



SECKFORD FOUNDATION
FREE SCHOOLS TRUST

**POLICY
DOCUMENT**

Bereavement Policy

Document Owner:	Trust Board
Responsible Trust Committee:	Education Leadership Group
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APPROVED Signature (Principal):	DATE ()
APPROVED Signature (Trust Board):	DATE ()

1. Other relevant policies and documents

- Assembly Policy
- Managing Staff Absence Policy
- Well-Being Policy

2. Explanation of terms used in the policy

'Trust' = Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust

'Free School(s)' = schools within the Trust

3. Purpose of the policy

This document outlines the policy with regard to dealing with bereavement in the Free Schools within the Trust. This policy covers the Trust and all its Free Schools and as such there is no need for each Free School to have its own policy.

4. Policy statement

The Trust and its Free Schools believes in adopting a holistic approach to the support and care of students and staff. When a bereavement occurs it can affect a variety of people not just the family concerned. To this end the Trust and its Free Schools will ensure that those involved are given the appropriate support and advice required.

Aims of the Policy:

- The Bereavement Policy is intended to reflect our ethos and our place at the centre of our communities;
- To ensure that all students and members of staff faced with a bereavement are provided with an appropriate level of support within our remit as educational institutions;
- To signpost / direct students and parents / carers to appropriate agencies where necessary;
- To utilise support and expertise from outside the school where appropriate.

5. Bereavement situations

5.1 Death of the close family member of a student:

Before a student returns to school after the death of a family member:

- Anyone informed of the death should inform the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Pastoral Leader, tutor and other relevant staff as soon as possible;
- The Headteacher should make contact with the family to express the condolences of the school and to offer support to the young person when they return;

- If possible the tutor should meet the nearest relative to discuss any changes in daily routine e.g. where they will live, how they will come to school (if suitable the student should be consulted as to whether they mind their class talking to them about the bereavement);
- The school will check with the nearest relative the definite date of the student's return to school.

When a student returns to school after the death of a family member:

- The tutor should meet the student at the start of the first day back - the student should be given 'space to grieve' - reassured that they may feel emotional and given channels of help to talk to if they so wish: tutor, Pastoral Leader and access to the School Nurse or a counsellor;
- The school will talk to the parents / carers to ascertain if any mention of the death should be made to the student involved and to what extent;
- The appropriate Pastoral Leader should make a short note of the death and its cause including the date, and place this on the student's file;
- The Headteacher's PA should up-date the parent / carer / sibling information on the school's MIS;
- It is recognised that peer support is vital. Where appropriate the tutor will discuss with the affected student (and / or relevant relatives) the level of peer support that can be provided within school.

5.2 Bereavements affecting members of staff:

The Trust wishes to support staff who are going through any period of bereavement and loss. The Well-Being Policy provides information on how staff can access appropriate support during periods of bereavement.

Close or immediate family

The Principal (for Trust staff) and Headteacher (for school staff) will contact the member of staff at an appropriate time to discuss:

- The manner in which their situation will be communicated to staff;
- When they will be able to return to work.

Other bereavements

- All absence requests for Headteacher's Leave should be made through the usual channels (see Managing Staff Absence Policy);
- The member of staff should contact the Headteacher to discuss any additional support that may be required.

Before a member of staff returns to work:

- The Principal / Headteacher will contact the member of staff involved to offer support and convey the condolences of the Trust / school;
- Any requests to attend funerals should be made in writing to the Principal / Headteacher through the normal channels;
- Where appropriate staff may be invited to contribute towards a sympathy card and gift.

When a member of staff returns to work:

- As a general rule it is better to acknowledge the death of a relative than to ignore it. However the Principal / Headteacher will advise members of staff of the person's wishes;
- The Trust will be sensitive to the tasks that the person will be asked to undertake for a specified period upon return to work.
- A 'Return to Work' meeting will take place to enable the school and Trust to best support the individual concerned.

5.3 Death of a student on roll:

In the event of the death of a student on roll then:

- Both the Headteacher and the Principal of the Trust should be informed of the death of a student as soon as it is known;
- If a death outside school, then the Principal will advise the Headteacher of the steps to take which will be bespoke to the circumstances;
- In the event of a death at school or on a school trip, the Critical Incident Policy should be consulted and depending on the nature of the death, appropriate steps should be taken from that policy on how to proceed in the situation;
- Where relevant the Principal and or Headteacher should work with the LADO and attend Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (SUDIC) meetings, and carry out the agreed Action Plan.

5.4 Death of a member of staff:

In the event of the death of a member of staff at the Trust or one of its Free Schools then:

- The Principal of the Trust (and the Headteacher if a school member of staff) should be informed as soon as it is known;
- If a death outside school, then the Principal will advise the Headteacher of the steps to take which will be bespoke to the circumstances;
- In the event of a death at work, the Critical Incident Policy should be consulted and depending on the nature of the death, appropriate steps should be taken from that policy on how to proceed in the situation.

5.5 Other situations:

We recognise that other bereavement situations may be experienced by members of the Trust and Free School communities. Every effort will be made to support appropriately those experiencing a bereavement situation.

6. Training

Dealing with bereavement and a knowledge of this policy is an integral part of our staff development and training programme. There will be awareness-raising for all staff and more specialised training available for those with specific responsibility.

10. Complaints

Any complaints about this policy from outside the Trust should be made in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy. Any other complaints should be brought to the attention of the Principal in the first instance. Serious issues could be raised through the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Compliance and performance monitoring

The Trust Board will review this policy every three years and ensure that practice across all schools is in line with this policy. Any review will take into account the most up-to-date legislation and guidance.

The Trust has identified a range of Assurance Methodologies as tools by which compliance with policies can be tested. Those most relevant to this policy include:

- Internal Audit