



HIGH WELL SCHOOL

Preparing for Positive Futures

Pupil and Staff Death Policy **(inc. Bereavement Procedures)**

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Policy Lead: | Business Manager |
| Date approved by Governing Body: | 28.01.2021 |
| Date Shared with Staff: | 02.02.2021 |
| Date of Review: | November 2021 |

Signed by Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Date: 28.01.2021

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Communications | 3 |
| 3. Standard Actions of Emergency Services | 4 |
| 4. Procedure for Responding to a Pupil or Staff Death on School Property | 4 |
| 5. Procedure for Responding to a Pupil or Staff Death <u>outside</u> of School Property | 5 |

Appendix 1 – Bereavement Procedures

High Well School – Pupil and Staff Death Policy and Procedures

1. Introduction

This Policy and Procedures applies to all pupil and staff deaths that occur outside a controlled environment such as a hospital. It provides a high-level overview of the responsibilities and actions required to respond to deaths of Pupils and/or staff.

It is rare that a school is faced with the death of a pupil or staff member, however it is essential that High Well School have formal procedures in place, which observe the following principles:

- an appropriate level of response, with help from the appropriate external agencies;
- a sensitive and compassionate approach which recognises the distress for the person finding the body, the next of kin, and the distress or potential for distress for staff and Pupils close to the deceased person;
- clear lines of responsibility to support a set of coherent and valuable contributions in response to the death made by College staff and Pupils;
- the observation of legalities to protect the interests of High Well School in cases where negligence might be alleged;
- an appropriate duty of care towards all staff and pupils.

High Well School is committed to responding to the death in a compassionate and respectful manner. High Well School will:

- act in a timely and sensitive manner with respect and compassion;
- care will be extended to those closely involved with the individual or the incident leading to the death, including the family or next of kin, friends, fellow Pupils and staff members.

2. Communications

- High Well School will seek to collaborate and cooperate with external officials to facilitate any investigations or administrative activities relating to the death.
- All staff will act discreetly when dealing with information relating to the individual and the incident.
- No public statements will be made for or on behalf of the School. Any press communications will be dealt with by Wakefield Council.
- All staff will ensure that they do not undertake any external communications, outside of those with emergency services, unless this is sanctioned by the Head, Chair of Governors or Wakefield Council Health and Safety.
- Staff should continue to strictly observe the same protocols of data protection as set out under the Data Protection Act.
- Staff should be careful of the language used when communicating with others. The term 'suicide' should never be used as this classification of death can only be used after it has been ruled as such by a Coroner. It can also be incredibly upsetting for family members.
- All staff, parents and pupils should ensure that they do not post any information on social media about the death.

3. Standard Actions of Emergency Services

- The Police and emergency services will notify the School of the confirmation of death.
- The Police will normally arrange for the removal of the body and any necessary post-mortem.
- The Police will normally arrange for the next of kin to be informed.
- The Registrar (or nominee) will source the details of a pupil's next of kin.
- The HR Manager, School Business Manager or Headteacher will source the details of a staff member's next of kin from their staff file.

4. Procedure for Responding to a Pupil or Staff Death on School Property

- Any pupil or member of staff who discovers a body should not touch or move the body or any object connected with the scene.
- Immediately notify a member of the Senior Management Team (SLT) – Headteacher (Miss L Quinn), Assistant Head (Mr A Coates, Mrs Nicola Fradgley), HR Manager (Mr M Davis) and /or School Business Manager (Mrs V Weeks).
- A member of the SLT will be required to instigate an evacuation of the building excluding those directly involved in the incident.
- A member of the SMT will call 999 and request an ambulance and the Police; telling the emergency services exactly where they are and who they are; also giving them the relevant mobile or extension number so that they can be reached directly.
- If there are witnesses, please ask them to wait until the emergency services have arrived.
- Please be aware that both you and other people at the scene may be experiencing shock.
- Please ensure you seek help from another member of SLT and / or our First Aider if you or others feel unwell.
- Please do not contact relatives or friends of the deceased as the notification of death should normally be undertaken by the Police.
- Fatalities must be reported to Wakefield Council's Health and Safety Executive.
- In a result of an accident to an employee causing a fatality (whether at School or not), an IRF 2016 reporting procedure must be followed (please refer to the Health and Safety Policy where there is a copy of the form at Appendix 2). Forms can be obtained from the School Admin Office.

The SLT member(s) should:

- Liaise with the person who has discovered the death and the emergency services.
- Ensure only necessary individuals are at the scene (the person who discovered the death, witnesses and emergency services) - anyone else must be escorted away.
- Instigate an evacuation of the building, in a calm manner so as not to panic any pupils or staff.
- Inform the Care Team who can offer support to pupils at the scene or the HR Manager (or nominee) for staff requiring support.
- Discuss with other team members about the closure of the building after the incident has been dealt with.
- Inform any other staff required to support the incident.
- Contact Wakefield Council Health and Safety and HR to inform them.
- Cooperate with Wakefield Council and the emergency services to ensure that any evidence is made available and the building is secured once the emergency services have left.

High Well School – Pupil and Staff Death Policy and Procedures

- Notify all support staff members (inc. admin office / reception) to help support the Pupils and staff enquiring about the incident.
- After the event ensure no communications (letters etc) are sent to the parent of the pupil regarding standard school matters / school dinner monies etc

5. Procedure for Responding to a Pupil or Staff Death outside of School Property

- Parents, pupils or staff members should inform the school of a death that has not occurred on school property.
- Please call the school on T.01924 572100 and request to speak with the Head (Ms L Quinn) or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If the incident occurs out of school office hours, **please call 07824 820 300 / 07824 820 200 in emergency.**
- If the school receives a call out-of-office hours they will inform the Headteacher or other members of SLT as soon as possible.

The Headteacher and / or SLT member should:

- liaise with the person who has reported the death and the emergency services (if appropriate);
- inform a nominee member of staff who can offer support to pupils who were at the scene, or the HR Manager (or nominee) who can offer support to staff;
- inform any other staff required to support the incident;
- ensure the emergency services have been notified;
- Ensure that Wakefield Council have been notified;
- Notify all support staff members (inc. admin office / reception) to help support the pupils and staff enquiring about the incident;
- After the event ensure no communications (letters etc) are sent to the parent of the pupil regarding standard school matters / school dinner monies etc

Appendix 1 – Bereavement Procedure

Introduction

This Bereavement procedure will:

- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the governing board;
- Identify best practices for supporting pupils and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement;
- Set out how a death will be communicated in a timely manner that balances our school community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased;
- Provide a framework for pupils or staff returning to school following bereavement.

Roles and responsibilities

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

The Headteacher will:

- Liaise with the family of the deceased
- Where appropriate, communicate details of a death to pupils and staff
- Participate in any multi-agency reviews as requested
- Lead reintegration meetings for pupils or staff returning to school after a bereavement
- Arrange for monitoring and support for bereaved pupils or staff from nominated individuals / team who will:
 - Provide direct support to bereaved pupils and staff;
 - Signpost to external support available to bereaved pupils 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 pupils at funerals (where permitted);
 - Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved pupils 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 / college.

The governing board will:

- Undertake monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them;
- Monitor the Headteacher's emotional wellbeing through regular meetings between the Headteacher and chair;
- Assist the Headteacher, where required, in responding to requests for information in the case of a publicised death;

High Well School – Pupil and Staff Death Policy and Procedures

- Where necessary, arrange for another staff member to take the lead if the Headteacher is not available to respond to a death immediately.

Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

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

- Regular communication / meetings
- Training where necessary

Communicating the death

The Headteacher 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;
- sharing the news with staff and explaining what support will be available to those who need it by calling a staff meeting either in person or virtually.
- sharing the news with pupils and explaining what support will be available to those who need it. This will be done by either calling a whole-school assembly, grouping particular year group classes together to share the news or using the texting system to alert parents of where to find important news online (if the school is closed).
- notifying parents / carers by sending a letter home with pupils explaining the steps taken during the day to inform pupils of the death, what additional support has been made available and where to go for more help and information:
 - **if the death is the result of suicide (Samaritans provides a [step-by-step programme to support schools if this happens](#))**
 - if the death is due to homicide or family violence (Child Bereavement UK has a guide to 'Supporting children and young people bereaved by murder or manslaughter')
 - If the death is due to contagious disease / virus, High Well School will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team

Support for pupils and staff

Pupils and staff may require support to grieve in the initial days and weeks following a death. Pupils and staff will be supported through peer-to-peer support and may be signposted to external support such as community mental health resources and bereavement charities where applicable.

The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher will discuss whether pupil timetables may need to be adjusted for some or all pupils.

Tributes and condolences

The School will discuss the appropriate way to come together with the community to memorialise the deceased. The School will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

- Whether members of staff and/or pupils are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service
- How condolences should be made and how staff and pupils can contribute

If staff wish to attend the funeral then they must request this using the Special Leave Request forms via the HR Manager. The HR Manager will collate forms and agree with the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher regarding who will be approved to attend (depending on availability of cover in school etc)

If pupils wish to attend the funeral then this should be with the approval of the Headteacher.

Support for pupils returning to school after bereavement

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

The Headteacher (or nominee) will meet with the bereaved pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil and their parents/carers have about the return to school;
- Consult with the pupil about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant);
- Open lines of communication between the pupil and relevant staff to ensure support should the pupil feel overwhelmed;
- Open lines of communication between the school and the pupil's parents/carers to coordinate support;
- Consider any additional support needed for a pupil who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability.

Ongoing support

The Headteacher or nominee will:

- maintain regular contact with the pupil's parents/carers to monitor how the pupil is coping;
- acknowledge significant dates or holidays which may be especially difficult (by putting a reminder in the outlook calendar with notifications);
- be aware that grief may impact a pupil's progress and affect their behaviour and monitor this;
- take care to manage changes for bereaved pupils by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions.

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.

The Headteacher and / or HR Manager 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 pupils 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.

Ongoing support

High Well School 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.

The school 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.

The school will work with each individual to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person. This may include:

- providing access to external sources of support;
- making adjustments such as provisions for flexible working or reduced timetables.

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/ |