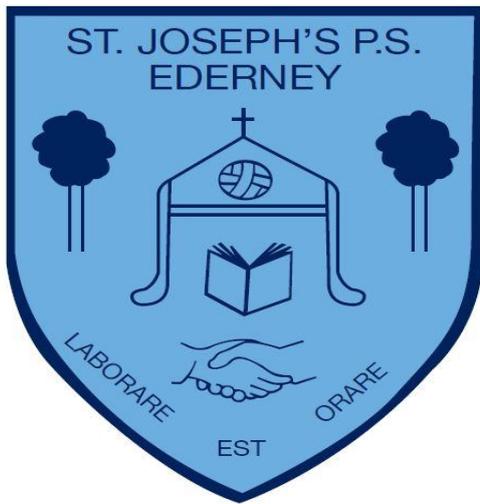


**St. Joseph's P.S
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Ederney Community Nursery



Bereavement Policy

Introduction

This policy has been constructed by members of staff to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances. It seeks to reflect the values and ethos of St Joseph's P.S. Ederney.

Every bereavement and loss and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and a policy that covers every possible contingency would be excessively long. The school uses its discretion when taking into account requests of the family.

In order to be ready to act professionally, sensitively and compassionately, staff are encouraged to read material relating to bereavement and loss and visit appropriate websites, e.g. Winston's Wish/Noah's Ark.

Our Aims

At St. Josephs Primary School, we seek to meet the needs of all our children/students/pupils and staff in all situations. When home circumstances are changed because of a death in the family or separation, all around is 'different'. We need to be a place that both the child and family can rely on and gain some much needed support. If the death occurs of one of our pupils or of a member of staff, we will work together, with outside agencies as appropriate, to support each other.

Procedures

We always work in partnership with parents or carers. We will always listen. We sensitively support and encourage parents, carers or family to tell us of any happenings in their child's life that may affect their child's emotional state but we recognise we will never be told everything.

Every bereavement and loss, and the circumstances in which it occurs, is different. Sometimes we will only get to know that someone important to one of our pupils has died or has been separated from because of the depressed emotional state/ disturbed behaviour or other signs of distress we have seen and have needed to respond to in the child. Sometimes the child will confide in a member of staff or a fellow pupil. Sometimes a member or friend of the family will tell us. Sometimes it will be a friend of the child.

If there has been a bereavement or significant loss in a family, we will seek their help and advice to help us avoid saying anything that could confuse or upset the child or add further to the distress of those family members most affected.

In the event of a death of a close member of a pupil's family the following procedures will be followed: -

- The Principal should be informed immediately a member of staff is informed of a bereavement or loss.
- All staff should then be informed as quickly, quietly and sensitively as possible.

- The Principal will make contact with the family. S/he will explain the desire to be supportive and to avoid saying or doing anything that would add further distress. For this purpose, s/he will endeavour to ascertain information about the situation and how much the child knows in as unobtrusive a way as possible.
- The Principal will act as a link to the family to ensure good communication and facilitate implementation of the bereavement and loss policy.
- The family will be asked if they want the school community to be told formally and if so the sort of arrangements that might be made to let other families know the circumstances. This might be necessary in order to alleviate any risk of rumour circulating which may not be factual and could be upsetting for the family. In some circumstances it will not be appropriate to do this, for example if the death occurred in circumstances likely to stimulate rumour.
- If information is to be given to other parents formally, this will be done by letter home to the children's parents in envelopes. For young children it would be preferable for this to be given to the parents at the end of the school day when they collect their children.
- If a child has not attended school for a period following bereavement, plans for the child to return to school should be agreed and reassurance given that the family will be contacted if the child is distressed. It may be desirable to include a visit to the child at home by the child's class teacher prior to the return.
- Outside Agencies (EA and/or CCMS) should be contacted if bereavement falls under remit of Critical Incident.
- Outside agencies should be contacted if appropriate or if in doubt.

If the death of a pupil or member of staff occurs, this is likely to cause considerable distress to everyone in the organisation and the following additional actions should be taken:

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- Discussions will take place with the family and their wishes taken into account on how and what to tell the school community.
- Arrangements will be made for counselling to be available if necessary. This is more likely in cases of unexpected or violent death. Appropriate agencies outside school will need to be contacted.
- In some circumstances it may be desirable for the school to be closed so that as many people as possible can be released to attend the funeral or memorial service if they so wish.

- Staff and children should be supported throughout the grieving period. There should be systematic observation and monitoring with any signs of complex grieving brought to the attention of the appropriate professional agencies.