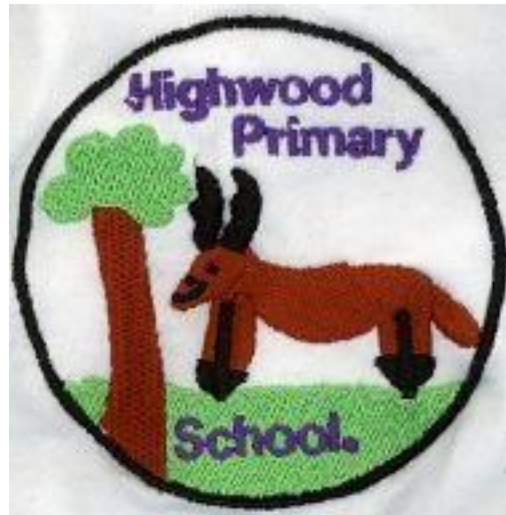


# Highwood Primary School



## *Bereavement Policy*

<b>This policy was written in:</b>	<b>Reviewed May 2015</b>
<b>It was ratified by the Governing Body on:</b>	<b>May 2015</b>
<b>The policy is due for review in:</b>	<b>May 2018</b>

## Highwood Primary School Bereavement Care Policy.

### **Rationale**

Many children are likely to encounter the death of a pet, grandparent, other relative or family friend during their time in primary school; for a few the loss will be more immediate and traumatic, involving the loss of a parent, sibling or personal friend. The purpose of this policy is to outline approaches that will need to be tailored sympathetically to the situation, but above all

- a caring attitude must be fostered to those suffering the bereavement
- a consistent but flexible approach adopted
- all those concerned must be informed, including teaching staff, learning support assistants and other parents and individuals that have direct contact.

Children need to be helped to mourn losses at the time they happen, acknowledging their feelings and needs.

### **Guidelines**

These guidelines are particularly relevant and appropriate in cases where the loss is of a close relative or friend, but can, and should, be adapted according to individual circumstances.

Children grieve in similar ways to adults, but express their grief differently:

- Behavioural and emotional – aggression and violence, difficult behaviour and regression, sleep disturbance, mood swings, depression
- Somatic reactions – health and physical problems
- School based problems – absence, lack of concentration, lower attainment, and anxiety, being teased or bullied.

### **How to help children cope**

- Be honest – listen, talk and explain, giving age appropriate information and keeping that information up to date. Use the words dead and dying and avoid euphemisms eg. gone away, resting.
- Be open – do not be surprised by shocking or surprising questions, reactions or behaviour. Repeat explanations, accept short conversations, expect children to show their grief differently to adults and accept play as a diversion.
- Help children grieve – encourage them to express feelings through talk, play, stories or art. Talk about the dead person and share memories and keepsakes. Offer them a chance to take part in 'goodbye rituals'; those appropriate to school might be memorial assemblies, choosing memorial objects etc.
- Help them cope – work towards continuity and routines, talk about their worries and anxieties and offer reassurance. Be aware.

### **At Highwood Primary we will ensure that:**

- A clear understanding of the situation is gained – how much people know and who has been involved etc., and a discussion with the family to take into account their wishes.
- Children will be allowed time to grieve; understanding that tears and anger are an outward sign of that grief.

- Staff will find time to listen and talk and will do their best to comfort when necessary.
- Children will be told that staff will try to help them come to terms with their grief and are available at all times.
- A distressed child will be allowed time and access to materials in order that s/he may express their feelings in their own way.
- All staff and assistants will be made fully aware of the situation and will be kept informed.
- The possible fears, insecurities and emotions of other children which may arise from the situation will be addressed and dealt with sympathetically.
- Religious, cultural and social backgrounds, as well as parental wishes will be taken into account when considering appropriate responses.
- When appropriate, communication with parents will ensure that they too are kept up to date with what has happened.
- When deemed appropriate a school thanksgiving/memorial service or assembly may be included.
- Outside agencies may be asked to become involved, offering their particular expertise to the situation as necessary.
- Counselling will be available.
- The school may be closed, or as many people as possible released to attend funeral or memorial services if they wish to do so.
- Staff, as well as children, may need support through the grieving process; anyone displaying signs of stress will be offered appropriate support.
- We foster the idea that when a loved one has died it is good to keep all the happy memories alive by talking about them.

### **Teaching about death and loss.**

Preparing for loss and bereavement is part of the preparation for life. Teaching about loss will help children cope with the inevitable losses they will face throughout their lives. Not only death but separation, divorce, moving house, moving school, growing up and growing old.

It often helps to raise difficult issues and concepts with children through stories. Suitable books are listed below and a developing resource bank will be up dated from time to time.

Useful books:

#### Key Stage 1

Grandpa – John Burningham

Waterbugs and dragonflies – Doris Stickney

Badger's Parting Gifts – Susan Varley

#### Key Stage 2

Heaven – Nicholas Allan

See ya Simon – David Hill