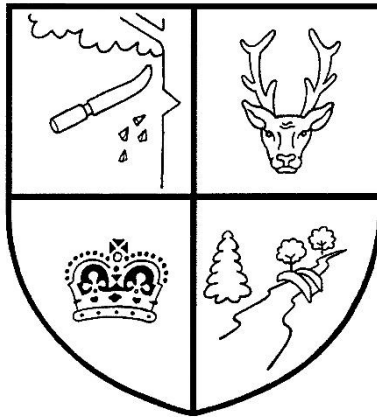


# Thomas Willingale School and Nursery



## Bereavement Policy

Policy Date: Summer 2025  
Review Date: Summer 2026

Signed: *Rhian Jenkins*

Chair of Governors

Date:

## **Contents**

Aims and Principles

Legislative requirements and non-statutory guidance

Roles and responsibilities

Procedures and practice

Inclusion and Equal opportunities

Additional opportunities and community links

Monitoring and Evaluation

## **Purpose and Intent**

We acknowledge that death, while being the inevitable end of life, is often unexpected and traumatic. Its unpredictability can cause severe distress and can shock and disturb the whole school community. Bereavement can have a varied effect on individuals and it is important to remember that both staff and pupils will react in very different ways.

We acknowledge that should our school community be informed of a death, our response should be a planned, tested and considered one in which we react sensitively and professionally.

This policy has been created to establish a flexible structure for the handling of such an event and establishes how Thomas Willingale School and Nursery will respond when such a tragedy occurs.

## **Aims and Principles**

This policy aims to:

- To identify key staff within the school, resources and further support services to help the whole school community work together.
- To provide a framework for all staff to give guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately with difficult and upsetting circumstances.
- To have clear expectations about the way school will respond to the death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all.
- To support pupils and/or staff before during, and after bereavement.

## **Legislative requirements and non-statutory guidance**

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy also has regard to the following statutory guidance:

- DfE (2016) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body**

Governors will review this Bereavement policy in conjunction with the Headteacher and monitor the policy's effectiveness.

### **The Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in the absence of the HT)**

It is the role of the headteacher:

- To inform staff and pupils of the bereavement, according to procedures laid out below.
- To consult the family of the deceased to ascertain their wishes regarding the sharing of information. This accurate information will be shared quickly so that rumours and assumptions do not spread and cause the family further distress.
- To appoint a member of staff to be the point of contact for the bereaved. This may be the headteacher, a member of the Wellbeing Team, or any member of staff who is in the best position to support the bereaved.

### **Wellbeing Team**

The Wellbeing Team consists of:

Headteacher (Miss Teresa Phillips)  
Deputy HT (Mrs Lynda Collins)  
Inclusion Manager (Mrs Jackie Burgess)  
Family School Co-ordinator – (Mrs Michele Hinton)

It is role of the Wellbeing Team:

- To offer support and advice where necessary to all members of the school community who may be affected by the bereavement.
- To arrange for counselling where necessary (BCCS, Educational Psychologist, Winston's Wish, RAINBOWS Bereavement Support, Child Bereavement UK)

## **Procedures and Practice**

We will ensure that school office staff are prepared to receive the news of a death within the community and respond in an appropriate manner.

Should we receive the news of a death, in **ALL** cases the person receiving the news will:

- Confirm the information, check it, record it and check it again. (*It is essential to have the facts confirmed*)
- Share the news as soon as possible with the headteacher and a member of the Wellbeing Team.

### **Informing staff and pupils:**

All staff will be informed before pupils are told.

Agree a set time for teachers to inform their class what has happened, how this is to be done and EXACTLY what is going to be said. Identify any absent pupils.

Ensure the school community is represented at the funeral. Where possible staff who have requested to attend the funeral or memorial should be released. The school will send flowers or arrange a collection in line with the family's wishes.

Pupils who are particularly vulnerable, such as close friends of the victim or who witnessed the event, will be identified and offered additional support.

Arrange for the Wellbeing Team or Senior Leadership Team to be on hand at the end of the working day for staff to de-brief and reflect upon the day's events and to agree upon any further action or support that may need to be put in place. Staff members who are particularly vulnerable or who it is known may be alone that night will be offered help and support. This will include phone details being exchanged in order to provide a point of contact for the member of staff.

### **The death of a pupil.**

Should we receive the news of a pupil's death, we will call appropriate colleagues together having consulted with the family of the pupil to ascertain their wishes.

We will follow the above procedures and, in addition, will:

- Encourage staff to voice their concerns and anxieties.
- Give pupils opportunities to express their feelings at the time they are informed and over the following days and weeks.
- Avoid rumours, exaggerations and embellishment of the event, by agreeing the facts which will be stated openly and honestly without assumptions or judgements.
- Remember that such news will be greeted with a mixture of emotions and feelings. Some may deny or disbelieve the announcement. Others may feel panic; some may show feelings of anger. There may well be tears and distress. Planned support will be available.
- Inform parents the same day in the most appropriate way and in accordance with the wishes of the family.
- Ensure time for corporate grieving amongst the staff and enable them to share how they feel about what has happened.

### **The death of a member of staff**

We acknowledge that if such a death occurs it is doubly traumatic for the staff; supporting the pupils but also grieving on a personal level for a colleague.

Should we receive the news of the death of a member of staff; the headteacher will call together colleagues from the Wellbeing Team.

We will use the guidance notes below:-

- Gather together the staff and inform them of the news.
- Allow time for corporate grieving amongst the staff.
- Allow the staff to share how they feel about what has happened.
- Inform the teachers that they will need to address what has happened in their classes.
- Agree with the staff how and when the announcement will be made and what facts are to be announced to the pupils. To avoid rumours, exaggerations and development of the event, the agreed facts should be stated simply.
- It must be remembered that such news will be greeted with a mixture of emotional feelings. Some will deny or disbelieve the announcement. Others may feel panic; some may show feelings of anger. There may be tears and distress; everyone will react in their own way.
- Under such circumstances some staff may have difficulty coping with the loss themselves. Colleagues and the Wellbeing Team will need to be aware of those staff who seem particularly affected by the death.

### **Long term support for those who grieve**

Our Wellbeing Team will seek out the best way to support the bereaved. We will offer pupils access to a range of age related peer support programmes available through our trained staff provided by Rainbows Bereavement Support GB/Child Bereavement UK.

### **Death and Bereavement in the Curriculum**

We acknowledge the importance of remembering anniversaries of death. We will endeavor to provide longer term support for the pupil by keeping a diary of significant days and ensuring this information is communicated (with consent) to the pupil's next school. We will also endeavor to include the pupil in commemorative days such as mother's/father's day by sensitively providing time for reflection and remembrance where appropriate.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

It is important to consider any cultural or religious implications and seek advice if necessary.

Special guidance about how to inform children with special educational and health needs will be sought from the SENCO, Educational Psychologist and any outside agencies as appropriate (BCCS, Simon Says, Rainbows Bereavement etc)

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.**