

Lower Kersal Community Primary School

Supporting Those Bereaved Policy



Written by: Mr D Rutter
Date written: April 2020

Key adults

S Steward – Headteacher

D Rutter – Assistant Headteacher/ Nominated Bereavement Lead

M Rogers – Designated safeguarding lead/ Bereavement team

S McCarthy – Class Teacher/ Bereavement team

Preparing for bereavements

Lower Kersal has clear systems and strategies to support a family that has been bereaved: these are detailed here.

1. Have a team of nominated leads and key adults who will be a point of contact for the family and offer support. Key adults will be overseen and supported by the nominated leads.
2. Consider staff that would take up the role of a key adults for a particular family – an adult that would be in the best position to support the family.
3. A notice published on the school website to guide families to the school bereavement protocol and what support they can access.
4. Invite parents to let school know if they are impacted by loss; explain how they can do so via the school website.
5. A key document produced that explains to parents how Lower Kersal will support them and what the protocol is.
6. Organise a book of condolences for relevant school community members to sign.
7. Ensure class teachers are aware of children impacted by a loss so they can welcome them back to school appropriately.

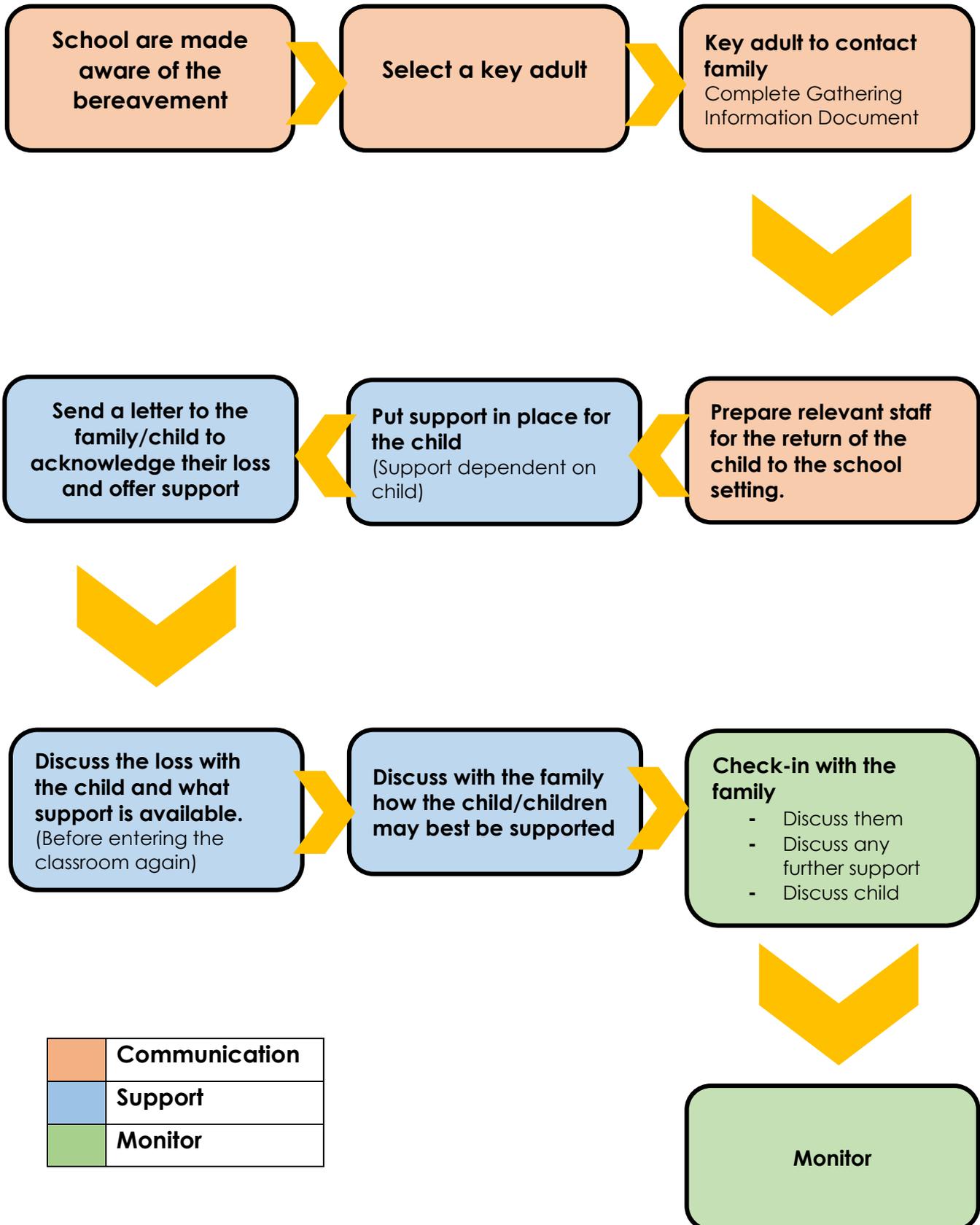
Levels of bereavement

Level	Action
3 Bereavement that impacts the whole setting and wider community and where there are additional complexities and safeguarding concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contact Claire Jackson/Rona Taylor and EPS inbox (contact details at the end of this policy)- EPS will be part of a multi-agency response.
2 Bereavement impacting a large proportion of the community around the setting. This is likely to be through a cluster of bereavement and loss issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contact school EP and EPS inbox- Act upon advice given
1 Bereavement impacting a small number of people e.g. one family, one member of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Refer to LKPS Bereavement Policy: putting into place the support.- Contact school EP and EPS inbox, if required.

Supporting bereavements at Level 1

Most cases of bereavement in school settings would be at level 1. The support will follow the below flowchart. Further guidance and support tools can be seen in the appendices.

Supporting families during a bereavement



Supporting leaders, nominated leads and key adults

Members of staff that are part of the team of support for bereaved families will also require support in being able to manage their own well-being and mental health. In order to support these staff, Lower Kersal as the following in place.

1. Self-care checklist (see appendices)
2. Confidential staff drop-in session to share any feelings, thoughts and emotions in order to gain support.
3. Staff well-being initiatives
4. Staff CPD

Resources to support child bereavement

Below is a list of resources used to support children with bereavement; these resources can be used during initial conversations or as a way of discussing and monitoring the effects of the bereavement on the child. All resources accessible through a school shared area.

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Use</u>
Welfare card	A card to monitor the child's emotional well-being and a means to monitor what support is given and when. Card to be show daily to the child's key adult.
Online book of condolences	A selected group of people would use the electronic book of condolences for the child to read.
Letter to family member that has died	This will be a written letter to the family member that has dies that will be completed with their key adult.
Building memories book	It is intended to be done over several sessions perhaps once a week. This will give the child that important one to one support and an opportunity to talk about their feelings.
Diary	This is a resources to allow older children to keep a diary of their day-to-day adventures that they would discuss with the person that has died. This will be a private conversation between them and the person.
Visual reminder (craft)	There are many craft based activities to help support a child in order to offer them a visual reminder of the person and to represent the person in some way. E.g. pebble painting, memory box etc.
Bereavement story books	A set of books that will be used to discuss the issue of bereavement with a child in a non-direct way. This will allow children a stimulus to talk about their bereavement to their key adult.

Staff bereavement

At LKPS we offer a wide range of support for staff bereavement that is offered based on an individual basis as we are aware that adults cope with bereavement in different ways and require varied support.

If a member of staff has been bereaved then they should seek support from the Head Teacher (S Steward) who will work with the member of staff to identify/discuss the necessary supportive measures for the individual.

Even if you feel you are managing to cope with bereavement please speak to one of the members of the bereavement team who may be able to offer additional support.

Appendices

Conversation guide for first responders

Gathering information as a first responder

Self-care checklist

Letter for child

Conversation guide for first responders

This guidance is for those who may be responding to bereavements, tragic news and critical incidents, either in person or via other communication (telephone).

- This conversation requires a calm, steady, quiet and sensitive approach. It will be important to allow the person to tell their story, and to listen.
- You might want time to take a breath and steady yourself. It is okay to ask for a pause, for example to get something to note down contact details and important information.
- Demonstrate that you are listening through occasional gentle responses. These could be empathetic sounds or short phrases like "Oh I'm so sorry", "I'm listening", and "Take your time".
- Leave pauses so that the caller does not feel hurried and has time to gather their thoughts.
- Allow the caller to tell their story in their words and in their own time and avoid asking questions.
- You can check that you have heard and understood by paraphrasing back, for example, "You said that he died at home last night, is that right?" and again leave pauses so that the caller can correct you.
- When the conversation reaches a natural break, explain that you need to take clear notes of the important information.
- It may become apparent that there are additional complexities and/or that there is likely to be an impact on the wider community. Therefore, it might be important to obtain as much accurate, factual information about the critical incident as possible. Bear in mind that it is very easy for rumours to spread. Uncertainty or misinformation can greatly add to distress levels, create confusion and will take time and effort to correct.
- Before ending the call, check that you have collected sufficient factual information and the personal and contact details of the person you are talking to. Use the 'Gathering information as a first responder' table.
- After alerting others, it is important that you give yourself time to process the information and your own thoughts and feelings before getting back to work. It may be helpful to share your reaction with a colleague. Please refer to the self-care checklist for suggested steps to take to meet your own needs after responding.

Gathering information as a first responder

Use the table below to guide the conversation in order to ensure, as a first responder, you obtain all the relevant information that can be used to offer the correct support.

Who has called?	Given name: _____ Surname: _____ Position: _____ Relationship with the person of family affected: _____ Contact details:
What happened? What is the nature of the incident? When did it happen?	
Who has been affected? For example, note the names and ages of children attending the school.	
Who else has been contacted? Who else is offering support?	
Ask the caller, "What else is it important for you to tell us?"	

Self-care checklist

This is for anyone who is responding to bereavements, critical incidents, or tragic news, whether directly or indirectly e.g. office staff, family, friends. During the safety talk when flying, we are urged to put on our own oxygen mask before we help others; it is important for us all to consider our own needs in order to respond effectively and safely to others.

Immediate:

- Ideally find someone to talk to (colleague, friend or partner) within the first 12 hours. If there is no one, sit quietly and go over the events in as much detail as possible. Carry out your own debrief in drawn/written form.
- Ask yourself/a colleague 'am I best placed to support, might I be significantly affected by the news and unable to respond effectively?'
- Ask 'do I need someone to pick up other tasks or duties for me?'
- Tell a partner/family about your involvement because you may not feel sociable or you may feel upset or angry; be mindful that they might not feel able to be willing listeners.

Short Term:

- Share your experience with colleagues. Participate in personal/team discussion both for support and sharing of experiences.
- Be aware that you may experience physical and emotional effects such as fatigue, anxiety, depression, irritability, aggression, anger, etc. which are normal reactions.
- Consider setting up a 'buddy' system so that everyone is able to support each other.

Long Term:

- Be gentle with yourself! Remember that we can't 'fix' everything and we are bound to feel helpless at times. Caring and being there are sometimes more important than doing.
- Give support, encouragement and praise to peers and to colleagues. Learn to accept it in return.
- At the end of each day, focus on a positive thing that occurred during the day.
- Take time to care for yourself and engage in hobbies or relaxing activities.
- If you feel you are continuing to have intrusive thoughts about the event and these feelings are not lessening after a few weeks, you may need some more support. You may wish to contact the EPS to support with this.

Letter for child after notified of a bereavement

Dear _____,

I am so sorry that your grandma has died. I am wondering how you are feeling and to let you know that we are thinking about you and your family.

It might be a strange and confusing time for you. All your current feelings are normal and OK. There is no right way to feel when someone has died.

I am thinking about you. _____, _____ and _____ are thinking about you too. I will be thinking about your kindness, because I've noticed how caring and helpful you are to the younger children on the playground. I will also be thinking about your wonderful singing voice. At the moment, you might feel like singing sometimes, and sometimes you might not. I am looking forward to hearing you singing in assembly when we are all back together in school. **(Edited to link to child)**

I plan to phone you and your family, to find out more about how you are doing and how we can help you in this time as we care very much about you. You can choose whether you would like to speak to me.

I hope to speak to you soon.

Best wishes,

EPS Contact information

Please copy in the EPS inbox with any communications via e-mail and when contacting your school/allocated EP.

EPS e-mail: EPS@salford.gov.uk

Telephone: 0161 778 0476

Claire Jackson (Principal EP)

E-mail: C.Jackson@salford.gov.uk

Rona Taylor (Senior EP, Critical Incidents)

E-mail: Rona.Taylor@salford.gov.uk