

Blackhall Nursery

Bereavement Policy

Blackhall Nursery works to support children, families and staff at all times and the aim of this policy is to help us to be prepared and have plans in place to deal with death, grief and bereavement as well as reacting to the death of someone in the Nursery community, whether a child, a family member, or a member of staff.

‘It is much easier to think about how to respond if you’ve thought about it beforehand’
(Child Bereavement UK).

The policy does not take account of the circumstances of the death. It focusses instead on the impact of bereavement and will act as a guide to be followed, which is particularly important when in shock or upset. It is acknowledged that everyone responds to death, grief and bereavement differently and that flexibility is required.

Following the death of a pupil or member of staff:

Roles and responsibilities

- The Nursery Manager will be responsible for implementing the policy. If it is the Nursery Manager who has died, then the Business Manager and / or the Chair of the Nursery Board will be responsible.
- The Nursery Manager will inform the Care Inspectorate and a senior member of the City of Edinburgh Council’s Early Years team (Senior Education Officer or QIO) if a member of staff dies – this is a condition of registration. It is important that news does not spread via social media to prevent speculation and rumours. A letter should be sent out to all families and staff as quickly as possible.
- Staff should be instructed not to speak to the press and any enquiries should be directed to the Nursery Manager or the Chair of the Board.
- Children will be informed together in a special group time and given the opportunity to ask questions.
- Nursery will seek external bereavement support and make this available to children, families and staff.

Procedures

- Clarify information and the wishes of the family.
- Share the news with staff and pupils – it helps to feel prepared when delivering sad news so a script can be useful. Do not be afraid to show emotion. Acknowledge that you have sad news to share, give simple facts, use the word dead/died. If you have permission from the family, explain briefly where and when the death occurred. If you don’t have these facts say that you don’t know. Mention any support arrangements that are in place, acknowledge that it is normal and ok to feel sad.

- Inform families. Examples of appropriate letters can be found at <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/managing-bereavement-a-guide-for-early-years>
- Provide links to help families know how to talk to their children (Richmond Hope, Child Bereavement UK, Winston's Wish etc).

The First Few Days

- Consider if staff require support and arrange time and space for this if necessary.
- Consider if it is appropriate for Nursery to operate as normal or if adjustments are required (staffing, timings etc).
- Consider setting up a book of condolences and/or a tribute to be shared with the family.

The funeral

- Consult the family to find out whether staff, children, families are welcome to attend.
- Can children be consulted in choosing flowers and/or organising a collection?
- Identify the practicalities of allowing those who wish to attend the funeral (cover staff, close the Nursery).

Support

- What support can be provided for children / families / staff?

City of Edinburgh Council Educational Psychology services.

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Pages/Category/child-bereavement-uk-support-services>

<https://www.richmondshope.org.uk/>

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support>

<https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/bereavement-support-services/>

- Acknowledge how stressful supporting children through a bereavement can be for staff. Consider if any staff may be more vulnerable. Speak to staff to find out what support they would like to have.

Remembering

- Consider if it would be appropriate to hold a memorial service / plant a tree /a bench etc – consult the family of the person who died about any plans for this.

Supporting a bereaved child:

Returning to Nursery

- The Nursery Manager will discuss the return to Nursery following a bereavement.

This meeting should establish if/how the news should be shared, consider the creation of memory boxes etc. and find out how the family would like communication to take place between the setting and home.

Longer term support

- Significant dates should be recorded – birthdays, anniversaries. Mother's/Father's Day etc as these may be difficult for many years.
- Grief may impact progress – be aware of any changes in behaviour and create supportive strategies as required. Change can be difficult so particular attention should be paid to times of transition/ moving to school.
- Pass on details of bereavement when children leave Nursery / move on to school.
- Remain sensitive to the bereaved person if the topic of death/grief arises

Richmond Hope (Edinburgh): 0131 661 6818

Child Bereavement UK Helpline: 0800 02 888 40

Marie Curie Helpline: 0800 090 2309

This policy links to:

Curricular Area(s): HWB

Quality Indicator(s): 1.4, 2.4, 2.7

Care Standards(s): 1.7, 1.12, 1.29, 3.4

UNCRC: Article 3

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