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**BEREAVEMENT POLICY FOR ROXWELL PRE-SCHOOL**

**Introduction**

Within our pre-school community there will almost always be at some point a bereaved child/ren who are struggling with their loss, or sometimes the death of a member of staff or a peer may have an impact on the whole pre-school community. Whilst we would hope to not encounter such circumstances, we have this Bereavement Policy in place so we can be proactive, rather than reactive, in these very sensitive situations.

Usually, support and understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of our pre-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**

As we recognise that most children and adults can be effectively supported through bereavement and loss by those with whom they already have relationships, we want to equip pre-school staff and others to respond effectively and confidently to a death in the pre-school community. It is important too that we recognise that everyone experiences bereavement and grief differently and that there is no right or wrong way to do it. Therefore, it is our aim:

* to provide appropriate support to all children and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after a bereavement
* to provide a safe and calm environment for children and staff
* to ensure there is effective communication between home and pre-school and to provide parents with information on how to access other support (if it is required)
* to work with the local authority and other partners as appropriate

**The role of the committee**

* To approve policy and ensure its implementation and regular reviews
* To ensure there is a whole pre-school approach to supporting emotional wellbeing

**The role of the Manager**

* To have oversight of support required and provided, liaising with external agencies as appropriate
* To be the first point of contact for the family/child concerned
* To respond to media enquiries if required
* To keep the committee fully informed
* To ensure staff are appropriately trained around bereavement and undertake actions set out in this policy (such as how to share sad news with children), including a deputy for the role of the Manager should the event mean the Manager is unable to complete this role

**The role of the Local Authority (LA)**

* To advise and support pre-school staff as required
* To signpost to referral pathways and other means of support
* To provide information, guidance and support for all schools (available on Essex Schools InfoLink)

**The role of staff**

* To provide a safe and calm environment for all
* To act as a ‘trusted adult’ to support children and proactively enable them to have the time and space to talk
* To monitor the wellbeing of their children, identify concerns and escalate where additional support may be required
* To ensure any safeguarding concerns are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Procedures following a bereavement**

1. Wherever possible (and if deemed appropriate), the Manager will attempt contact with the bereaved family before taking **any** other action. This is to ensure any communications to the wider pre-school community (and the media) are factual, avoid rumour or confusion and are aligned with the family’s wishes. Where it has not been possible to establish contact with the family, and news of the death is already in the public arena, the Manager will need to manage this and will do so, taking advice from the local authority
2. The Manager will inform staff of any death and agree how information will be shared with children and the wider pre-school community
3. The Manager and staff will agree how to share information with children in a supportive and age-appropriate way
4. The Manager will prepare a communication to all parents / carers to inform them of the death and advice about how to support their child, should they be affected
5. The Manager will agree a statement for the media, where this is required, linking with the local authority as appropriate
6. The Manager will adapt the pre-school session and timetable if necessary to enable appropriate support to be provided. This support may be from pre-school staff and / or from the local authority Education Psychology Service or other appropriate agencies
7. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance will be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial pre-school closure in some circumstances
8. The Manager and staff will monitor the wellbeing of all children identifying any concerns and escalating where additional support may be required
9. The pre-school will record any concerns about a child’s wellbeing on their file to ensure any future setting is aware that additional support may be required

Helpful organisations

WinstonsWish.org.uk has a Freephone National Helpline and it is free to call on 08088020021 and offers therapeutic advice following a bereavement. This helpline provides bereavement support for parents, carers, and professionals who are looking for childhood bereavement advice and support.

Childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

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