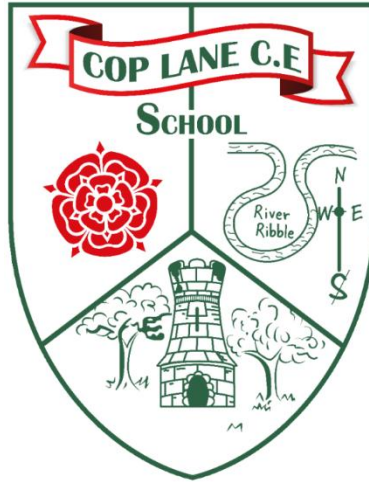


Cop Lane C.E. Primary School



Bereavement Policy – Autumn 2025

This policy is embedded in our school's mission statement and distinctive Christian vision:

A welcoming Christian community, committed to one another, giving our very best at all times.

Our church school is a welcoming and caring Christian family where everyone is valued and supported so that they can flourish. We aim to instill a lifelong love of learning and nurture everyone's individual talents. Through Jesus Christ, our aspirations, hopes and dreams can be achieved.

'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'

Philippians 4.13

Bereavement Policy

1. Aims

This bereavement policy aims to:

- Set out a guideline for how our school will respond to a death in our school community
- Set out a plan for communicating deaths in a timely manner that balances our school community's interests and transparency with the wishes of the family of the deceased
- Identify best practices for supporting pupils and/or members of staff experiencing bereavement
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and the governing board
- Provide a roadmap and framework for pupils or staff returning to school following bereavement

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for delegating any responsibilities under this policy to other members of staff.

The headteacher will:

- Liaise with the family of the deceased
- Where appropriate, communicate details of a death to pupils and staff as set out in this policy, or activate communication teams
- Respond to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Participate in any multi-agency reviews as requested
- Lead reintegration meetings for pupils or staff returning to school after a bereavement
- Arrange for monitoring and support of the pastoral support team or any individual staff members who are supporting bereaved pupils or staff

The Role of Pastoral Staff/ Clergy

- Provide direct support to bereaved pupils and staff
- Signpost to external support available to bereaved pupils and staff
- Organise safe spaces for bereaved members of the school community to take a time out
- Organise memorials, such as temporary tributes, books of condolences, memorial web pages
- Arrange for the attendance and supervision of pupils at funerals (where permitted)
- Maintain a calendar of dates and holidays that may be particularly difficult for bereaved pupils or staff and ensure they're supported on those days

- Provide additional support during significant transitions – for example, when moving up to the next year group or transitioning to a new school

The Role of the Governing Body

- Undertake monitoring of how the school is supporting the bereaved, and the staff who support them
- Monitor the headteacher's emotional wellbeing – for example, through the wellbeing governor
- Assist the headteacher, where required, in responding to media requests for information in the case of a publicised death
- Where necessary, arrange for another staff member to take the lead if the headteacher is not available to respond to a death immediately

3. Provision for supporting staff who support the bereaved

Supporting pupils and staff who are grieving can be painful. Those staff members who carry out this essential work will be monitored and supported. This could be through the school supervision arrangements, school counsellor or other agencies.

4. Immediate actions following a death

4.1 Clarifying information and the wishes of the family

- The Headteacher/ SLT will be responsible for contacting the family to confirm news of a death and determine the wishes of the family in terms of what can be shared with the rest of the school community and how

4.2 Sharing the news with staff

- The Headteacher/ SLT will be responsible for sharing the news with staff and explaining what support will be available to those who need it. This will usually be done using a staff meeting.

4.3 Sharing the news with pupils

- The Headteacher/ SLT will be responsible for sharing the news with pupils and explaining what support will be available to those who need it

4.4 Informing parents/carers

- The Headteacher/ SLT will notify parents/carers of a death (e.g. sending a letter home with pupils explaining the steps the school has taken during the day to inform pupils of the death, what additional support has been made available and where to go for more help and information).

4.5 Responding to specific causes of death

Some deaths need to be handled more sensitively due to their potential to cause fear, anger or imitation.

If the death is due to contagious disease, we will follow procedures as determined by our local health protection team

4.6 Responding to the media

In the event that a death that affects the school raises media interest, we will respond in line with our school emergency plan. As part of the school emergency plan the person with responsibility for media communication is the Deputy Headteacher.

5. Follow-up actions and support following a death

5.1 Support for pupils and staff

Pupils and staff may require support to grieve in the initial days and weeks following a death. This could be through the school counsellor for example.

5.2 Funerals

We will consult the family as appropriate, to confirm:

- Whether members of staff and/or pupils are welcome to attend the funeral or memorial service
- How condolences should be made and how staff and pupils can contribute

If staff are welcome to attend the funeral and wish to do so.

6. Support for pupils returning to school after bereavement

Whether a pupil has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

6.1 Reintegration meeting

The Headteacher/ SLT member will meet with the bereaved pupil and their parents/carers to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the pupil is emotionally ready to return to the classroom either full time or with adjustments to the timetable to allow for a phased return
- Address any concerns the pupil and their parents/carers have about the return to school
- Consult with the pupil about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant)
- Open lines of communication between the pupil and relevant staff to ensure support should the pupil feel overwhelmed
- Open lines of communication between the school and the pupil's parents/carers to coordinate support

- Consider any additional support needed for a pupil who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability

6.2 Ongoing support

- We will maintain regular contact with the pupil's parents/carers to monitor how the pupil is coping
- We acknowledge significant dates or holidays may be especially difficult
- We know that grief may impact a pupil's progress and affect their behaviour. Further support will be made available.
- We will take care to manage changes for bereaved pupils by preparing them in advance (where possible) and taking extra steps to support necessary transitions

7. Support for staff returning to school after bereavement

Whether a staff member has been away from school following a personal bereavement or after a death affecting the whole school community, the school will support them in their return to school and for as long as necessary afterwards.

7.1 Reintegration meeting

The Headteacher/ SLT member will meet with the bereaved staff member to discuss how best to manage a return to school.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Determine whether the staff member is ready to return to work and the best way to make that return (e.g. a phased return to work or a temporary change in duties)
- Address any concerns the staff member may have about the return to school
- Consult with the staff member about how or even if they want their pupils and colleagues to know of the death (where relevant)
- Set guidelines for communication between the staff member and their line manager to monitor and support the staff member

7.2 Ongoing support

We acknowledge that grief can have an impact on a staff member's physical and mental health, which can then go on to impact their performance.

We also recognise that grieving is highly personal and that there can't be a one-size-fits-all solution for monitoring and supporting a bereaved person.

We will work with each individual to create a system of monitoring and support that works for that person. This may include:

- Access to the school counsellor/ counselling services available to the school
- Signposting to agencies that offer support
- A phased return/ flexible working request

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required.

This policy was reviewed by Mr Ashmore in Autumn 2025.

It will be reviewed again in Autumn 2027 or sooner if needed.

Signed: *I. P. Ashmore*

Date: 29.09.25

Appendix: useful contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Child Bereavement UK	• Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 • https://www.childbereavementuk.org/contact-us
Winston's Wish	• Helpline: 08088 020 021 • https://www.winstonswish.org/about-us/contact-page/
Cruse Bereavement Care	• Helpline: 0808 808 1677 • https://www.cruse.org.uk/about-cruse/contact-us
Mind	• Infoline (information and signposting to further help): 0300 123 3393 • Further contacts: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/