



Signature of Principal

Bereavement Policy

This policy complements and should be read in conjunction with the School's policies on Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Child Protection, in particular. It also acknowledges the relevant sections of The Education Act 2002 and the Education (Independent School Standards Regulations, 2014), and the document 'Working Together' 2018, updated December 2023.

This policy also applies to the EYFS.

Rationale

Priory School is fully committed to the emotional health and well-being of its pupils and staff. To that end, this Policy recognises and supports the aims of The Children Act 1989 ensuring that the welfare of children is paramount, and the Children and Families Act 2014, which enshrines support for the best development outcomes for young people.

Objective

The intention of this Policy is to enable the School to support the bereaved and to mitigate so far as it is possible any adverse effects of bereavement and maintain pupils' emotional and mental well-being. We understand that, given that bereavement is an experience which will be faced by all members of our school community at some point, it will be more difficult when the loss is of a member of that school community – pupil or adult.

This policy aims to provide guidelines to be followed after a bereavement. The intention is to offer support to both pupils and adults.

We recognise:

- that grief is an intensely personal emotion and may not be apparent to others; nevertheless, its invisibility makes it no less real.
- that differing cultures / religions / faiths view death and bereavement with particular perspectives and are fully respected
- that the death of a child, adult member of the School community or a family member has huge repercussions beyond the immediate teaching / pastoral care team of that child or adult; and that sensitivity in dealing with and informing wider contacts is essential.

The Principal's role

In the event of the death of a member of the School community, The Principal is responsible for:

- taking a lead from the family as to communications with other members of the School community (including parents), provided that the Management Executive and Designated Safeguarding Leads, the staff, are officially informed before pupils
- liaising with outside agencies, the Local Authority and keeping the governing body informed
- responding to media enquiries and acting as sole spokesperson for the School

Support

Any member of staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate and will be a priority for the School.

In consultation with the family, arrangements for the School to be represented at the funeral may be clarified. The family will be asked for their views on whether they wish the death to be marked in any way by the School, and if so, how.

A degree of flexibility within the timetable may be necessary to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of children affected by the situation. It will certainly assist to have pastoral support in place for those who may not be able to attend class in the normal way. Support for each pupil should be dependent on their needs, and this may involve finding creative ways to communicate when sometimes words are not appropriate.

In the absence or indisposition of the Principal, the Head of Senior School and Sixth Form will assume this role.

The Bereaved Child

The School recognises that the impact of bereavement is long-lasting and will endeavour to be aware of any ongoing bereavement issues for new pupils. To this end, it is important to have effective communication with feeder schools.

A common experience for teachers and pupils is that of a pupil experiencing the death of a member of his/her family: particularly, parent/grandparent or sibling. While whole-school or class activities will not normally be appropriate in this situation, every consideration will be given to the needs of the child in question. A child's understanding of death varies according to age and personal beliefs, religious and non-religious. The School will always acknowledge and respect the individual's needs, rites, rituals and practices in this regard.

If a child has been bereaved, it is important to involve them in decisions about how Priory School manages issues relating to their loss, with liaison of their family. Contact with the child and their family about their preferred way of informing peers about what has happened and about what support they need will take place at the earliest possible opportunity.

Support can be offered and undertaken with Early Help and led by the school, with consent of the family.

Social media

If news of the death is shared on social media sites, the school will act quickly to establish the facts and communicate effectively to the school community as described above in order to dispel rumour and speculation, as well as alleviating unnecessary trauma to the bereaved family.

As mentioned above, the Principal is the sole spokesperson for the School: no information regarding the death will be shared or disseminated on behalf of the School by staff or pupils. Respect and empathy are key to protecting the bereaved from unnecessary distress, and the School will make every effort to handle the event and communication in as sensitive and efficient a manner as possible.

The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

- Miss K Pragnell, SEN Coordinator

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

- Mr S Lynch [Junior School]
- Mrs J Hull [EYFS]

All can be contacted on 01983 861222 and a suitable place identified if pupils require some time away from the classroom.

Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 'makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN) must have regard to:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents / guardians,
- the importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents / guardians, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions,

- the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents / guardians, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood.

Useful Contacts

HIPs Procedures website:

The IOW statutory safeguarding partners have agreed to work in partnership with the statutory safeguarding partners for Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton, to ensure coherence in safeguarding arrangements across the wider geographical area. The arrangements for this collaboration are known locally as 'HIPS'. This website provides staff from all relevant agencies with access to the full suite of local children's safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance that should be used in inform any individual agency policies. <http://hipsprocedures.org.uk/>

MASH: Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

- 0300 555 1384 during office hours: 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday; 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday.
- 0300 555 1373 at all other times to contact the Out of Hours service.

This is an agency representing Hampshire & Isle of Wight. Professionals should complete the Inter Agency Referral Form (IARF) found on the following link:

- <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/childprotection/mash#step-3>

Hampshire Children's services: 0300 555 1384 (as above)

Childrens.services@hants.gov.uk

- Out of hours: 0300 555 1373

Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership:

- Can be contacted at scp@iow.gov.uk
- www.iowscp.org.uk 01983 814545
- A duty LADO [Local Authority Designated Officer) working for Hampshire & IOW takes all calls and, when appropriate, refers to a LADO from a team of professionals to investigate.

The new number for the LADO is 01962 876364 and the contact details are:

- Email address: child.protection@hants.gov.uk
- There is no change to the threshold for referrals.
- The Children and Family Services Reception team/ Children's Social Care may also be contacted on 0300 300 0117. (This a 24-hour number for the public).
- In emergency, dial 999 and contact the police.

Professional's line for referrals

- 0300 300 0901

Isle of Wight Education & Inclusion Service

School enrolment, attendance, exclusions

- Thompson House Sandy Lane Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 3NA 01983 823151
- Open Mon-Thurs: 8.30am- 4.45pm; Friday 8.30am-4.30pm
- Website: www.iwight.com/education
- The current contact is Dave Edmonds. 01983 823151, dave.edmonds@iow.gov.uk

Anti-Bullying Text Line

- 07976 009494
- Freephone 0800 0286464

Hampshire Constabulary: central referral unit

- 02380 745399 or Constabulary: 0845 845 4545; in emergency dial 999
- cru@hampshire.pnn.police.uk; contact: Duty Sergeant
- Open Mon-Fri: 7 am- 8pm; Sat, Sun, Bank Holidays: 8am – 4pm

NSPCC

- Will give confidential advice
- 42, Curtain Road, London, EC2A 2NH
- www.nspcc.org.uk
- Tel: 0808 800 5000

St Mary's Hospital

- Parkhurst Road Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5TG
- Tel: 01983 822099

Authorised by the Principal, Mr David EJJ Lloyd

September 2023