

Loss and Bereavement Covid-19 For Secondary Schools

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Many thanks to the schools and settings whose contributions form the FAQ structure of the Loss and Bereavement pack.



For more details contact your STLS district team,

SEN EY, KEPS, TEP or Beck Ferrari.

With thanks to all the above for their collaboration on this project.

Loss and Bereavement

1. Prior to return

What can your Secondary School do to support bereaved pupils?

How can I plan and prepare for any bereaved pupils to return to school?

- Check your Bereavement policy is up to date and reflects COVID-19 if appropriate to do so (see Child Bereavement UK for sample policy if your school does not yet have one).
- Collate resources available e.g. information leaflets for staff, parent/carers, books for staff and young people (See booklist below).
- Make a “bereavement box” so you have resources to hand to support a bereaved pupil and keep in a pastoral staff members room (see below)
- Ensure you are aware of any young people where bereavement has occurred within the family. Gently seek to find out about the circumstances of the death and what your pupil knows about it. Consider any cultural implications to understanding and supporting the family’s grief (eg. background, religion).
- Consider accessing staff training to help build understanding and confidence. (See Training below)
- Provide supervision for staff who may be experiencing their own anxieties, as well as supporting young people, at this time.
- Consider setting up a bereavement support group within districts.

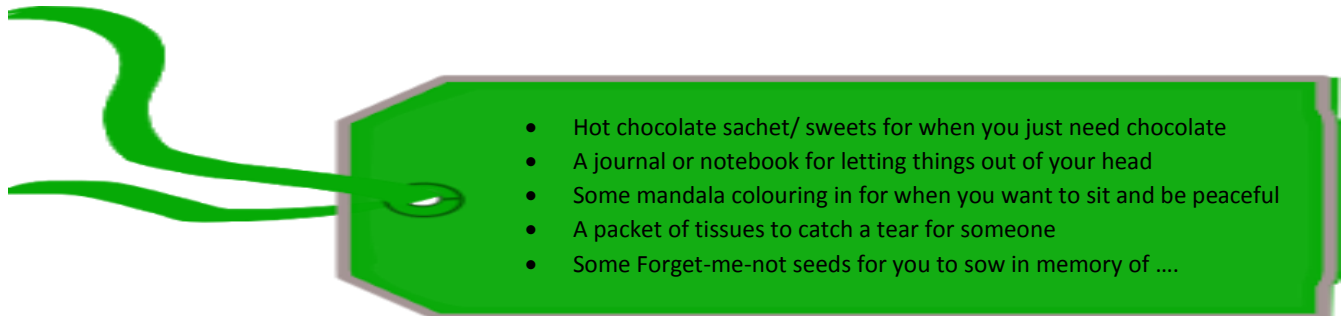
What can I say or do to support one of my pupils who has been grieving through the lockdown period?

Checking in with families by phone can remind them that you are there and help you keep liaison going prior to return. Grieving through the lockdown has the potential to have made things more challenging for bereaved families as they have had to manage without much of their support network and with far less to distract them. (To find out more see Bereaved Family Voices below)

What can I say or do to support a newly bereaved pupil where someone has died during the Coronavirus pandemic?

It can be really helpful for families to know you are thinking of them and can make a big difference to families to know that school genuinely care and are interested in supporting their child. You could send a card and follow up with a telephone call. *“I am so sad to hear about How are you all managing at the moment? Is there anything school can do at this stage to support your child? How are you and your child feeling about returning to school?”*

You may want to send a small comfort package home to a pupil this would be dependent on the young person interests. It might include:



What additional information is available if the person died from COVID-19?

If you find that the family were bereaved by COVID-19 you will be mindful of the difficult circumstances in which such a death occurred as well as the challenges for people in saying goodbye at end of life and in planning funeral services. You may want to signpost families to helplines and to specific support from bereavement organisations. See organisations below.

What plans do I need to make for a bereaved pupil to return to school?

Discuss with the family about the pupil's return to school letting them know that staff will be made aware of their bereavement. Find out whether they would like their child's peer group to be told in advance. Ask if there is anything that they or their child are concerned about. Outline any support the school may be able to offer- remember to check with the pupil what they would like. Signpost the family to support organisations.

For many young people, school is a place of normality and routine but right now there are additional challenges in making school feel normal. Bereaved young people would benefit from being with familiar staff and peers, although with social bubbles being proposed as schools reopen, this may be more difficult to achieve.

What support could I set up for a grieving pupil?

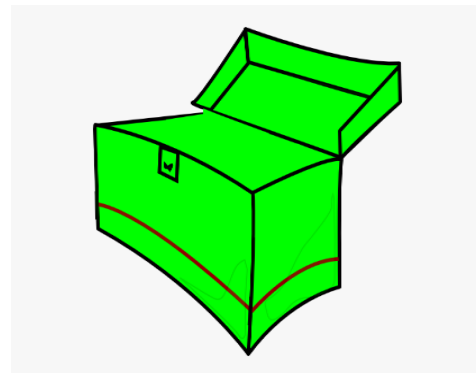
Support can be set up but needs to be adapted to the wishes of the returning pupil. When so much around a young person has changed it can be hard if others set out to control what they should do with their grief. You might wish to consider having named staff (not just one) on hand to provide support. Remember that your ideal member of staff for such a role (warm, caring and empathic) may not be the same as the pupil's. Prepare to adapt!

Decide on spaces that could be used if a pupil wishes to have some time out of class- and what exit strategy will be available to them. Agree these with the pupil on return. Would they like anything available in these places to support them?

Bereavement Box

Resources might include:

- A blank photo frame for decorating (card or wood)
- Sketch/doodle pad
- Mandalas for mindful colouring
- Mindfulness cards with ideas or yoga poses
- A fiddle toy
- Mixed media collage items and blank canvas
- Jar, salt, chalk etc for a memory jar



Of course, some bereaved young people may well not want to use a creative outlet for their grief and would simply prefer some time, space and maybe company.

What external support will be available to bereaved pupils and their families?

Most young people with good support from their family, friends and school will adjust and manage their grief. Many, along with their families will benefit from accessing group support within their school and/or from bereavement organisations (see below). A few may have more difficulties with their grieving journey because of challenges within the home environment, the traumatic nature of the death and factors that make it difficult for the young person to make sense of the death. These pupils may require more specialist therapeutic support on top of that provided by the school. Research suggests that being bereaved from COVID-19 increases the risk of more complicated grief. Pupils bereaved by COVID-19 who require it will have access to counselling sessions funded by KCHFT (details to follow).

Where can I learn more about supporting bereaved pupils?

There are many excellent resources to develop staff understanding about child bereavement and to provide families with helpful information. A good place to start is:

Child Bereavement UK	Download their Schools Information pack https://www.childbereavementuk.org/primary-schools-supporting-bereaved-children Additional guidance about COVID-19 and video clips https://www.childbereavementuk.org/coronavirus-supporting-pupils
Winston's Wish	Guidance about supporting pupils and coronavirus https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/
Grief Encounter	https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/serviceupdate/
Kent Educational Psychology Service	Resources and support for schools Schools can order the Grief and Loss Resource available on KELS https://www.theeducationpeople.org/products/partner-providers/grief-loss-and-crisis-support/
Slide Away	Toolkit for schools http://www.slideaway.org/Portals/0/Documents/Toolkit-factsheets-pt2.pdf
Beck Ferrari	Contact for consultation or training beck.ferrari@gmail.com

What training can staff access in supporting bereaved pupils?

The Education People Free Webinar for Early Years: <i>Bereavement and Loss in Covid 19 for Early Years setting</i> facilitated by Beck Ferrari	Friday 22 and Friday 29 May 2020 https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7760308395783045391
Kent Educational Psychology Service Free Webinars <i>Grief and Loss in Schools</i>	Details to follow via KELSI and LIFT
Beck Ferrari Bespoke bereavement webinar training for schools and settings	Various dates term 6 and term 1 Contact: beck.ferrari@gmail.com

What books could I read to help me understand teenage grief and what my school can do?

For adults:

The Little Book of Bereavement for Schools	Ian Gilbert	A personal account of how schools tried to support one family after the death of their mother, containing 'must know' advice and structured into fifteen points for schools to follow.
A Child's Grief	Winston's Wish	An accessible guidebook for parents and professionals.
You Just Don't Understand	<i>Winston's Wish</i>	A guidebook for parents and professionals focusing on supporting teenagers to manage their grief.
Still Here with Me: Teenagers and Children on Losing a Parent	Suzanne Sjoqvist, Margaret Myers	A collection of autobiographical accounts written by young people about their grief. Could also be given to a young person to read.
Never The Same: Coming to Terms with the Death of a Parent	<i>Donna Schuurman</i>	An excellent book to support those who experienced the death of a parent as a child. Useful for professionals to increase understanding of the needs of grieving pupils.

What books could I share with bereaved young people?

Information and Workbooks		
Grief Encounter	Shelley Gilbert	An excellent workbook with a whole range of activities to encourage conversations about loss between young people and adults-
The Grieving Teen	<i>Helen Fitzgerald</i>	A lengthy but very informative book for a young person, divided into the issues they are facing and how they can manage them.
Straight talk about death for Teenagers	<i>Earl A. Grollman</i>	An accessible book with short pieces of text talking directly with death and grief.
What on earth do you do when someone dies?	<i>Trevor Romain</i>	An easier book for pupils providing reassurance about feelings.
When a Friend Dies	<i>Marilyn E Gootman</i>	Very useful for young people- contains short statements which explore the feelings of grief when a young person loses their friend.

Out of the blue: making memories last when someone has died	<i>Winston's Wish</i>	A selection of activities for young people to do when wanting to remember someone who has died.
Healing your Grieving Heart A journal for Teens	<i>Alan D Wolfelt</i>	A journal for a young person to complete giving gentle guidance, prompts and ideas to write about.
Healing your Grieving Heart for Teens 100 practical ideas	<i>Alan D Wolfelt</i>	A collection of ideas to facilitate young people to express and manage their grief.

Where can I signpost families to for bereavement support?

CRUSE Bereavement Care	Support, advice and information for bereaved adults and children including free access to trained listeners
The Good Grief Trust	COVID-19 Bereavement Helpline and website with advice for families
Child Bereavement UK	Website and Helpline to support families and young people.
Hope Again	Website from CRUSE for bereaved teenagers including information and support and helpline
The Compassionate Friends	A peer support group formed by and for parents whose children have died, irrespective of the child's age at death and the cause of death.
Holding On, Letting Go	A bereavement support charity holding weekends for children and young people with support for parents and carers across Kent.
Slide Away	A bereavement support charity holding workshops for school aged pupils in West Kent.

For details on further books and organisations that offer bereavement support contact Beck Ferrari

What has it been like for bereaved families through lockdown?

Bereaved family voices:

Lockdown has been hard because I can't go to school anymore and school was helping me a lot. Primary aged girl

I don't like being at home all the time. I miss my friend. He understands how I feel. Primary aged boy

Well, being trapped inside is obviously making us all lonely, but when you've lost someone who means a lot to you, you already feel lonely. So the added isolation just repeats in your head; how wrong things are and pushes in how different life is without them, especially when you lived with them. It makes you feel independent, but the wrong type of independent, when you have to face all your fears alone because you know they weren't meant to leave and they didn't want to, but they did so you fear everyone else will too. Teenage girl

Lockdown has just made it hard, really tough, really tough. It's just me and my mind with nothing to take my mind off it, nothing to keep me busy. Teenage boy

His grandad died of COVID-19. I have told my son he died but not how. I don't want to say about the virus yet because I think that will make him more scared of getting it too. Parent

There have been negatives and positives with lockdown. The negative; that it's hit quicker, you're isolated just being on your own. It's the realisation that it's just us now. The positive is that we have all spent time together and have had to just get on with it. It feels like more of a rollercoaster ride. Parent

This situation has made it all so, so hard. I have felt so alone just trying to look after my son. And all I can do is ring people if I'm struggling, it's not the same. My grief is with me all day and then all night. Nothing to break it up.
Parent

For more details contact your STLS district team, KEPS or Beck Ferrari.

With thanks to the individuals from the above teams for their collaboration on this project.



Loss and Bereavement in Secondary Schools

2. The First Few Weeks

Acknowledging loss in the school community

What can we do to support children's feeling of loss?

As a staff group, have a discussion (virtually) where you consider the losses that have been experienced by young people, families and the staff team. Explore the losses that you are aware of from the communication you have had with families and staff as well as other potential losses not yet shared. During the pandemic we have all experienced some loss of stability and certainty, but many will have experienced much more. Building awareness of losses will help us to be mindful of both pupil and staff emotional states.

How can I help the community acknowledge the losses that have been experienced?

Use assemblies as well as smaller group work to explore and normalise feelings of loss. See the Universal strand for lesson plans and activities to support emotional wellbeing.

How do we share news of/talk about the death of a member of staff/school community?

See guidance in "Managing Bereavement: A guide for schools by Child Bereavement UK" page 7 section 3 – Breaking Sad News – a death in the school community. This resource provides template letters in the appendices too.

How can the school community acknowledge the death of a member of staff or pupil?

Where possible, hold assemblies for public remembrance of the death and to help recognise significance of the loss. If this is difficult to achieve for some time due to social distancing protocols, then explore ways in which class groups can join together virtually using technology.

Plan activities that everyone in the school community can contribute to whether or not they are currently in school. (Child Bereavement UK – Remembering Collaborative Projects for the School community)

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=7c952b41-2a99-443c-827d-25a739301a25>), for example a memory book; pages could be emailed in by children/families and collated at the end as a keepsake for the whole community.

For bereaved pupils

How can I understand what grief has been like for bereaved pupils?

It is unwise to measure young people's grief against a perceived value of the relationship and thus create a scale of loss. It can however be helpful to consider the particular challenges pupils face for different bereavements. In Kent there are an estimated 5750 school pupils who are parentally bereaved. Such a loss is likely to change their lives fundamentally and trigger a lifelong grieving journey. When a child experiences the death of a sibling, they not only face their own very painful grief but can be heavily impacted by the grief of their parents.

Although death from COVID-19 is very sadly possible at any age, the statistics show us that for those in their older years the death rate is significantly higher. It is more likely that your pupils will have been bereaved of an older family member, in particular, a grandparent or great grandparent. Recognising the significance of this is vital. Their grandparent may have been their childcare, their routine and stability. The relationship one of warmth and security, where young people had found unconditional love without the complications and tensions of parenting.

Of course, not all young people experience the positive benefit of a grandparent in their life. It is however quite likely that this might be the first death of a family member they have experienced. Helping them understand and learn to grieve is therefore important. As well as trying to manage their own feelings, a young person may have to face the very real emotions of their parent. The legacy of that most tangible grief may well last for weeks, months and years and the impact on family life be felt deeply.

The death of a pet can also trigger real pain and loss. For a young person, their pet may have been their close companion who provided unconditional comfort. Those whose pet died during lockdown may not have had the opportunity to go to the vet with their animal and take part in goodbye.

What should I look out for in terms of young people's grief?

It is worth remembering that although there are common emotions, the grief of young people may still look different from that of adults. Some pupils will externalise, being open and honest about their grief and some will internalise masking their grief, with changes being very subtle - this does not mean they are not grieving. Their responses can happen at different times, in different stages. There is often a delay. We might however see:

- difficulty regulating emotions and thoughts → anxiety, sadness and longing, anger/acting out, guilt/shame.
- restless, agitated, searching behaviour that is seemingly purposeless → trouble concentrating, hopelessness/despair
- disrupted physiological processes, e.g. immune system, hormonal system, cardiovascular functioning, sleep regulation → sleep difficulties, physical complaints, change in appetite
- cognitive challenges to make sense of someone's death
- a struggle to engage in learning, concentrating and socialising.
- some young people may be in denial or 'grab the limelight' – allow/accept this behaviour in the short term.

Children's understanding of death by age. (Remember that not all children develop in line with their chronological age).

Age 0-2	Aware of the absence of person they were attached to. Seek presence of person who has died. No understanding that death is permanent.
Age 2-4	Concrete thinking. Idea that death exists but no understanding of finality. 'Magical thinking' – may think they caused the death or that they can bring the dead person back to life.
Age 5-9	Understand that death is irreversible. More awareness of mortality. May think of death as something scary or spooky. Curious about death and may appear insensitive as they try to make sense of the death. May present physical symptoms of loss and stress (somatic symptoms) – e.g. tummy ache and sleeping difficulties
Age 9-12	Understand finality of death and own mortality. More able to understand death as both concrete and abstract. May make them feel different from peers at time when they want to be 'normal.'
Adolescents	Grieve in similar way to adults, but less able to process powerful emotions. Question meaning of life and bereavement.

What should I say to a bereaved pupil as they return to school?

Saying something is better than saying nothing. Acknowledging the death directly with your pupil is key; when we say, *I'm so sad to hear that your Dad died*, we open the door of communication to the young person and remove the responsibility from them to have to bring the subject up. We don't have to use 'clever' or wise words, just acknowledge that it is very difficult. *I'm going to check in with you each day and you can tell me if you want to talk to me.* Pupils will usually let you know by their response if they wish to continue the conversation. After initiating conversation, we do well by simply listening and thanking them for telling us rather than feeling that we need to say the 'right' thing.

How can I support a bereaved young person who appears upset and tearful at school?

One of the toughest parts of supporting a bereaved pupil can be for staff to learn to tolerate the young person's sadness and not to be scared of their grief. It is their grief that has made them upset, not us. It can be helpful just to sit with them and give them some time and space. They may want ideas about expressing their feelings and holding onto memories.

- use resources in the Bereavement Box (See Prior to Return section for ideas)
- for details of other activities see TISS crib sheet attachment

For further ideas see:

Out of the blue: making memories last when someone has died	<i>Winston's Wish</i>
Healing your Grieving Heart for Teens 100 practical ideas	<i>Alan D Wolfelt</i>

Most school staff are not trained counsellors. What will they do if their support opens up a 'can of worms'? Who can they ask?

Grief is a normal response to the loss of someone significant and not a 'can of worms.' Yes, there may be times when a young person becomes outwardly emotional or distressed. This is a normal part of them processing their pain. We don't need to be a trained counsellor to be a safe person for them to express their feelings. Being a caring human being is enough. When our responses are empathetic, they will help contain the young person from feeling overwhelmed e.g. *I can see that it's really hard for you right now. That's okay if your tears come. Shall we sit here quietly? Do you want to tell me about your tears?*

If our responses are from a place of fear or discomfort with the young person's emotions e.g. *Don't get upset? Go outside and calm yourself down*, then they give the message that we cannot cope with their grief.

If we are worried about a young person's level of distress or other grieving behaviours, then we should share this with other staff involved and check in with the family. We need a fuller picture to help us understand how the young person is. If the shared information leaves us with concerns then we can access guidance from bereavement organisations, STLS and KEPS or Beck Ferrari. If you feel they are immediate risk of harm then follow your school safeguarding procedures.

How can I support a bereaved young person who is very private and withdrawn about their grief?

Respect their privacy, they may want the normality and security of school away from a home of grieving adults. However, we can still let them know we've noticed them and remember what they are going through. A simple, *It's good to see you or Thank you for working hard /helping me* can help young people not feel invisible even when they want to remain more private. Validate all feelings as legitimate and painful. And remember that *Silence is Golden*. Sometimes there are no words that bring enough comfort to take away the pain. Your presence can sometimes say what words cannot.

How can I support a bereaved pupil who is presenting with challenging behaviour at school?

Accept anger, understanding that it is misplaced grief. Reassure that being angry is OK. It will help young people to have boundaries in place, but empathy comes first. Reassure that hurting is part of grieving and eventually will subside. Find safe physical outlets for their anger, for example they can punch a pillow as a focus for their anger. Put aside adult activities when possible to emphasise the value of conversations about guilty or angry feelings. Encourage drawing, writing, and playing out feelings. Where possible meet periodically with the siblings as a group to explore feelings of guilt and anger and work out solutions to common problems with their new living situation. Help young people keep at their studies but do not allow it to impinge on their leisure time. It may be helpful to agree with pupil strategies

that will enable them to cope in the classroom e.g. able to leave lessons without fuss – “exit card” system. Reassure the pupil that a lack of motivation and concentration is normal and will pass. If possible, give interim strategies, e.g offer shorter tasks, opportunities for movement, celebrate small successes, minimise failures.

How to support pupils whose parents have died of COVID-19? What external/specialist support is available?

Research has highlighted the additional difficulties in being bereaved during the Coronavirus pandemic in particular death in ICU, limits on access to saying goodbye at the end of life and restrictions on funeral arrangements. Bereavement organisations offer support so that the young person can meet with others who are grieving. Young people whose parents have died from COVID-19 can have access to KCFHT funded counselling should they need this specialist support. Prior to Return section for signposting.

What happens if a pupil refuses to return to school in fear they or a family member might die?

Fear of separation and fear of death are common and understandable responses for bereaved young people. In the Coronavirus pandemic, levels of anxiety are likely to be heightened with increased attention on death in the media as well as risks of contagion.

- Have open dialogue with parent/carers to acknowledge and validate such fears.
- Understand how parents themselves feel about this as their own anxieties might contribute to their child’s concerns.
- Be open and honest about how school are putting into practice all safety requirements.
- Prepare to adapt usual expectations about attendance as pupils might benefit from shorter periods of attendance and increased support as they learn to manage their fear.
- Refer to the **Anxiety** strand of the working group for more information on managing emotionally-based school refusal.

For more details contact your STLS district team, KEPS or Beck Ferrari.



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Loss and Bereavement in Secondary Schools

3. In the Long term

How we can we respond in the long term to loss in our school community?

Showing we remember losses in our community for the long term sends a clear message that each member of the community is valued; and that they would be valued if something happened to them. Initial responses to loss in COVID-19 have had to be constructed within the guidelines about keeping people safe. Sometime in the future we hope that our responses will not have to consider social distancing.

naming a room
memorial award
each planting a daffodil
tree
wildlife garden
mosaic mural
garden
memorial area
naming a building
memorial service

Discuss ideas with the bereaved family, they may wish to take a role in planning or in attending something. Some families may be more private and would rather be sent a photo of what you made/did. Offer pupils and staff the opportunity to get involved too, this may be both empowering and healing for their grief.

Consider setting up a bereavement group within school to offer ongoing support any bereaved families. See Child Bereavement UK for advice. Set up a one off or biannual day for bereaved pupils e.g. Beck Ferrari Child Bereavement Specialist facilitating a Treasured Memories Day within your school. Look back at the First section of the Loss and Bereavement pack (Prior to the Return) for contact details for other organisations.

How long we can expect each stage of grieving to last for?

The idea of there being linear, one-way stages of grief has largely been dismissed. Each grieving journey is individual, and people may travel through different 'stages' (or 'tasks') in a bidirectional manner, revisiting feelings and darker periods of grief. It can be more helpful to think of tasks of grief and look to young people managing and adjusting to a life without the significant person. For example, adjusting to changes in simple things, such as who locks the door at night. This can involve reinventing roles which can evoke feelings of helplessness and be difficult to manage. Young people will revisit their grief as they reach different stages of development and different milestones. It is still important and significant, even when many years have passed.

How can we let bereaved young people know we haven't forgotten their grief?

Keeping the communication going will allow us to check in with a pupil and show them we are keeping them in mind. This might be particularly helpful when changes, transitions, anniversaries are ahead. Be mindful of triggers; Coronavirus has been the main focus of life for society, when this begins to dissipate the young person may be glad that the attention has shifted, they may also be worried that their loss will be forgotten. Other causes of death, particularly cancer appear in charity or fundraising appeals as well as TV programmes and each mention may be a trigger a wave of grief for a bereaved young person.

How can we support transition to other classes or schools?

Transition within school:

Information about a pupil's bereavement would be kept within their school file and this might include important dates/anniversaries. It can be helpful for schools to think about manageable ways to share this with key staff e.g. each new class teacher as the pupil transitions from year to year. Dates could be held by a member of the pastoral team and then reminders sent to class teachers as dates are nearing (each half term). Ongoing communication with the family can be valuable as you can ask the families to inform you (and give you reminders!) of any difficult dates.

Transition between schools:

Ensure bereavement is noted on transition documents if young people are transferring to new schools. Find an opportunity to liaise directly with the new school to make them aware. It can be hard for a new school to open the door of communication so facilitate this to happen if possible. Also encourage the parent/carers to inform the new school in person.

How should school support times in the school day, timetable or curriculum areas that are difficult for grieving pupils?

Pupils struggling with anxiety might find separating from parents or carers to attend school difficult but there may also be other times which are tricky e.g. particular subjects or having an unfamiliar teacher. This will depend on the individual pupil.

The secondary curriculum has many emotive and potentially tricky topics for grieving pupils. It would be very difficult to predict them all, but letting young people know where possible, allows them to prepare and you both to discuss how they might best want to manage. This is also relevant for difficult dates, school events, even charity fundraising, which can present challenges for grieving young people and families. These do however also give them the opportunity to contribute to something that is very relevant to them. There are many ideas for supporting pupils at school e.g. Mothers' Day or on anniversaries. See Child Bereavement UK <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/news/learn-how-to-makeformum-this-mothers-day>

How can our school foster pupil's resilience to help them cope with the adverse effects of Covid-19?

Resiliency can be defined as the ability to spring back from major difficulties and negative experiences. Research indicates that resiliency is not a single quality or trait and that the concept can best be understood from a multi-level perspective - child, family and community. A complex interaction between factors contribute to an individual's resiliency level: e.g. temperament, relationships with other, school ethos and standard of living. School are well placed to support resilience, such as by providing opportunities for positive relationships with both peers and adults, offering space for containment and processing of emotions (*see emotion coaching phrases below*), instilling clear consistent boundaries, and a sense of belonging through participation in events. It may be helpful for young people to listen to other children's experiences of grief linked to Covid-19 and to benefit by learning how they are feeling and coping.

Emotion coaching aims to recognise, empathise and validate feelings. For example:

- *I can see that you're frowning and kicking the wall. I wonder if that's telling us you feel a bit angry. I would feel like that too. It's ok to feel angry.*
- *I've noticed you looking around at the other students who are doing their work. I wonder if you might be feeling worried about something. Have I got that right?*
- *It's normal to feel off task/upset/angry when you've experienced a loss. Feeling those emotions can feel hard sometimes.*

These statements can support children to recognise and accept their emotions and support them to believe in their ability to navigate through painful and overwhelming feelings.

Should a bereaved pupil be added to the SEN register?

There may also be concerns that the child is experiencing ongoing guilt or blame cognitions which are interfering with their ability to function in day to day tasks many years after the experienced loss.

Being bereaved is not a special need and grief is a normal response to the death of someone significant. Most pupils adjust and with support learn to manage their grief. For some bereaved young people, the death may impact more significantly on their social, emotional or mental health. Where the pupil then needs to access additional support for this in line with the schools SEND policy they may be placed on the SEND register for their SEMH needs.

What should I do if I'm still worried?

We will often feel worried about grieving pupils. It can be upsetting to be around a grieving young person, or to even imagine what they have been through. With good support from their family and school most young people will learn to manage. They will adjust and although they may revisit their feelings in turbulent ways, will be able to grow around their grief. For some, when the death was traumatic (in their eyes), the support structure around the young person is fragile or the young person has particular needs which make processing and adjustment hard, there is risk of poorer bereavement outcomes e.g. complicated grief or PTSD symptoms. There may also be concerns that the child is experiencing ongoing guilt or blame cognitions which are interfering with their ability to function in day to day tasks many years after the experienced loss. Sharing our concerns with both family members and school staff can help us get the fuller picture. We may then wish to raise concerns with STLS, KEPS or other bereavement organisations.

Grief is not mental health problem itself, but where a pupil struggles to adjust it can trigger or contribute to mental health difficulties. These concerns can be discussed with your NELFT CYPMHS team to consider referral for psychological support.

I am worried about a staff member's ability to cope. How do we support staff who are bereaved?

It can be difficult to support a bereaved pupil as it can weigh heavy on our emotions. If you are also managing your own grief this may feel additionally hard. For more details on self-care and support see working group pack on supporting staff, and also page 20, Section 10: "Looking after yourself (staff)" in "Managing Bereavement: A guide for schools by Child Bereavement UK"

It can be difficult to support a bereaved child as it can weigh heavy on our emotions. If you are also managing your own grief this may feel additionally hard. For more details on self-care and support see the working group pack on supporting staff, and also page 20, Section 10: "Looking after yourself (staff)" in "Managing Bereavement: A guide for schools by Child Bereavement UK".

A final thought...

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

There's an elephant in the room.
It is large and squatting, so it is hard to get
around it.

Yet we squeeze by with, "How are you" and "I'm fine"
And a thousand other forms of trivial chatter.

We talk about the weather.
We talk about work.
We talk about everything— except the elephant in the room.

There's an elephant in the room.
We all know it is there.
We are thinking about the elephant as we talk together.

It is constantly on our minds.
For you see, it is a very big elephant.

It has hurt us all.
But we do not talk about the elephant in the room.

Terry Kettering

Although not always easy, ongoing **communication** is essential.

Many thanks to the schools and settings whose contributions form the FAQ structure of the Loss and Bereavement pack.

For more details contact your STLS district team, KEPS or Beck Ferrari.



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