



AYLESBURY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Founded 1598

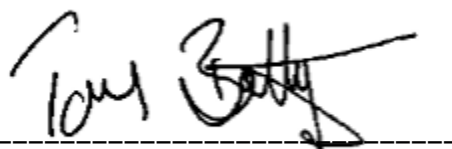
BEREAVEMENT POLICY

CATEGORY B:

This policy has been approved by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) pending final approval by the Governors' Community & Development (C&D) Committee in June 2026.

The next update will be due by June 2029.

Signed: Mr Tom Batty (Chairman of Governors):





BEREAVEMENT POLICY

1. Aims

1.1. This policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how our School 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 body
- Provide guidance and a framework for students or staff returning to School following bereavement

2. Safeguarding, confidentiality and recording

- 2.1. We follow our School's safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that the welfare of the child remains paramount throughout, and that all children are protected from harm.
- 2.2. It is important to maintain confidentiality throughout the handling of any incident or disclosure. However, children will need to be made aware that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- 2.3. To retain the trust of children, parents, and carers, we will ensure that the sharing of appropriate information is kept to a minimum. Sensitive information will only be disclosed internally or externally with careful attention to the rights and needs of individuals and in line with general data protection regulation.
- 2.4. If a child is suffering from trauma, we will share this as appropriate with staff, but not necessarily the details of their experience.
- 2.5. We will discuss with the bereaved child and their family which adults in the school community they would like made aware of the experiences impacting on the child.
- 2.6. We will use our usual school systems to record when a child has experienced a close bereavement and is at risk of further harm.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The Governing Body

3.1.1. The Governing body is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and supporting the Senior Leadership Team.

3.1.2. The governing body will:

- Undertake regular monitoring of how the School is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them
- Monitor the Senior Leadership Team's emotional wellbeing through regular meetings between the Headmaster and Chair of Governors
- Assist the Head, 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 Head is not available to respond to a death immediately

3.2. The Head and Senior Leadership Team have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for delegating any responsibilities under this policy to other members of staff.

3.2.1. The Head and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Liaise with the appropriate pastoral team responsible for 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
- Arrange for monitoring and support of the pastoral support team or any individual staff members who are supporting bereaved students or staff

3.3. Pastoral staff

3.3.1. 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).

3.3.2. The pastoral team will:

- Be available to provide support to bereaved students and staff
- Provide information on external support available to bereaved students and staff
- Offer safe spaces for bereaved members of the School community
- Offer appropriate recognition of the bereavement as appropriate
- Arrange for the attendance and supervision of students at funerals (where permitted)
- Provide additional support during significant transitions

3.4. The role of staff at the School

- access bereavement support training and cascade learning to other staff if appropriate
- know how to access support for themselves, for other staff and for the family, if advice or information is needed
- know how to report a concern if the bereavement or sudden and unexpected death has placed a child at significant risk of harm
- know how to support a child when they are distressed and how to refer to specialist support if needed
- have a basic understanding of a child's needs when facing loss and change
- provide individual support as and when needed and in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and pastoral support team
- inform the Senior Leadership Team at the earliest possibility if they hear about a death of someone in the school community

4. Equality and inclusion, values and beliefs

4.1. We recognise that there is a range of cultural and religious beliefs, customs and procedures concerning death. It follows that bereaved children and families may have differing expectations.

4.2. Some of these may affect matters of school organisation. We will source training and guidance to develop our understanding of the range of beliefs to best support children.

4.3. We will present a balance of different approaches to death and loss. We will make children aware of differing responses to bereavement, and that we need to value and respect each one of these.

5. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

- 5.1. Supporting students and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported by the line manager, SLT and/or other relevant staff with additional support being provided as required.

6. Procedures for Bereavement

6.1. Pre-Bereavement

6.1.1. In some situations, it is known in advance that a death is going to occur. This is usually because of a long illness. In cases where this is an adult within the school community, individual conversations will be held with the Senior Leadership Team in terms of support, information exchange and practical considerations.

6.1.2. When the expected death is of a child or a member of a child's family we will:

- contact the family to confirm factual information and explore what support could be provided to them
- identify a key point of contact in School in terms of information exchange and to update when things change
- ensure that all relevant adults are clear about what information has and needs to be shared
- keep lines of communication open to ensure that all information is received in a timely fashion
- explore the possibility of signposting to other organisations or a local hospice
- explore what support for the children affected might look like in practice
- arrange training for specific members of staff to ensure all involved are confident in their ability to support the child
- if appropriate, consider and reflect on how to communicate with the wider school community for example the child's peers
- if appropriate, begin conversations around practical considerations in the events leading up to the death and following the death

6.2. Immediate actions following a bereavement

6.2.1. We will consider each individual situation carefully to ensure that the response from the School is sensitive, accurately reflects the gravity of the situation, and involves those affected as appropriate.

6.2.2. Clarifying information and the wishes of the family

- The Senior Leadership Team or appropriate member of the Pastoral Support Team will be responsible for contacting the family to confirm news of a death and determine the wishes of the family in terms of what can be shared with the rest of the school community and how
- The Headmaster or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will liaise with the relevant authorities to confirm a death if the family can't be immediately contacted

6.2.3. For a death that may attract media coverage

- The Head or a nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team will manage, with guidance from the Governing Board, what will be communicated to the school community if news of a death is spreading via social media before confirmation can be made
- The Headmaster will identify a nominated spokesperson to provide a 'news statement' at an agreed time, as a way of dealing with media intrusion
- The individual's family will be contacted by the nominated person before any statement is made and police or legal advice will be sought as appropriate

- With death in traumatic circumstances such as suicide or murder, bereavement support services may be requested as well as the School Counsellor (e.g. Winston's Wish, Cruse, Compassionate Friends, the Educational Psychology Service and Papyrus in the case of death by suicide)
- Alert Reception Staff and, if necessary, the whole school community, to the possibility of media attention and who the nominated spokesperson is

6.2.4. Responding to the media

- In the event that a death that affects the School raises media interest the Head is responsible for responding to requests from the media. All requests should be sent to the Head's office
- Appropriate steps will be taken to respond to those requests

7. Follow-up actions and support following a death

7.1. If the death is of a student's immediate family

- 7.1.1. The wishes of the student's family will be sought where possible and permission gained to share the news with other students and staff as appropriate.
- 7.1.2. If news leaks out before this permission is gained, other students may need to be told in order to prevent rumours circulating.
- 7.1.3. Staff will be informed as appropriate.
- 7.1.4. The appropriate information will be shared with the Data and Information Team to update the School Management Information System and communication information as soon as possible.
- 7.1.5. Consideration will be given as to whether to contact the parents of particularly upset students.
- 7.1.6. The appropriate pastoral lead will identify and gather other close friends in different classes, informing them shortly after the initial group has been notified.

7.2. In preparation for the student's return to School

- 7.2.1. The appropriate pastoral leader will make contact with the family. This contact will make arrangements for the return to School, including providing designated support and pastoral care strategies, including assessing the individual circumstances and impact, with appropriate support.

7.3. After the student's return to School

- 7.3.1. A reintegration meeting will be arranged with the appropriate pastoral leader. The purpose of the meeting will be to determine the specific individual requirements for the student and ensure support is in place for them.
- 7.3.2. Open lines of communication will be established between... and relevant staff to ensure support should the student feel overwhelmed.
- 7.3.3. Open lines of communication will be established between... and the student's parents/carers to coordinate support and share developments.

7.4. Ongoing Support

- 7.4.1. The student's details will be updated on the Schools Management Information System, with key information to be shared with current and future teachers to be agreed in consultation with the student and their parents. This will be shared with staff and updated as required.
- 7.4.2. Regular contact between the student's parents/carers and School to monitor how the student is coping.
- 7.4.3. Consideration will be given to the student's timetable and appropriate support.

Additional measures when responding to a death within the School Community

8. Sharing the news with staff:

- 8.1. The Headmaster or an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for sharing the news of the death within the School community with all staff. This communication will be prompt and sensitive and will explain what support will be available to those who need it.

9. Sharing the news with students:

- 9.1. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will arrange the process for informing students.
- 9.2. The appropriate pastoral leader will be responsible for sharing the news with students and explaining what support will be available.
- 9.3. Students who had a long-term and/or close relationship with the deceased will be identified and informed together as a separate group, handled with extra sensitivity. If the death occurs outside of school term time, parents of such students will be contacted by the Senior Leadership Team, and support offered if possible.
- 9.4. The wider student groups will be informed as Tutor Groups or Year Groups.
- 9.5. Staff informing students will be given guidelines and support on how to do this.
- 9.6. Time will be allowed for students to ask questions and share their own experiences of death, if they wish.
- 9.7. A member of staff who can be available to students throughout the day will be identified, and students will be informed how to find them.
- 9.8. Arrangements will be considered for those who might wish to attend the funeral.
- 9.9. Pastoral staff will be alert to signs in later days that any student is struggling and will liaise with the student and parents as appropriate.

10. Informing parents and carers:

- 10.1 The appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team will assess how and when parents/carers will be notified of the death. This will be through the appropriate school communication platforms, explaining the steps taken to inform students, the support available, and where to go for more help.

11. Funeral arrangements

- 11.1. We will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:
 - Whether members of staff and/or students are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service
 - How condolences should be made and how staff and students can contribute
 - If staff are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so, staff will follow School processes to request authorisation. If the numbers of staff attending any service will potentially affect the efficient operation of the School, the process will be managed by the Senior Leadership Team and associated staff leaders.
 - If students are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so, parents of students can request leave to attend following the normal School processes

11.2. After the funeral we will:

- Consult the family and involve the child to consider whether it is appropriate to visit the child and family affected at home and plan a return to School
- Ensure friendships are secure – peer support can be particularly important for a bereaved child or young person
- Continue regular contact with the family and show we still care about them and their child over time
- Monitor the emotional needs of staff and children and provide ongoing appropriate support as required
- Continue to assess the needs of children most affected and record and plan for support accordingly

11.3. Ongoing Support

11.3.1. The student's details will be updated on the School's Management Information System, with key information to be shared with current and future teachers to be agreed in consultation with the student and their parents. This will be shared with staff and updated as required.

11.3.2. Regular contact between the student's parents/carers and School to monitor how the student is coping.

11.3.3. Consideration will be given to the student's timetable and appropriate support.

11.3.4. Consideration will be given to how the school community will come together to memorialise the deceased in line with our School guidelines

12. Further guidance on specific situations of a sudden death

- As a school community we will make a response to a sudden death in a timely manner
- Information provided to the school community in the immediate aftermath of a sudden and unexpected death will depend on the age of the students
- If the death is due to contagious disease, we will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team

12.1. If the death is the result of suicide:

- The School will follow advice from the Samaritans who provide a step-by-step programme to support schools and Local Authority Guidance
- Suicide is not just a really difficult event to deal with, it also presents the unique risk of potentially being the trigger for another suicide
- It is necessary to maintain the structure and order of the School routine, while facilitating the expression of grief, and reducing the risk of imitative suicide

12.2. If the death is the result of homicide:

- Children may experience profound and lasting shock
- If the death is due to homicide or family violence the School will contact and/or follow advice from Child Bereavement UK and appropriate support services
- Bereavement organisations recommend taking an honest and consistent age-appropriate approach to talking with children about what has happened. It is not possible to shield them from what has happened completely.
- Winston's Wish can provide support to families bereaved in this way and further information can be found on their website: <https://www.winstonswish.org/death-through-homicide/>

13. Staff training

- We will ensure that regular training is provided to support staff in meeting their roles and responsibilities as identified in this policy.
- e.g. Winston's Wish offers training courses and also a free online training course for school staff - <https://winstonswish.org/supporting-you/professionals-and-training/> and <https://www.winstonswish.org/bereavement-training-courses-schools/>

Appendix 1 - Additional Support

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/
Hope Again	● http://hopeagain.org.uk/ ● A website for young people who have been bereaved.
Childhood Bereavement Network	● http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk ● Find childhood bereavement support in your local area.
Samaritans	● http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/supporting-schools ● A range of guidance and support for schools.
Education Support Partnership	● one of their support features is assisting with/helping staff cope with bereavement 08000 562 561. At AGS we have this signposted in the staffroom (posters) and in the Staff Welfare Handbook

Appendix 2 – Aylesbury Grammar School – In Memoriam Guidance

The School acknowledges that we will all be affected by the potential and actual loss of students, staff, governors, ex-students, ex-staff, and ex-governors. It is important to recognise how the School will ensure transparent and fair recognition for all those affected.

The following is for guidance only.

In memoriam

- Recognise - student on roll, staff in service – in-School recognition
- Acknowledge - memorial day/event, plaque on the Aylesburian board (OAs, Ex-staff, Ex-Governors), Aylesburian Magazine - In Memoriam page
- Celebrate - family involvement in collaboration with the School - awards, benches, trees/plants, event, prizes, memorial garden

Appendix 3: A charter for bereaved children and young people

To help us meet the aims of this policy we will use the Winston's Wish Charter for Bereaved Children.
<https://www.winstonswish.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ww-0107-CBC-lo.pdf>

B	Bereavement support Bereaved children need to receive support from their family, from their school and from important people around them. We will signpost them to specialist support if needed.
E	Express feelings and thoughts We will help bereaved children to find appropriate ways to express all their feelings and thoughts associated with grief, such as sadness, anxiety, confusion, anger and guilt.
R	Remember the person who has died We understand that bereaved children have the right to remember the person who has died for the rest of their lives. We will support them to share special and difficult memories.
E	Education and information All children, particularly bereaved children, are entitled to receive answers to their questions. They also need information that clearly explains what has happened, why it has happened and what will be happening. We will strive to enable children to have their questions answered, through the PSHE curriculum, on an individual basis, working with parents and carers or through support services.
A	Appropriate response from schools and colleges Bereaved children need understanding and support from their teachers and fellow students without having to ask for it. We will provide training to ensure this happens.
V	Voice in important decisions We will work with families to encourage them to involve bereaved children in important decisions that have an impact on their lives such as planning the funeral and remembering anniversaries.
E	Enjoyment We will support the bereaved child's right to enjoy their lives even though someone important has died.
M	Meet others We will try where possible to enable bereaved children to benefit from the opportunity to meet other children who have had similar experiences.
E	Established routines We will endeavour, whenever possible, to enable bereaved children to continue activities and interests so that parts of their lives can still feel 'normal'.
N	Not to blame We will help bereaved children to understand that they are not responsible, and not to blame, for the death.
T	Tell the story We will encourage bereaved children to tell an accurate and coherent story of what has happened. We know this is helpful to them particularly if these stories are heard by those important people in their lives.