



**KINGSDOWN
SCHOOL**

Loss and Bereavement Policy

Last reviewed on: October 2025

**Next review due
by:** October 2027

Aims

This policy focuses on the loss and mourning felt as a result of any death, divorce and separation in its broadest sense. Kingsdown acknowledges the complex nature of mourning, that the trauma of such events often has far reaching consequences over time, and can affect attitude, performance and the ability to cope with school and life in general. It is, therefore, important for the school to have clear supportive strategies in place for our students and staff.

Although the policy describes in detail strategies and action to be taken in the case of death, it is felt that similar consideration must be given to those who suffer any loss. It is here recognised that the results of divorce and separation are felt deeply but they are not necessarily the same as death. Those affected by divorce and separation must also be supported.

Supportive Strategies

Kingsdown recognises the need to enable bereaved students to access its in-school support systems from a staff member who has received formal counselling training. Other staff are also available to create listening opportunities, to provide information and to monitor the behaviour and progress of bereaved students. It is also their role to keep channels of communication open so that involved staff, students, parents/carers and counsellors remain informed as necessary.

The school recognises the need to provide training and strategies for staff in their role as listener/carer and ensure active support and supervision for those involved in the counselling/listening process. It also acknowledges that the subject of bereavement and the experience of mourning are complex and personal and that staff must be permitted to decide on their own level of involvement.

Bereaved Staff

When a member of staff suffers a loss/bereavement it will be acknowledged formally on behalf of the school by a member of the SLT and it is expected that help and support on a personal basis will be offered by Senior Leadership and close colleagues. Heads of Department and departmental staff should be prepared to offer help with workload if it is required. Access to the Staff Support Services will be available. All staff have access to our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Outside Agencies

Those who grieve can greatly benefit from support and counselling from outside professional agencies. The school is prepared to access help for staff through the Employee Assistance Programme. The Employee Assistance Programme is a confidential external support service, which works with individuals and family groups. Kingsdown will make this known to staff as appropriate and encourage those suffering grief to access this support.

In the case of grieving students this may, or may not, result from prior discussion with other family members, students are able to self refer to their Progress Leader for support. The Progress Leader will be informed of students who have suffered bereavement and offer support if necessary. Kingsdown has a successful history of working with external agencies such as Be U Swindon, who have a weekly clinic at Kingsdown and TaMHS (Targeted Mental Health), recognising and valuing the work of the organisations. It is also anticipated that students may choose to talk in confidence to the School Nurse who we are fortunate to have working with us one day a week in school. The Progress Leader may support the student or they may refer to our Student Support Panel for additional support from our Bereavement trained HLESC (Higher Level Education Support Champion). This is an additional supportive strategy we encourage our students to utilise.

Other outside agencies such as Tree House, are prepared to work with those suffering from loss and bereavement. The school recognises its responsibility in making this known to those affected if necessary.

Response by the School to a known, imminent bereavement

If it is known that a person is dying, the school should offer support to those affected. This could include:

- Discussing how support can be given with the student and family.
- Making staff aware. Discussing if other students should be informed.
- Appreciating that school work will be a secondary consideration.
- Accepting it may be relevant for family members to take time off to be with the dying person.
- Being prepared and offering the opportunity to talk about the situation. In the case of a dying student additional strategies, depending upon circumstances and wishes, will have to be considered.

At the time of death of a student, a past student, parent/s or siblings the following procedure is recommended:

- A formal message of condolence sent to the family. Personal contact from a member of the Senior Leadership Team – recommend a home visit. The tutor may also feel able and wish to also make a visit.
- Ascertain funeral arrangements.
- For the school to be represented at the funeral.
- For the school to respect family wishes regarding flowers, etc.
- To support the grieving students on return to school by being sensitive to the students' needs referring to the Progress Leader if necessary.

Return to School

- Grieving students will be asked sensitively and regularly what they need.
- Grieving students need to know it is okay to grieve and to talk about the person they have lost.
- Grieving students need a safe haven in school, ideally with a close friend.

- Staff need to know that grieving students should not be left isolated, the occasional caring inquiry helps.

Grieving students do not want to be pitied or treated as different. They want people to be aware and remain aware of what they have been, and are, going through. Teachers should not be too hard on themselves; the right balance between over-concern and ignoring is difficult to strike. NB : this is difficult work!

- We all need to know that school work may not be a priority for a grieving person.
- Staff need to know that it is okay (in fact, it is therapeutic) just to listen. The importance of simply 'being there' cannot be underestimated.
- School can be seen as a sanctuary from the chaos and grief at home.
- Kingsdown should be aware of the anniversary of a death and know that this will always be a painful time, which calls for extra sensitivity. Form tutors could alert staff to such dates.

Other Children in School

- We must be aware of the fears of other children when a child loses a close family member; they are reminded that their own family is not immortal.
- Children can make cruel remarks to a bereaved child.
- We should avoid children hearing of a death through gossip or rumour. We should make a formal announcement and provide a time of respect.
- In the case of a student or recent ex-student's death, a memorial service can be held in school for the affected year groups.

Death of a member of staff

- Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Headteacher and the family's wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations. We need to be mindful of the use of social media sites and their impact throughout this time as rumour and gossip spread quickly.
- Staff should be informed before pupils and be prepared to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance.
- Pupils should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them. A decision should be made as to whether this information should be given as part of a whole school approach or if only certain groups of pupils need to be informed.
- A letter to all school families affected should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed.
- The school should be aware that the school timetable may need a degree of flexibility to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of children affected by the situation. However, minimal disruption to the timetable also offers a sense of security and familiarity.
- Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate.
- In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial school closure in some circumstances.
- Where necessary a press statement should be prepared by the Headteacher.

Policy Review Dates

Review Date	Changes Made	By Whom
September 2018	Policy created	Ms S M Magenty
September 2019	No changes	Ms S M Magenty
November 2021	No changes	Ms S M Magenty
November 2023	Updates made	Mrs K Agambar
September 2024	Updates made	Mrs K Agambar
October 2025	No changes made	Mrs K Agambar

Signed :

E Leigh-Bennett
Headteacher

Signed :

V Edwards
Chair of Governors

Date:

Date: