

Stanton Drew & Pensford Preschool & Forest Club

Bereavement Policy

Principles

This policy has been drawn up in anticipation that at some point in the future, bereavement is likely to impact upon one or more children at the setting.

Many of the principles contained in this policy can be used in other ways. As well as the death of a child or someone close to a child (including pets), the 'symptoms' of bereavement are visible in children who have suffered loss in other ways, such as divorce, long term absence of a parent (illness, prison, in the forces etc.) or separation from friends or culture, due to a move.

There are acknowledged to be five stages for an individual dealing with grief, as identified and defined by Kubler-Ross (1969):

1. Denial and isolation
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

It is essential that a child is helped through the first four stages in order to reach the fifth.

Reacting to a bereavement

News that there has been bereavement should be passed immediately to the senior member of staff at the preschool, generally the leader.

A meeting should be called of all staff at the setting as soon as possible to inform them of what has happened and to outline a plan of how children and parents will be informed. It is important to realise that staff may also be upset, will need time to take in the news and will themselves require support. It is also important for senior staff and the committee to realise that this would be a stressful and very upsetting time for the leader, who may herself require support.

The children should be told as soon as possible, after the advice listed above has been sought. It may be that different ages, due to maturity, need to be told separately. It is important that the truth is told i.e. that the person is dead, not 'gone away'.

The nature of any plan will depend upon the details of the bereavement, but may involve holding a special assembly as well as a letter to parents.

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Specific circumstances will also dictate how the setting responds to the following points:

- Wherever possible, the views of the dead person's family are paramount and should be respected. If this conflicts with what may be thought to be best for the setting (for example, if the parents don't want death to be talked about, but the setting felt that children should have such opportunities) advice should be sought from, for example, Winston's Wish (see below for contact details)
- The Local Authority will offer advice on the provision of counselling for children and staff at the setting if it is felt to be required.

There are a number of things which can be put in place to help children deal with bereavement. Staff at Winston's Wish Charity are willing to offer immediate support. Advice and other ideas can be accessed via their website (www.winstonswish.org.uk) or calling their Freephone Helpline on 08088 020 021 between 8am and 8pm, Monday to Friday.

Ideas might include:

- Memories can be shared on a memory board or posted around the preschool
- A memory box in which items to remember the child can be placed
- Memory fountain where the child's name can be put on a pebble in a small fountain.
- The setting should, however, be seen as a place of stability, where life continues in a relatively normal way.
- If a child is diagnosed with a terminal illness and the death is, therefore, predictable, advice should be sought from Children's Hospice south West (01275 866600) and/or Charlton House, enquiries@chsw.org.uk
- Advice should also be sought on how much to inform/include the ill child and their family in this work.

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Conclusion

- The precise circumstances of the bereavement will dictate the details of any plan set up to help those affected come to an acceptance that it has happened
- The purpose of this policy is not to set a plan, but to help those who need to set one up to do so as effectively and swiftly as possible, by providing them with important and necessary points of contact at a time which will be stressful for everyone.

Held on (date)	Monitoring and reviewing
Date to be reviewed (date)	April 2024
Signed on behalf of the committee	
Name and role of signatory	
Signed on behalf of preschool	Melissa Diaz
Name and role of signatory	Melissa Diaz -Preschool Leader