

**Rowland Hill Nursery School and Children's
Centre**

Bereavement Policy

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WHY DO WE NEED A POLICY ABOUT BEREAVEMENT?

We believe that bereavement and loss are an inevitable part of living and growing. Early Years practitioners will provide opportunities within their settings for children to develop their own appropriate range of emotional, spiritual and intellectual responses to manage these experiences.

We believe that the ethos of the school, based on openness and mutual support, provides a framework in which these experiences can be realised in an enriching manner.

WHAT DO WE WANT FROM OUR POLICY?

The school will act in a planned and agreed manner, so that all staff know what is expected and can contribute their part in a way that is consistent with the values that have been adopted.

By adopting a planned and considered approach the school can with some degree of confidence support the emotional well being of the child. As a result Staff will:

- Feel equally valued.
- Have an opportunity to prepare themselves for the supportive role they adopt.
- Be given time and space to work through their own feelings.
- Become aware of the needs of bereaved children, and be offered training, to develop strategies to support them.

Children will:

- Be offered support by sensitive, trained staff working together.
- Have the opportunity to tell their story, express their feelings, share their memories and develop coping strategies.

The school will:

- Have clear expectations about the way that it will respond to the death, not simply react.
- Provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment where there are no expectations in their responses to the children's grief.

The family will:

- Feel supported.
- Be given an opportunity to express their feelings of loss.
- Have opportunities to understand and communicate with their child about their loss as a result of the activities provided by the school.

The parents/carers will:

- Be given guidance on how to support their child/children.

- Be aware of the

HOW DO WE PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE?

The school will have identified, through the process of a one day bereavement conference, a named school bereavement contact. This person will be aware of the needs of bereaved children and will have collated resources in order to support them.

The school bereavement contact, in partnership with the practitioners will co-ordinate the school's response and be fundamental in liaising with bereaved family.

As far as possible, all staff should be told together by the named person. By creating a list of people to be told, the school can be sure that no one close to the situation will find out by chance.

All the parents/carers will be told in writing at the same time and as promptly as circumstances will allow.

Following this the children in school will be told at a time previously notified to the parents.

Staff will be consistent in their use of terminology to ensure clear understanding of the concept of death.

Absentees from school will also need to be informed at the earliest opportunity. The school will have procedures to track who is informed, when and by whom, to ensure that no one is missed.

The school will have a range of strategies that it may adopt in the days and weeks that follow any significant loss. Decisions about which to undertake will be determined following discussions with the family concerned and will take into account the cultural/religious beliefs of the family.

The child's key worker or other named member of staff will be identified to keep in touch with the family so contact from the family's perspectives is manageable. This person will co-ordinate the sending of a card.

Attendance at the funeral and other forms of remembering will be agreed by the staff team. If you decide to close the setting in term time, this will need to be with the prior agreement of the headteacher due to funding regulations

Staff will have ongoing opportunities for peer support in order to maintain their well being.

The school bereavement contact will take responsibility for recording details of a bereavement on the child's Record of Transfer and ensuring this information is passed to the next setting, with parents permission.

The school will provide ongoing support and will ensure that the anniversary of the death is remembered.

Curriculum

In the event of bereavement or significant loss the school has identified activities that will support the child/children to explore their feelings and memories. Some opportunities may include:

Telling the Story

- Use puppets
- Use toys
- Use stories
- Use playdough

Expressing feelings

- Feelings biscuits
- Volcano/mad box
- Water balloons
- Bag of feathers

Remembering

- Memory box
- Memory jar
- Photo albums
- Memory bracelets
- Bookmarks

Coping strategies

- Sad box
- Worry dolls
- Handprints
- Special dates

Parents/carers

In acknowledging the role of the school in supporting children with bereavement and loss, the school will work alongside the parents/carers in this process.

The parents/carers remain the most significant support to young children in understanding death. The school can support parents/carers in this by:

- Sharing with parents/carers the intentions of the school to act in a particular way in the event of a death.

- Offering guidance to parents/carers on how they might support their child.
- Sharing information with families about other sources of support e.g. Winston's Wish Family Line, participation in a Slide Away school workshop.
- Keeping parents/carers fully informed about the actions of the school throughout the immediate period of grieving.
- Parents/carers will be invited to be involved in any school response that occurs after the death, e.g. a remembering time. The format of this will take into account the beliefs and wishes of the bereaved family.

Contact Information:

Samaritans 08457909090
 Samaritans North London 02088896888
www.samaritans.org

Cruse Bereavement Care 08444779400
 Cruse North London 02089643455
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Caris Islington 02072815200
www.carisislington.org

Evaluate and Review the Policy

The policy will be displayed in the foyer visible to parent/carers. Governors will have a copy of the policy. Staff, students and part-time staff are given the policy in their induction to the centre.

Ratification

This Policy was reviewed in

This policy was ratified by Governors in: (Name of Governor meeting)

Date:.....

Signed by chair of Governors or Governor Representative:

Print Name:

Signed: Date: