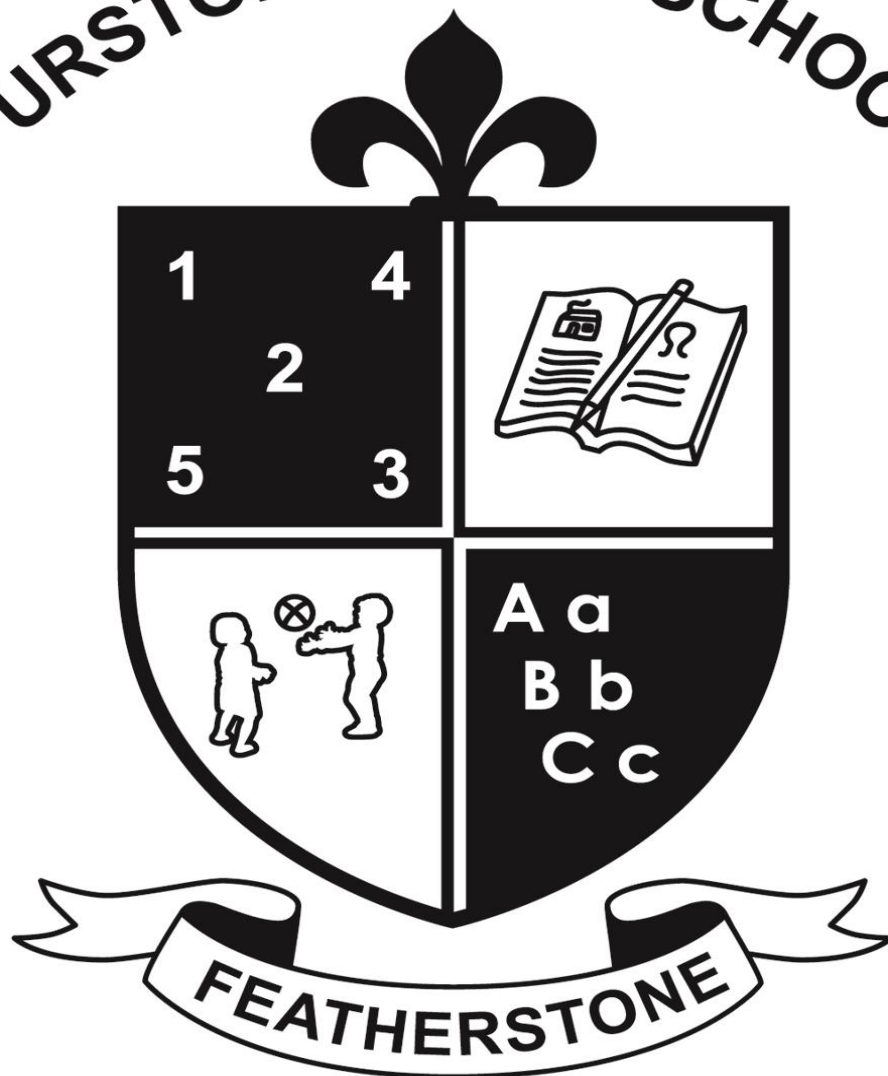# Bereavement Policy

Bereavement Policy

This policy outlines our commitment to supporting pupils and their families who have suffered a bereavement. We aim to support the emotional and physical wellbeing of bereaved pupils and their families providing comfort and support to help them through a very difficult time.

At Purston Infant School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in our whole school community, including pupils, staff, parents and carers. We understand how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that mental health is a crucial factor in our overall wellbeing and can affect our outlook and attitudes on a daily basis.

We all go through ups and downs and some people face significant life events. We will follow our procedures to enable us to communicate with and support bereaved pupils and their families, both before and after a pupils return to school.

Our procedures will help us to support bereaved children and their families with mental health and wellbeing which we can do by working with children on feelings and thoughts and to provide information to families and signpost to appropriate services.

All bereavements in all families matter to our school equally. Every bereavement is unique and will face different challenges. Each bereavement will be supported and needs will be understood and met.

Stages of grief

Denial   Anger   Bargaining   Depression   Acceptance

If a pupil is bereaved, we will commit to supporting both them and their family in the following ways.

- Establish a core group of staff responsible for communication and co-ordination of support offered. This will include a pastoral contact.

- In the days after the death, but before a bereaved pupil returns to education, a nominated person will contact the family to offer a point of contact and explain what support we can offer.

- Offer bereavement resources that are age-appropriate and signpost to online advice and relevant agencies.

- In the days after the death, we will inform staff members and pupils. This will be done in an age-appropriate and sensitive way, considering confidentiality, potential stigma surrounding the cause of death and the family's wishes (as established with them).

- When the pupil returns to school, we will reflect on the needs of the child discussing with the family how we can best support.

- We will work to enable the pupil's re-integration into 'normal' school routines safely and create a secure environment for them.

- For a bereaved pupil's remaining time in our school, we will ensure significant dates/anniversaries are recorded and considered and allow opportunities to reflect on the death encouraging speaking with others and accessing support.

- When helping a bereaved pupil we will ensure they know who they can reach out to in school for support and offer them opportunities to express their emotions safely and appropriately.

- To enable and support our staff, we will ensure staff involved in planning school activities and lessons are helped to identify triggers and content which may upset the bereaved child or young person. We will also provide information and signpost staff to support services as necessary.

- If we notice a child is struggling with their mental health and wellbeing, we will pass this information on to parents/families and discuss ways to support.

- We will review this policy every Two years and update or check the services and support that we are sharing.

Death of a Pupil.

The death of a child or children within the school community raises whole school issues that require careful consideration.

This policy outlines systems for sharing information with all those who had contact with the deceased pupil.

The responsible staff will take control of talking to the pupils, to be available when needed, to make crisis contingency arrangements and to pass on information to relevant people.

In the case of a sudden death, it is important to tell all pupils and staff what has happened. A class, or whole school assembly may be held, but this must only be carried out with the permission of the deceased child's parents.

The media

Press attention should be kept away from the school grounds and pupils. Only responsible staff should make any press releases with the permission and agreement of the family and the LEA.

Emotional support

This may be required for those closely affected such as classmates and close friends. Their teacher may also need support at this time to reassure them that the support they are offering their class is appropriate. With the family's agreement, school staff and some pupils may wish to attend the funeral.

Supporting the parents

A parent may have anticipated the loss of their child due to ill health. Other losses may be sudden. Regardless of how their child has died all parents will be in a state of shock and their loss will have a profound impact on them. The following steps may be helpful for them:

- Immediate and ongoing communication from the school to the parents.

- With parental agreement, staff attendance at the funeral

- A book of remembrance

- If the parents wish to collect their child's books/belongings, ensure there is a quiet room available for them, where they will not be interrupted.

• Pass information onto the parents relating to support groups which they may find helpful. Supporting siblings in school. Special consideration should be given to siblings of deceased pupils who attended our school. To support the siblings, school will appoint a member of staff with whom the child/ren have a good rapport, to oversee their return to school and listen to their concerns and worries. The school will keep the parents informed on their child/ren's emotional wellbeing.

Responsible members of staff

Phillip Barnett – Headteacher and Mental Health Lead

Alison Gascoyne – Deputy Headteacher

Kerry Dyas – Family Support worker

Useful numbers

Child bereavement UK- Helpline 0800 02 888 04

Cruse Bereavement Care – Helpline 0808 808 1677

Samaritans- Helpline 116 123

Winston's wish – 08088 020 021

At a loss – ataloss.org

Dying matters – dyingmatters.org

The good grief trust – thegoodgrieftrust.org

Sudden – 0800 2600 400