



Bereavement Policy

At Gilded Hollins we believe the ethos of the school is based on openness and mutual support therefore we need to minimise any disruption and show that the world is still a safe and predictable place. This policy relates to the death of a staff member a child within the school or the death of a parent of a child in school.

We are committed to the emotional health and wellbeing of all staff and pupils. We are dedicated to the continual development of a 'healthy school'. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that support and prepare pupils for coping with separation or loss of a loved one, either through death or divorce.

The Team:

The Headteacher: Mrs Christine Burns

First point of contact, responsible for dealing with all parties.

First point of contact for family.

Immediately inform Chair of Governors.

Act as media spokesperson and assist with outside agencies. Arrange a staff meeting.

Chair of Governors: (or the Deputy Headteacher)

To ensure all Governors are informed.

Deputy Headteacher:

To coordinate staffing of classes, support children and staff.

SENDCo:

Inform Educational Psychologist to coordinate their support.

School Business Manager

Oversee administrative needs.

Headteacher's role

It is the role of the Headteacher to gather factual information regarding the death. They will consult the family of the deceased to ascertain their wishes regarding the sharing of information. If appropriate, this accurate information should be shared quickly so that rumours and assumptions do not spread and cause the family further distress.

The Headteacher is also responsible for preparing a letter to parents/carers explaining the event which should be distributed at the end of the school day.

Informing staff and pupils

All staff should be informed straight away before pupils are told. As soon as staff have been told pupils should be informed immediately.

This should be done in small groups by somebody they are familiar with. Staff will be given guidance on the approach to use.

Pupils who are particularly vulnerable, such as close friends of the deceased or who witnessed the event, should be identified and offered additional support.

Staff members who are particularly vulnerable or who it is known may be alone that night should be offered help and support. This should include phone details being exchanged in order to provide a point of contact for the member of staff.

Social networking and the policy

Gilded Hollins will make every effort to handle the event and the communication of this in a sensitive and efficient manner. It is the school's policy that no information be shared, regarding the death, using social media by staff or pupils until the facts have been established and all family members, friends and colleagues have been informed. Respect and empathy are key to ensuring the bereaved do not face unnecessary trauma.

The death of a pupil

- Support will be provided for the whole school community. Designated members of staff will be deployed to provide support and comfort.
- The LA will be informed and may be deployed in counselling roles to provide support and comfort.
- Designated areas will be established to provide pupils a place to reflect during the day.
- A book of remembrance will be set up in an appropriate location, e.g. the school hall.
- Staff should be provided with the opportunity to meet as a group at the end of the school day to discuss any concerns and difficulties and for support.
- The Headteacher, in consultation with the chair of governors and an LA representative, will discuss and draft an official statement on behalf of the school should the press be involved.
- Pupils with a particularly close relationship to the deceased should be told one-to-one or in a separate group.
- Pupils should be encouraged to share their feelings and discuss the event and death.
- Staff should be honest and open about their feelings.
- Minimum disruption to the school timetable is ideal. Structure and regularity will ensure pupils are not overwhelmed. However, pupils who feel too distressed to attend lessons should be allowed to go to the areas designated previously.

The death of a staff member

- Support should be provided for the whole school community. The LA will be informed and may be deployed in counselling roles to provide support and comfort.
- Designated areas may be established to provide pupils with a place to reflect during the day.
- A book of remembrance will be set up in an appropriate location, e.g. the school hall.
- Services of remembrance will be offered.
- Staff should be provided the opportunity to meet as a group at the end of the school day to discuss any concerns and difficulties and for support.
- The Headteacher, in consultation with the chair of governors, will discuss and draft an official statement on behalf of the school should the press be involved.
- Staff members with a particularly close relationship to the deceased should be offered specialist support, including appropriate cover if applicable.
- Pupils should be informed.
- Pupils with a particularly close relationship to the deceased should be told one-to-one or in a separate group.
- Minimum disruption to the school timetable is ideal. Structure and regularity will ensure pupils are not overwhelmed. However, flexibility may be required and great sensitivity should be shown when determining how lessons will be covered following the death.

The death of a pupil's family member

- If the death occurs while the pupil is at school, it is preferable for a family member of the pupil (preferably a parent) to come to the school and inform the child.
- If the above is not an option, arrangements should be made to transport the pupil to their home and family.
- In some circumstances it may be necessary for the Headteacher to inform them.
- The school should liaise with the pupil's family to determine their wishes before notifying pupils.
- The pupil's peers should be informed as to how the pupil wishes to communicate/respond to the incident. This could be talking openly about the death or asking for respect and privacy, letting the pupil talk about it in their own time.
- The Headteacher will delegate a staff member to liaise with the family regarding their wishes for the funeral and/or the sending of flowers/cards.
- It can be expected that the bereaved pupil may have a reduced capacity for school work immediately following the death. They should be allowed time to recover and given any extra help and support necessary.

The death of a pupil or staff member on a school trip

- In the event of a death during a school trip an emergency management team will be established by the Headteacher.
- Those who have witnessed the death will be the priority and they will be offered support.
- The Headteacher will consult with emergency personnel to determine the timeliest and most appropriate method for informing the deceased's family.
- A designated staff member will undertake the role of school liaison and if possible a designated phone line for enquiries should be established.
- The emergency management team will organise support and counselling as necessary.

Funerals

- The school will always abide by the family's wishes.
- The family will often welcome the involvement of the school community in the funeral but, there will be times where the family wishes to keep the proceedings private and this should be respected.
- If the family wishes the school to be represented at the funeral the Headteacher, in collaboration with the leadership team, will identify which staff and pupils may attend.
- Practicalities, such as providing cover for teachers, will also be arranged.
- The Headteacher will consult the family, and in turn staff and pupils, in determining the appropriate sending of flowers, cards or the holding of a collection.
- A permanent form of remembrance may also be considered.

Appendix A Coping with the sudden death of a pupil

Step		
1.	Headteacher to obtain factual information at start of crisis	
2.	Headteacher to inform Chair of Governors and agree as to whom informs other Governors	
3.	Headteacher to inform LA	
4.	Headteacher to liaise with Chair of Governors regarding possible press release. Call LA press office is appropriate	
5.	Headteacher to brief staff and give factual information	
6.	School Business manager to ask admin staff to cancel all meetings and support children and staff	
7.	Emma Hurst to inform Educational Psychologist to ask for support from Wigan	
8.	If child has died teachers to give factual information to pupils in small groups in class.	
9.	Teaching assistants to support in classes	

10.	Office staff to set up quiet place, condolence book etc. Ask pupils for their ideas.	
11.	Deputy headteacher to discuss with Welfare Staff how to deal sensitively with bereavement	
12.	Class teachers to monitor high risk staff and pupils, contact local agencies for support	
13.	School Business manager to coordinate letter to parents	
14.	Headteacher to liaise with the family to decide appropriate arrangements for the school on the day of the funeral / organise memorial event	

Appendix B

Coping with sudden the death of a member of staff

Step		
1	Headteacher to obtain factual information at start of crisis	
2.	Headteacher to inform Chair of Governors and agree as to whom informs other Governors	
3.	Headteacher to inform LA.	
4.	Headteacher to brief staff and give factual information	
5.	Admin staff to cancel all meetings and support children and staff	
6.	Deputy Headteacher to inform Educational Psychologist to ask for support from Wigan	

7.	Teachers to give factual information to pupils in small groups in class;	
8.	The Pastoral Team to set up quiet place, condolence book etc. Ask pupils for their ideas.	
9.	Deputy Headteacher to discuss with Welfare Staff how to deal sensitively with bereavement	
10.	Teachers to monitor high risk staff and pupils, contact local agencies for support	
11.	School Business manager to coordinate letter to parents	
12.	Headteacher to liaise with family to decide appropriate arrangements for the school on the day of the funeral/organised memorial event	

Summer 2026

To be reviewed every 3 years