staff
- Organise safe spaces for bereaved members of the school community to take a time out
- Organise memorials, e.g. temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages
- Arrange for the attendance and supervision of students at funerals (where permitted)
- Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved students or staff and ensure they're supported on those days
- Provide additional support during significant transitions e.g. when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school

2.3 The Trust

The Trust is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy, and supporting the Principal.

The Trust will:

- Undertake regular monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them, for example through regular meetings between the Safeguarding Trustee and the DSL
- Monitor the Principal's emotional wellbeing, for example through regular meetings between the Principal and the CEO
- Assist the Principal, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Where necessary, arrange for another staff member to take the lead if the Principal is not available to respond to a death immediately

3. Staff Support & Training

Supporting students and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported.

- The Principal will arrange for staff to receive one on one time with a member of staff trained in bereavement support
- Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate.
- All staff are provided with online training in supporting bereavement and loss

4. Procedures

The school will;

- Speak to the family, if possible, offer them condolences and support before ascertaining what they would like to happen;
- Give them a direct telephone number for someone they can contact in school;
- Obtain factual information to avoid unnecessary speculation;
- Inform staff straight away;
- Decide where students will be told if this is necessary. The school will identify the most vulnerable students and give the support they might need;
- Tell the students as soon as possible in familiar groups by someone they know;
- Send a letter to families on the same day if possible;
- Give guidance to parents on supporting bereaved children.

4.1 The Funeral

The school will;

- Find out the families wishes and how far they wish the school community to be involved;

- Identify which staff and students may want to attend and the practicalities of issues such as staff cover and transport.
- Send flowers if acceptable;
- Consider the cultural and religious implications if appropriate;
- Enable the person(s) who had the closest relationship with the child to attend the hospital and/or funeral - this would usually be the current class team but may be a staff member who had worked closely with the child in a previous class, and be able to have absence to attend

4.2 Long Term Illness

The school will:

- Designate one person to make contact with the child/staff family to find out their wishes about staff visiting.
- Ensure they keep abreast of any developments without causing distress to the family;
- Advise staff of the family's wishes;
- Enable, wherever possible staff to visit with permission from the family
- Support the school community with accurate information and support.

4.3 Support for bereaved students

Not all children and young people will need the support of specialist practitioners; they need familiar people who care.

The school will offer:

- A routine, providing a sense of normality;
- Some space, away from an emotional intense atmosphere;
- Neutral space and people to share their feelings without the worry of upsetting a loved one;
- Time to be themselves without feeling guilty (being with friends, time to socialise in a safe space outside the home environment);
- Regular correspondence with home, providing reassurance about behaviour and general well-being, will ensure the child or young person is managing their grief;
- Access to appropriate resources via the Student Welfare Officer and external agencies as appropriate
- Preparation time for children and young people to discuss what to say and how to behave when the bereaved child or young person returns to school;

- Time for staff to be aware of changes in behaviour that may be related to the death;
- An individual link person to support the students when necessary;
- A suitable place in school for students who need some space if too upset to stay in the classroom and people to whom they can go for support.

4.4 Support for students generally

The school will:

- Identify students who may be particularly vulnerable or likely to experience symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;
- Compile and keep updated a list of outside professionals and agencies who can come into the school in the event of a traumatic death to counsel students;
- Remember and commemorate the person who has passed if a member of the school community.

4.5 Support for staff

The school will:

- Support bereaved staff and acknowledge they may be struggling with their own reactions and emotions while supporting students;
- Plan for informal mutual support to give staff an opportunity to share feelings and reactions.
- Give people time to attend the funeral if appropriate;
- Offer general training for all staff;
- Be aware of resources available and give time to staff to become familiar with what is available.

4.6 Support for parents

The school will:

- Communicate with the family straight away and offer support;
- Send a letter of condolence;
- Give out information to appropriate people depending on the families wishes;
- Give parents and family the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who has died;
- Send a representative to the funeral if appropriate;
- Hold a collection/flowers to be sent as appropriate;

- Invite parents/carers to any commemorative events held by the school, both at the time and in subsequent years;

4.7 Memorials

TKAW will give the following opportunities to commemorate loss for parents/carers, staff and students:

- Hold memorial assemblies;
- Enter messages into the school memorial book
- Offer support to individuals who wish to talk about their experiences;
- Offer counselling to students who need to explore and learn to understand their emotions;
- Give students opportunities to talk within a group about their experiences.

4.8 Responding to the media

Some deaths may attract media attention. All members of staff will be advised not to respond to journalists and to refer all enquiries to the Principal, who will make a considered response after seeking assistance from the trust and the Local Authority Press Office.

5. Support for students returning to school after bereavement

Whether a student has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

5.1 Reintegration meeting

The Head of School and/or DSL will meet with the bereaved student and their parents/carers to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the student is emotionally ready to return to the classroom either full-time or with adjustments to the timetable to allow for a phased return
- Address any concerns the student and their parents/carers have about the return to school
- Consult with the student about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant)
- Open lines of communication between the student and relevant staff to ensure support should the student feel overwhelmed
- Open lines of communication between the school and the student's parents/carers to coordinate support
- Consider any additional support needed for a student who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability

5.2 Ongoing support

- We will maintain regular contact with the student's parents/carers to monitor how the student is coping

- We acknowledge significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult, we will liaise with staff, students and families to offer additional support at these times
- We know that grief may impact a student's progress and affect their behaviour. To manage this, we will create a personalized support plan
- We will take care to manage changes for bereaved students by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions

6. Support for staff returning to school after bereavement

Whether a staff member has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

6.1 Reintegration meeting

The Principal will meet with the bereaved staff member to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the staff member is ready to return to work and the best way to make that return (e.g. a phased return to work or a temporary change in duties)
- Address any concerns the staff member may have about the return to school
- Consult with the staff member about how or even if they want their students and colleagues to know of the death (where relevant)
- Set guidelines for communication between the staff member and their line manager to monitor and support the staff member

6.2 Ongoing support

We acknowledge that grief can have an impact on a staff member's physical and mental health, which can then go on to impact their performance.

We also recognise that grieving is highly personal and that there can't be a one-size-fits-all solution for monitoring and supporting a bereaved person.

We will work with each individual to create a bespoke system of monitoring and support.

Appendix: Useful Contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us
Winston's Wish	Helpline: 08088 020 021 https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/
Cruse Bereavement Care	Helpline: 0808 808 1677 https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us
Mind	Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393 Further contacts: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/