

	Policy Name: Bereavement & Loss Policy	
	Owner: Senior Deputy Head	
	Last Review Date: September 2024	Next review Date: September 2025
	This policy will be revised as regulations or review demands	

For the purpose of this policy a child is seen as anyone who is a current student of Mayfield.

Introduction and Background

As a Catholic community guided by Gospel values our response to bereavement and loss must be to provide an environment which is sensitive and compassionate to the needs of those needing to grieve. We have a responsibility/duty to provide a curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students, and we therefore recognise that learning to cope with the impact of bereavement and loss must be an integral part of that curriculum.

In responding to bereavement, we need to consider the impact of the death of a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, a relative, a teacher, a student and a pet.

In responding to loss we need to consider the specific needs of the individual (eg. divorce and family breakdown, being a looked after child, being a refugee/asylum seeker).

From time to time every school is touched by the death of a student, member of staff or family member. Individuals and families react to bereavement in their own very unique ways. The trauma of bereavement can have a profound effect on the School community, and as a Catholic community we are called to respond to others when they are in need and to offer with sensitivity the spiritual and emotional support necessary at such a time.

Defining responsibilities

In all instances, the Headmistress and Head of Pastoral will be made aware of instances of bereavement and loss which may impact on a student's progress or behaviour.

Different situations will require different responses, and normally a team will be formed which will comprise the Coordinator (a member of the Senior Leadership Team), Lay Chaplain, Head of School, Tutor and Housemistress and others, as appropriate. The situation may become a Critical Incident (please see Critical Incident Emergency Plan). The coordinator will be responsible for arranging communications with the families involved. Sometimes the person theoretically designated as coordinator may wish or need to pass on that responsibility. As a general guideline:

- In the case of the death of a member of staff or a student, the Headmistress will assume overall responsibility;
- If a girl's relation has died, the Senior Deputy Head, the Head of Pastoral, the Head of Lower School, Middle School or Sixth Form will assume overall responsibility.

In the case of the death of a member of the School community, it is essential to maintain as calm and controlled atmosphere as possible. It is important to obtain factual information and to prevent news breaking in corridors or classrooms and so this process should move along swiftly and efficiently.

In general, it is best to have a minimum of disruption to the School timetable. The structure and regularity of the School day is important to maintain, but some flexibility may be required. If a student is too upset to attend lessons, she should be excused to go to the Chaplaincy or Health and Well Being Centre. The timing of any announcement will be done as sensitively as possible as it is recognised that students and staff will need space to reflect before carrying on with the normal school timetable.

Appropriate pastoral support should be provided for the whole School community. The SLT/SMT, Lay Chaplain, School Counsellor, Wellbeing Centre staff and other pastoral staff should be deployed appropriately to provide counselling and comfort. The Chaplaincy will be designated as an area the student can go for this support. A book of remembrance should be set up in an appropriate location, where the bereaved can come to express their grief and loss. Services of remembrance may be offered at various times, and a mass offered for the deceased. Support for staff who are directly involved with grieving students is important and staff should have the opportunity to meet together at an appropriate point in the day to provide an opportunity to share feelings and reactions. The Headmistress will determine the appropriate period of time for these pastoral supports to continue. If the press are involved in reporting on the death, the Headmistress will consult with SLT regarding an official statement on behalf of the School.

The death of a student or a member of staff during the School day, or on a School trip

Should the death of a student or staff member occur during the School day or on a School trip the Headmistress will take responsibility for informing the family and will quickly assemble an emergency management team. They will prepare a suitable statement and arrange a series of meetings will be convened to tell the School community. The process will usually be as follows:

- The Headmistress will consult with the police and emergency personnel in determining the most appropriate and timely method of informing the immediate family of the death.
- The School community will then be briefed using a prepared statement to ensure all members receive the same message. Announcements will be made by the Headmistress or other members of the senior leadership team and done as soon as possible, once the family have been informed. Announcements to happen concurrently.
- As a guide the following locations should be considered:
 - Staff - Coffee Staff Room
 - Close Friends (if a student) – the appropriate Head of School Office.
 - Lower School – Lower School Foyer
 - Middle School – Concert Hall
 - Sixth Form - Chapel
- The first priorities will be to offer support to students and staff who may have witnessed the death. This will be done by the Head of Pastoral, and/ or the appropriate Head of School, alongside the Chaplain.
- The Senior Deputy Head and the emergency management team will deal immediately with issues at the School including contact with accident and emergency personnel, organising support and counselling for the School community and communicating information to the wider School community as appropriate.
- A media statement will be prepared. Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may use the services of an external public relations company, such as Alder, to support the Senior Leadership Team. ([Education & School PR Crisis Communications | Alder UK \(alder-uk.com\)](#))

The death of a student or a member of staff at home

In the first instance a member of the deceased's family will contact the School and agree the way in which the information will be shared. Initial contact will usually be with the Headmistress but may be a member of SLT or another member of staff. If it is not the Headmistress, she should be informed immediately.

The death of a family member of a student

In the case of the death of a family member of the girls, if the death happens while the girl is at School, a representative for the family, preferably a parent should come to the School to inform the girl. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for a senior member of staff such as the Head of School, Chaplain, or Housemistress (for Boarding Students) to give the death notification, this will be determined by the Headmistress. Before notifying fellow students, the School should speak with the bereaved student's family to determine what information should be given to her peers. They should be informed as to how the bereaved student wants to talk about what has happened (i.e. speak openly and take initiative, or let the bereaved student decide when to talk about the death.)

The Head of School and Tutor should consult with the bereaved student's family to determine what is appropriate in terms of classmates attending the funeral and/or sending flowers. Following the death of a family member, it can be expected that the bereaved student may have a reduced capacity for School work. The bereaved student may need extra help at a later time, [such as Special Consideration in Examinations] when working capacity becomes normal again.

The death of a family member of a member of staff

In the case of the death of a family member of a member of staff, it is expected that the staff member concerned will inform their line manager, the Bursar or the Headmistress. Staff will be notified by the Headmistress, who will consult with the bereaved staff member as to their wishes as regards to attending the funeral and/or sending flowers. (HR will contact the member of staff to discuss leave and further arrangements if necessary.)

Funeral Procedure and attendance

When a funeral has been planned for the deceased, it is essential that the School is sensitive to the family's culture and religious beliefs and abides by the family's wishes. The family may welcome involvement of members of the School community but equally, may wish to keep the funeral private.

The School Chapel may be made available for Catholic funerals and memorial services for any member of the School community, providing appropriate permissions have been received.

For the funeral of a current member of staff or a student, the Headmistress, in consultation with SLT, will identify which staff and students may want to attend and the practicalities of issues, such as staff cover and transport. The Headmistress will also consult with staff and students in determining what is appropriate in terms of sending flowers, a collection and/or any furthermore permanent remembrance.

If and when appropriate, the School will offer to the family, to hold a memorial in the Chapel to celebrate the life of the deceased at a mutually convenient time.

For the funeral of a parent of a current student, In addition to the Headmistress, the girl's Tutor and/or Head of Year and Head of School may wish to attend.

It is customary for the Headmistress, or her representative, to attend the funeral of a former member of staff, wherever possible, unless this be against the family wishes.

Press and Social Media

Press

Any Press enquiries or releases must be dealt with through the Headmistress's Office, or the nominated external PR company.

Social Media

- Students and staff should be reminded that anything placed on the internet, such as on social websites, becomes part of the public domain and can be used (even abused) by anybody else with access to it. Facebook remembrance sites, for example, are often open to all.
- Social media is increasingly used for celebrating the life of the deceased; posting condolences and sharing grief. When managed carefully this can be a support to the bereaved. However, it can also be potentially harmful. Girls particularly should be reminded to be sensitive and not to post anything (e--g group pictures) without the appropriate permissions.
- An e-book of condolence may be created in School and managed by the Chaplaincy, to share pictures and memories of the deceased which will then be passed on to the family.

Appendix 1

Bereavement support is available for:

- girls who have lost a parent or sibling
- girls who have lost one of their peers
- staff

Resources and training for staff who are dealing with bereaved students

Staff will receive support from the Chaplain, Health Centre and Counsellors when dealing with those who have been bereaved. There are books and leaflets available in the Chaplaincy.

www.cruise.org.uk www.childbereavement.org.uk

www.winstonwish.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk

Support for Girls

In the first instance, Tutor will be keeping an overview of their well-being. This is easy if the girl is happy to talk. If not, her Tutor needs to be aware of who the girl is most comfortable talking to and liaise with that person; be it adult or peer. Where a peer or group are supporting an individual, they will have additional support themselves.

When a girl changes Tutor, information on any bereavement or other well-being needs to be shared in person, although it should all be available on MyConcern;

Head of Year and Head of School need to be aware of each bereaved individual and ensure that information is shared appropriately;

The Chaplaincy team similarly needs to have an overview of all those in the School who have lost a close relative, especially those who have lost a parent or sibling;

Rainbows or equivalent group therapies

- Staff are specifically trained
- Groups are created as necessary and cover bereavement and the loss resulting from divorce

Where the bereaved is a member of the Year group, Tutors, HoY and HoS and Chaplain need to be aware of key milestones; exams; key birthdays; leavers' events; anything where the year group come together and the bereaved is obviously absent; anniversaries.

Staff should also be mindful that the effects of grief can sometimes be masked, and that it is useful to check in on students, even if they appear to be coping.

Wider support for the girls to support bereaved friends

- Individual support, as appropriate
- Sixth Form Mentoring – training currently provided by Head of Middle School
- Work with small groups – organised by Head of Year
- Big Sister Programme – organised by Head of Middle School

Whole School support

- Liturgies and assemblies – during the School term.

- Masses especially in November
- Service of Remembrance
- Acts of remembrance e.g., planting a tree for the deceased person

Sometimes grief does not manifest itself immediately and can be delayed; it also takes many forms. This needs to be recorded on MyConcern. It is important that the deceased are mentioned regularly e.g., in masses and assembly prayers, and staff are mindful of the effects delayed grief may have on the behaviour and progress of the individual/s concerned.

Grief counselling

The School offers specific grief counselling as well as general counselling for girls and staff. Girls can be recommended for referral by staff or parents, or can request counselling themselves. The School also supports girls who have external counselling by providing space in School for them to meet online, or (providing appropriate safeguarding checks are in place) for the counsellor to visit School.

Support for staff

- The EAP Scheme called 'LifeWorks' offers access to counselling and support (face to face, via telephone and on-line) on a wide variety of topics including bereavement. It also offers practical everyday support on a vast number of subjects including elderly care, childcare matching, legal services, financial & debt support, nutritional & weight management, relocation, parents, midlife & retirement, career guidance and other everyday issues.
- Health Smart is the 24 hour on-line access to GP services. As a reminder this provides access to an online GP, mental health support and wellbeing services. The online GP service works in the same way as a normal GP and staff can book a 30 minute online slot. The GP is able to issue prescriptions which can be sent to the member of staff in the post and can also refer staff back into the NHS if necessary.

Appendix 2 – A suggested timeline for managing bereavement

Managing the First Day of a Bereavement

- The Headmistress will establish contact with the family concerned and where appropriate, staff members will visit.
- The Headmistress will take the decision on how best to inform the school community following liaison with the family concerned.
- If the bereavement occurs at a weekend or school holiday then the Emergency Staff Cascade System will be used for staff.
- Parents will be informed via email if it is a school holiday.
- Inform staff through a morning briefing, noting absent staff (who will be informed by email).
- A nominated member of SLT will inform the Governing Body and will act as a spokesperson for the media, if needed.
- The Headmistress will speak to the Tutor and prepare him/her for interaction with the form and family of the deceased.
- The Headmistress or a nominated member of the SLT will inform the LA should this be necessary ie. in the case of a death occurring on a school trip.
- The Headmistress will give a factual explanation of how the death occurred and how this news will be communicated to students via the SMT.
- As far as possible, students will be informed in form groups giving them time afterwards to explore emotions/feelings. Begin with the friendship group/year group of the deceased. A prayer will be offered for the parents of the deceased.
- If a student dies in the school holidays then the relevant year group will be sent a letter via email.
- Support services will be available on site and, where requested, students will be allowed to go to the Chapel, take time out to grieve/articulate their thoughts/feelings.
- Experience has shown that bereaved children do not necessarily need 'therapy' to understand what has happened, but benefit from an opportunity to:
 - have their bereavement acknowledged
 - talk about the person who died
 - understand that feelings of grief are natural
 - know that adults and other young people care about them.
- Time will be given to students to discuss past bereavements eg. when my pet/gran died...
- A letter will be drawn up for parents indicating the circumstances of the death.
- The Lay Chaplain will organise services to take place that day or the following day for all year groups.

- A Book of Condolence will be placed in a central place allowing the students to contribute prayers, poems, messages and mementos via specially designed cards.
- Key staff will be identified who will be available to talk things through with a member of staff, parent, students if they are finding the situation particularly hard.
- An end of day service will be held for staff to remember the student concerned and then refreshments will be provided so that they have time to recount their feelings and describe what was good and bad about the day.
- If a member of staff dies, the Headmistress and nominated members of staff will see those staff closest to that staff member before making a formal announcement.
- If a miscarriage has occurred, mothers and other expectant mothers will be informed in advance as to whether they wish for a formal announcement to be made.

Follow-up

- A Book of Condolence to be placed in a prominent position for a week to allow all age groups and staff to make contributions.
- Form group directly affected to prepare a memorial book, a copy of which will be presented to the parents. Allow them to express their feelings/thoughts in the way they wish eg. a collage of memories.
- Where a student is experiencing the death of a family member encourage the form group to send messages in a condolence card.
- As a community, the school will offer help with the funeral arrangements eg. music/readings/printing of the booklet.
- Allow for attendance at the funeral if parents wish; otherwise have own service in school.
- Get the students thinking about a long-term memorial eg. a bench, a tree.
- Use Tutor time/PD/RE lessons as opportunities for students to express their feelings following a death. Use as well to explore issues of loss and death in a carefully planned and supportive way.
- In circumstances where a child is returning following the death of a parent or sibling, pave the way for a smooth return involving friends. The same should apply to a member of staff returning following a bereavement - allow time to settle back in.
- The Tutor needs to monitor a child's/young person's return following bereavement long-term.
- Monitor students who have experienced a major loss throughout their school life.
- Where it is recognised that a student is finding a bereavement difficult invite parents in and, where necessary, issue with a helpsheet (see appendix 5).
- Anticipate behaviour problems. Acknowledge and discuss the feelings, enforce normal boundaries and suggest alternative coping strategies and safe ways of expressing strong feelings.
- Identify key dates: Central register kept of all bereavements and managed by Lay Chaplain and Pastoral Leaders identifying bereavements and dates and if they have accessed Spectrum support or not.
- Ensure records/iSAMs are updated to take account of a bereavement.

- Identify students entering the school who have suffered bereavement/loss and ensure this is highlighted in the personal profiles.
- Those staff involved in counselling the bereaved will need to be encouraged to take care of themselves and recognise that they cannot carry grief for others.

APPENDIX 3 – Supporting a Grieving Student

The best thing to offer a grieving child is a listening ear but it must be offered in the right way.

Try to make it a relaxed occasion with as much comfort in the surroundings as possible. Allow them to choose their own position - they may wish to sit on the floor, or the window sill, or perch on a table. Let them know that it's alright to move about if they want to.

Encourage them to do the talking by using 'open-ended' questions and giving yourself time to consider their answers. Limit your own talking and concentrate on what they are telling you and on their body language. Look for underlying feelings.

They may ask you many questions and some may be strange. Answer honestly and pick your vocabulary carefully - most children do not know the "language" of death. Let the child see that you care about them and that you respect them for what they are. Whatever they say, do not reveal shock, horror or make any judgemental statements. Always make sure that you have fully understood what they have said by reflecting back.

Child frequently feel guilty and believe that they have caused the death. Help them to understand that it was not their fault and it is not a punishment for them doing anything wrong.

Allow the child to cry and reassure them that it is good to cry. It is a healthy way of releasing tension. Let them know that it is also alright for adults to cry and not to be embarrassed if their parents or other adults burst into tears. Explain that crying is part of the healing process. Never say to a child "Don't be sad" or "Don't worry". They cannot control their responses and are put under extra stress if they feel this is required of them.

Children are often angry with the person who has died because they feel abandoned. They may try to hide this emotion, thinking that it is wrong to express their anger. Reassure them that this is a normal reaction and that when they feel anger they need to express it. Tell them to take some violent exercise like running or swimming until they are exhausted and pretend they are hitting out at whoever they are angry with. Warn them to avoid actually taking out their anger on their friends and family. Anger management sessions may be arranged for students if staff and parents feel it is appropriate.

Some children are unable to put their feelings into words. They may find that drawing pictures of what has happened will release feelings and give you a basis for helping them to talk.

You need to make yourself available to the child when they feel the need to talk but it has to be clear that this is only a temporary situation and cannot go on for the rest of their school life. Perhaps you can both agree to see each other at a regular time weekly for a term and then once or twice during the next term.

It is quite likely that the child will reveal things that you believe they should share with others. Discuss this with them but never betray their confidences, (with the exception of a safeguarding issue), unless they give you express permission to do so. If you betray their trust, not only do you end their relationship with you but you may permanently damage their trust in all adults.

Finally, you should share some of your concerns with a colleague/friend/relative whom you trust entirely. The child's distress will touch your feelings and you need a safety valve for these. Concentrate on your own reactions and safeguard, as far as possible, the confidentiality of the child's disclosures.

Key Points for Supporting the Bereaved

- Offer to support, but don't be obtrusive.
- Share grief.
- Allow discussion.
- Allow expression.
- Talk openly but honestly about the person who has died.
- Be aware of other people's beliefs and values.
- Reassure those who feel that they are in some way to blame.
- Be honest with explanations.
- Be compassionate but firm.
- Be prepared to ask for additional help if required.
- Expect regression.
- Never avoid the bereaved.
- Never pretend life will be the same.
- Never put a time limit on how long you expect the grieving period to last.
- Be honest at all times.

Could you Just Listen

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving me advice,

You have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way

You are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel that you have to do something to solve my problem,

You have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked was that you listen, not talk, or do - just hear me.

I can do for myself; I am not helpless - maybe discouraged and faltering,

But not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself,

you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel,

No matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and get about this business of understanding what is behind this irrational feeling.

When that is clear, the answers are obvious and I do not need advice.

Irrational feelings make more sense when we understand what is behind them.

So please listen and just hear me.

Anon

Supporting Young People dealing with Bereavement and Loss

Although there are significant differences between bereavement and family breakdown, both involve major losses. Our use of language may appear to highlight the differences - sadness about separation and family breakdown, grief in bereavement. However, the impact of loss, the feelings that loss evokes, our responses to it, and the means by which we manage it, reflect a process which is common to both.

Loss

Grief (sadness) is a normal emotional response to loss.

Each loss is unique.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve/express sadness.

Grief is ongoing.

Fear accompanies grief.

Grief comes in waves.

It is hard work, physically and emotionally.

There can be many different reactions.

Children and young people are as deeply affected by bereavement and loss as adults. We cannot know what the child or young person is feeling without asking them. Small losses can trigger memories of bigger losses from the past, evoking a corresponding intensity of emotion.

Tasks associated with managing Loss

To accept the reality - children and young people need the facts to accomplish this

To experience the pain - the adult's natural response is to try to protect

To adapt to the loss - further change and loss can impede this process

To integrate the loss into the present

Common responses to loss and ways children and young people might express them

Shock - shock may be accompanied by disbelief, dismay and protest, by withdrawal, numbness, or carrying on as if nothing had happened. In a child, shock may be expressed in a variety of ways: crying, screaming, bewilderment, withdrawal, laughing, apparently unaffected, or they may carry on as normal. For a young person, the numbness and inability to feel, which often accompanies shock, can be scary and confusing. The difficulty of not being able to take in what has happened, and the apparent failure to function rationally is similarly upsetting. It engenders feelings of helplessness associated with being a child, rather than of coping, which the teenager expects in the adult role they are preparing to take on. The feeling of nothing tends to be followed by very strong feelings.

Denial - A child may continue to expect/ask when a dead person will return, or, may not appear to show signs of grief. A child or a young person may become hyperactive - a coping mechanism to avoid thinking about what has happened and a defence against becoming overwhelmed. A young person may become switched off, unable to discuss what has happened.

Searching - A preoccupation with thoughts of the dead person, vivid memories and wanting to be in places associated with them, are common to all ages. Restlessness and aimlessness. A child may say, 'I want to go to the cemetery and find...' 'I want to go and dig up...'. Young people may wish to be on their own.

Despair/Depression - Intense sadness, rejection of others, pessimism about future. May be accompanied by school refusal. Young people may feel that nothing is worth doing because life is too precarious.

Anger - Common responses for all age groups: angry outbursts, hitting out, getting into fights, aggressive behaviour, acting out, difficult at home often with one parent/surviving parent.

Anxiety/Guilt - Anxieties about self and others, fears and frightening thoughts, feelings of guilt and blame. In younger children separation problems, school refusal, sleep problems, bad dreams. Somatisation of worries - stomach aches. Being overly good and trying too hard to please. Obsessional behaviours. Blaming others. Loss of confidence and self-esteem. Young people have the intellectual capacity to understand the consequences of events, and their anxiety may focus on practical and financial worries.

Confusion - For the young child, explanations about death may be comprehended in terms of factual explanations eg. 'the heart stopped working', 'the doctors tried their hardest but could not make it work again' (heart attack). Understand relationship breakdown is dependent on explanations about human relationships and their complexity. The young child lacks the necessary abstract thinking processes to make sense of such explanations and is particularly vulnerable to feelings of confusion around family breakdown, rejection, placement in care etc. Confusion in the child may be expressed through social withdrawal, lack of fluency and logic in speech and learning, difficulties with concentration and memorising, inconsistency and day dreaming, low levels of achievement.

Some factors affecting responses to loss

Nature of relationship – the closer the relationship, the greater the loss.

Quality of relationship - a difficult relationship is likely to be more difficult to deal with.

History and experience of previous losses.

Whether the death was anticipated, sudden or even violent, whether it was witnessed.

In family breakdown, level of parental discord/acrimony, domestic violence, prior and post separation.

Family support and availability of appropriate emotional support.

The extent to which their life is disrupted/changed.

Knowledge/understanding of what happened.

APPENDIX 5 - Helping Children Cope with Death

These guidelines are intended to give parents some practical ways of helping their child(ren) cope with death.

Talking

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to the child and establish their feelings, worries or concerns.
- Use of the correct language - say the words 'dead', 'died'. Avoid using phrases such as: 'He's sleeping', or 'God took her away', or 'He went away'. Accurate terminology helps the child to understand that the death is permanent.
- Use the given name of the deceased when speaking to your child.

Questions

- Ask questions. 'I wonder how you are feeling?', 'What have you heard from your friends?'. 'What do you think happened?'
- Ask your child if they have any questions.
- If you cannot answer their questions it is OK to say 'I don't know how to answer that, but perhaps we can find someone to help us'.
- If your child asks you a question, tell them that it is a good question and invite them to think of an answer themselves (eg. Child: 'Is Mrs Smith in heaven now?' Adult: 'That's a very good question, what do you think?').

Feelings

- Talk about feelings, such as: sad, angry, feeling responsible, scary, tearful, mixed up, depressed, wishing to die too. It is normal for bereaved children and their families to experience a range of feelings.
- Explain your own feelings to the child, especially if you are crying - it may be that the person who died was well known to you or you may be reminded of your own bereavements. Give them permission to cry too. We are their role models and it is good for children to see our sadness and to share our feelings with them. Experiencing the death of a parent or brother or sister is a very sad event.

The funeral and saying goodbye

- Talk about funerals. Explain what happens there and find out if your child wants to attend. Children regret not being given the opportunity to make their own informed decisions about attending the funeral.
- Think about ways children can say 'goodbye' to the person who has died. This may be an activity that is already going on in school.
- Talk to your child about their beliefs about what happens to people after they die eg. God, Heaven, Reincarnation, Memories.
- Talk about memories, good ones and ones that are not so good. It is important for children to have honest memories of the person who died. It may be that the child has mixed feelings.

The Future

- Read a book on death to your child if you can find one in the library. There is a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction that could prove helpful to your child.
- Invite your child to come back to you if he or she has more questions or has heard rumours and that you will help him or her get the correct information.

Things to look out for

- Watch out for 'bad dreams' - are they occurring often? Talk about dreams. They are our way of discharging stress and coming to terms with feelings.
- Sudden death, violent death, death of a young person, is especially hard to understand and disruption of sleep, appetite, daily activities is a normal response to an abnormal or unusual event.
- Watch for behavioural changes in your child. It is normal for a child to experience some changes after a death, but if changes continue or they concern you talk with the teacher. Outside agency support can be made available if needed.

NB.

- CRUSE has produced a very useful booklet called 'Caring for Bereaved Children'.
- Winston's Wish Family Line offers support, information and guidance to all those caring for a young person who has been bereaved. (Tel: 08088 020 021), www.winstonswish.org · www.cruse.org.uk (Information for Schools link) · www.ncb.org.uk

APPENDIX 7 [Some reflections that may be of use]

Death is nothing at all

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room.

I am I, and you are you. Whatever we were to each other that we still are.

Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy way which you always used.

Put no difference in your tone, wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word that it always was,

let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was; there is unbroken continuity.

[There is absolute and unbroken continuity. What is this death but a negligible accident?]

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?

I am waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner.

All is well.

Henry Scott Holland

She is Gone

You can shed tears that she is gone, or
you can smile because she has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that
she'll come back, or you can open your
eyes and see all she's left.

Your heart can be empty because you
can't see her, or you can be full of the
love you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and
live yesterday, or you can be happy for
tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember her and only that
she's gone, or you can cherish her
memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be
empty and turn your back, or you can do
what she'd want: smile, open your eyes,
love and go on.

David Harkins

Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep

I am not there, I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow;

I am the diamond glints on snow;

I am the sunlight on ripened grain;

I am the gentle Autumn's rain.

When you waken in the morning's hush;

I am the swift uplifting rush of quiet birds in circled flight;

I am the soft star that shines at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;

I am not there, I did not die

Mary Elizabeth Frye

Variation

In those quiet moments in the still of the night

Remember to rejoice and celebrate life

Do not think of me gone and weep

I am not there, I do not sleep

I am a thousand winds that blow

I am the diamond glints on snow

I am the sunlight on the grain

I am the gentle autumn's rain

When you awaken in the morning hush

I am the swift uplifting rush

of quiet birds in flight

I am the soft stars that shine

You will hear my gentle voice

and remember to rejoice

Never give up your fight

and remember always

to Celebrate Life....

Author unknown

I'm Free

Don't grieve for me for now I'm free,

I'm following the path God laid for me.

I took his hand when I heard him call,

I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day

To laugh, to love, to work or play.

Tasks left undone will stay that way,

I found that peace at close of day.

If my parting has left a void

Then fill it with remembered joy

A friendship shared, a laugh a kiss,

Ah yes, these things I, too, will miss.

But not burdened with times of sorrow,

I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.

My life has been full, I've savored much.

Good friends, good times, a loved ones touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief

Don't lengthen it now with undue grief,

Lift up your hearts and share with me,

God wanted me now,

He set me free

Author unknown

Farewell My Friend

It was beautiful as long as it lasted

The journey of my life.

I have no regrets whatsoever

save the pain I'll leave behind.

Those dear hearts who love and care...

And the strings pulling at the heart and soul...

The strong arms that held me up

When my own strength let me down.

At every turning of my life I came across good friends,

Friends who stood by me,

Even when the time raced me by.

Farewell, farewell my friends

I smile and bid you goodbye.

No, shed no tears for I need them not

All I need is your smile.

If you feel sad do think of me

for that's what I'll like when you live in the hearts

of those you love, remember then

you never die.

Rabindranath Tagore

"I'm Not Gone"

Don't cry for me ,

now that I am free.

Just look around anywhere,

and that is where I'll be.

For I am the daylight ,
when the sun starts to rise.
I'm the bright rainbow,
you see with your eyes.
I'm the tiny raindrops,
that sprinkle in the wind.
I'll always be here with you,
for there really is no end.
I'm the dew that's on the ground,
and the quietness all around.
Yes, I am so very happy,
with this new life I have found.
I'm the peaceful summer breeze,
that flows softly through the trees.
I'm the bluebird in the sky,
that sings with such ease.
Yes, I am so very happy,
so happy to be free.
Understand my family and friends
and don't you cry for me.

Sheila Pearce

Miss Me But Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road
and the sun has set on me,
I want no rites in a gloom filled room,
Why cry for a soul set free.
Miss me a little--but not too long,

and not with your head bowed low,
Remember the love that we once shared,
Miss me--but let me go.
For this is a journey that we all must take,
And each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan,
A step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick of heart,
Go to the friends we know.
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds,
Miss me--but let me go.

Anu Shraddha

Remember Me When I Am Gone Away

Remember me when I am gone away.
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand.
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me: you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had.
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than you should remember and be sad.

Christina Rossetti

God's Lent Child

I'll lend you for a little while, a child of mine, God said
For you to love the while he lives and mourn for when he's dead.
It may be six or seven years, or forty-two or three
But will you, till I call him back, take care of him for me?
He'll bring his charms to gladden you and should his stay be brief
You'll always have his memories as a solace in your grief.
I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return,
But there are lessons taught below I want this child to learn.
I've looked this whole world over in my search for teachers true
And from the folk that crowd Life's lane I have chosen you.
Now will you give him all your love and not think the labour vain,
Nor hate me when I come to take this lent child back again?
I fancy that I heard them say "Dear God, thy will be done.
For all the joys this child will bring the risk of grief we'll run.
We will shelter him with tenderness, we'll love him while we may
And for all the happiness we've ever known, we'll ever grateful stay.
But should the angels call him much sooner than we'd planned
We will brave the bitter grief that comes and try to understand."

Edgar Guest

To Those I Love And Those Who Love Me

When I am gone, release me let me go
I have so many things to see and do
You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears
Be happy that we had so many years
I gave you my love, you can only guess
How much you gave to me in happiness
I thank you for the love you have shown
But now it's time I traveled alone
So grieve a while for me if grieve you must
Then let your grief be comforted by trust
It's only for a while that we must part
So bless the memories within your heart
I won't be far away. For life goes on
So if you need me call and I will come
Though you can't see or touch me I'll be there
And if you listen with your heart you'll hear
All of my love around you soft and clear
And then when you must come this way alone
I'll greet you with a smile and welcome you home

Author unknown

When You Feel Lonely

When you feel Lonely

When a person you love passes away

Look to the night sky on a clear day.

The star that to you, appears to be bright,

Will be your loved one,

Looking upon you during the night.

The lights of heaven are what shows through

As your loved one watches all that you do.

When you feel lonely for the one that you love,

Look to the Heavens in the night sky above.

Author unknown

Remembrance

Remembrance is a golden chain

Death tries to break,

but all in vain.

To have, to love, and then to part

Is the greatest sorrow of one's heart.

The years may wipe out many things

But some they wipe out never.

Like memories of those happy times

When we were all together.

Author unknown

If Tomorrow Starts Without Me

When tomorrow starts without me,
And I'm not there to see,
If the sun should rise and find your eyes
all filled with tears for me,
I wish so much you wouldn't cry
The way you did today,
While thinking of the many things,
We didn't get to say.
I know how much you love me,
As much as I love you,
and each time that you think of me,
I know you'll miss me too.
But when tomorrow starts without me,
Please try to understand,
That an angel came and called my name,
And took me by the hand,
and said my place was ready,
In heaven far above,
And that I'd have to leave behind
All those I dearly love.
But as I turned to walk away,
A tear fell from my eye
For all my life, I'd always thought,
I didn't want to die.
I had so much to live for,
So much left yet to do,

It seemed almost impossible,
That I was leaving you.
I thought of all the yesterdays
The good ones and the bad,
I thought of all the love we shared,
and all the fun we had
If I could re-live yesterday
Just even for a while,
I'd say good-bye and kiss you
And maybe see you smile.
But then I fully realized,
That this could never be,
For emptiness and memories,
would take the place of me.
And when I thought of worldly things,
I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you, and when I did,
My heart was filled with sorrow.
But when I walked through heaven's gates,
I felt so much at home
When God looked down and smiled at me,
From His great golden throne.
He said, "This is eternity,
And all I've promised you."
Today your life on earth is past,
But here life starts anew
I promise no tomorrow,
But today will always last,

And since each day's the same way
There's no longing for the past.
You have been so faithful,
So trusting and so true.
Though there were times
You did some things
You knew you shouldn't do.
But you have been forgiven
And now at last you're free.
So won't you come and take my hand
And share my life with me?
So when tomorrow starts without me,
Don't think we're far apart,
For every time you think of me,
I'm right here, in your heart.

David Romano

A Gift From God

An angel was sent from heaven above
A special one that would bring much love.
God knew that this precious life would be short
So he looked around for a tender heart.
He made his choice and the gift was sent
In what seemed like a moment, the angel went,
Leaving treasured memories, and a heart full of pain,
A void, an abyss, tears flowed like rain.

But...

Wait just a moment, I wish you could see
The wonderful thing that's happened to me.
Jesus was waiting, His arms opened wide,
And He and His angels brought me inside
Such a beautiful place that I cannot describe,
A new home for me from the moment I died.
I'll wait here for you, so dry up your tears,
And go bravely on with your life free from fears.
Know that God's near you to help and to guide,
He'll never desert you, He's there by your side.
So speak to him daily from inside your heart,
And let him assure you, we're not really apart.

Author unknown