

## **Manuden Primary School Bereavement Policy**

FOR MANUDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL  
APPROVED BY GOVERNORS September 2024  
POLICY TO BE REVIEWED September 2025 (Annually)



**A Small school with big ideas ... Growing hearts, Growing Minds, Gowing Dreams.**

'Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility' Manuden Primary School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, governors, and volunteers to share this commitment. To achieve our commitment, we will ensure continuous development and improvement of robust safeguarding processes and procedures that promote a culture of safeguarding amongst our staff, governors, and volunteers. We believe that every child should be valued, feel safe and is happy. We endeavour to make sure that children at our school know this and are empowered to tell us if they are experiencing harm. We have several policies and procedures in place that contribute to our safeguarding commitment. These can be viewed on our school website. We actively support the Government's PREVENT (counter terrorism strategy) to address radicalisation and extremism.

### **Introduction**

At any given time, within our school community, there may be some recently bereaved children who are processing and coming to terms with their loss. Sometimes the death of a member of staff or a pupil may have an impact on the whole school community. Whilst we would hope to not encounter such circumstances, we have this Bereavement Policy in place so that we can be proactive, rather than reactive, in these very sensitive situations.

Usually, support and understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of our school, along with that provided by their family and friends, may be all the bereavement support most children or staff require. However, we recognise that referral to more specialist support may be necessary where the impact of grief is more complex.

### **Aims and Ethos**

Manuden Primary School is committed to supporting children and staff through bereavement with care and sensitivity, in line with our school vision: *'A small school with big ideas... Growing hearts,*

*Growing minds, Growing dreams.*' We recognise that each child's experience of grief is unique and that providing a nurturing environment is essential in helping them process loss in a healthy way. Therefore, it is our aim:

- To provide appropriate support to pupils and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after a bereavement.
- To create a safe and calm environment where children feel supported and valued.
- To maintain clear and compassionate communication between school and home, offering guidance for parents on accessing further support if required.
- To work with the local authority and other relevant agencies to ensure the best possible support network for pupils and staff.

### **The Role of the Governing Body**

- To approve this policy and ensure its effective implementation and regular review.
- To ensure a whole-school approach to emotional wellbeing, ensuring bereavement support is embedded within the school's pastoral framework.

### **The Role of the Headteacher**

- To oversee support required and provided, liaising with external agencies as appropriate.
- To be the first point of contact for the bereaved family or affected staff member.
- To manage any media enquiries sensitively if required.
- To keep the governing body fully informed.
- To ensure staff are appropriately trained to support bereaved pupils and undertake actions set out in this policy, including appointing a deputy should the Headteacher be unable to fulfil this role.

### **The Role of the Local Authority (LA)**

- To advise and support school staff as required.
- To signpost referral pathways and provide additional resources where necessary.
- To provide information, guidance, and support to all schools (available via Essex Schools Infolink).

### **The Role of Staff**

- To provide a safe and nurturing environment where pupils feel comfortable to express their feelings.
- To act as trusted adults, offering reassurance and listening support.
- To monitor pupil wellbeing, identify concerns, and escalate where additional support may be required.
- To ensure safeguarding concerns are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **In-House Counselling Support**

At Manuden Primary School, we recognise that some children may need more structured emotional support to navigate bereavement. To support this, we offer access to our **in-house counsellor**, who is available to provide targeted emotional support for pupils who may be struggling with grief.

- The counsellor will offer one-to-one sessions tailored to the needs of the child, providing a safe space to talk about their feelings.

- Parents/carers will be consulted before a child accesses this support, ensuring that their wishes are considered in the approach taken.
- The school will work closely with families to evaluate the ongoing needs of the child and make further referrals if necessary.
- Staff will be guided on how to signpost children towards counselling support as needed.

### **Procedures Following a Bereavement**

1. Wherever possible (and if deemed appropriate), the Headteacher will attempt contact with the bereaved family before taking any other action. This ensures that all communication to the wider school community (and media) is factual, avoids rumour or confusion, and aligns with the family's wishes. Where it has not been possible to establish contact with the family, and news of the death is already public, the Headteacher will manage the situation with advice from the local authority.
2. The Headteacher will inform staff of any death and agree on how information will be shared with pupils and the wider school community.
3. The Headteacher and staff will determine how to share information with pupils in a supportive and age-appropriate way.
4. The Headteacher will prepare a communication to all parents/carers to inform them of the death and provide advice on supporting their child, should they be affected.
5. The Headteacher will agree on a statement for the media, where required, in collaboration with the local authority.
6. The Headteacher will adapt the school day and timetable if necessary to ensure that appropriate support is available. This may include additional time with the in-house counsellor, external agency support, or classroom adjustments.
7. The Headteacher will make arrangements in school for a book of condolence and/or an area where flowers may be placed, in consultation with the bereaved family.
8. Funeral attendance will be clarified in consultation with the bereaved family, with consideration given to a full or partial school closure if appropriate.
9. Staff will continue to monitor the wellbeing of all pupils, identifying any concerns and escalating where additional support is needed.
10. The school will document any concerns regarding a child's wellbeing to ensure that future schools are aware that additional support may be required.

By embedding our core values into this policy, we ensure that **Manuden Primary School** remains a compassionate, supportive, and nurturing environment where every child and staff member feels valued and supported during times of loss.