

# Diocese of Leeds Education Team Bereavement Guidance



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## Bereavement Guidelines

Death is something that most people choose not to think about, so when faced with it schools may find themselves ill prepared. It is important that the school is seen as a safe haven where all members can find support, care and security. A death in the school community and the way that the school responds for its members in the light of this is a real test of its Christian distinctiveness, which should be at the heart of the school and therefore a context in which to cope.

### Rationale:

Every 22 minutes in the UK a parent of dependent children dies, leaving about 41,000 bereaved children each year. Many more are bereaved of a grandparent, sibling, friend or other significant person and sadly, around 12,000 children die in the UK each year.

Within our school community there will almost always be some recently bereaved pupils who are struggling with their own situation – or sometimes the entire school community is impacted by the death of a member of staff or a pupil. We would hope not to encounter such circumstances, but the statistical inevitability of such an occurrence implies the necessity of having bereavement guidelines in place in order that we might be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these sensitive situations. Empathic understanding in the familiar and secure surroundings of school may be all the bereavement support some pupils – or staff – require, though referral to more specialist support should be a consideration where the impact of grief is more complex. Additional information and resources can be accessed at:

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/>

<https://www.winstonswish.org/>

This is a particularly good resource for schools with older pupils

[https://churcharmy.org/Groups/341046/Church\\_Army/web/What\\_we\\_do/Resources/Death\\_Grief\\_and/Death\\_Grief\\_and.aspx](https://churcharmy.org/Groups/341046/Church_Army/web/What_we_do/Resources/Death_Grief_and/Death_Grief_and.aspx)

### Objectives:

The core intentions of the guidelines are:

- To support pupils and/or staff before, during and after bereavement in an inclusive spirit that recognises everyone's value to God.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.
- To identify key staff within school, LA, MAT and the Diocese and clarify the pathway of support.
- The Children Act 1989 aimed to ensure that the welfare of the child was paramount, working in partnership with parents to protect the child from harm. All intentions of this policy endorse that aim as we endeavour to counter any adverse effects of bereavement and maintain pupils' emotional well-being.

## The Roles of the Leadership

### Who to Tell

- Inform your diocesan adviser who will be able to provide support, the local authority, MAT and (with the permission of the family) the local parish incumbent / local church clergy. **Don't forget that support from the parish can often make a big difference to the wellbeing of the family and community.**

### The role of the governing body

- To approve the guidelines, ensure their implementation and review the guidelines regularly.
- To engage with and support the school – and particularly the headteacher - in appropriate, and mutually agreed, ways.

### The role of the Headteacher

- To ensure that staff feel ready to cope with a death in their community.
- To empower everyone by encouraging staff in each class to read an appropriate book about bereavement with their class at the start of the year (primary only). Should there be a death that year the class has a comforting and familiar resource to draw on. To prepare with secondary students by opening discussion and reflection on death and bereavement as appropriate.
- To be the first point of contact for family/pupil/staff member concerned.
- To keep the governing body fully informed.
- To liaise with the church as appropriate through the incumbent, key lay leaders or foundation governors.
- To keep the school community fully informed.
- To coordinate support throughout the community.
- To monitor progress and liaise with external agencies.
- To respond to media enquiries.
- To have concern for the wellbeing of all those affected whether staff, governors, pupils or other stakeholders.
- To oversee in the long-term the continued wellbeing of all concerned.

### The role of the LA /MAT / Diocese

- To offer relevant support and advice to the Headteacher.
- To consult on referral pathways and identification of complex grief.
- To signpost/provide resources for support (e.g. counsellors as appropriate, bereavement box etc.)

### The role of staff

- To have emotional awareness of both pupils and staff.
- To prepare their class/tutor group by reading an appropriate book on the theme of bereavement at the start of the school year.
- To offer appropriate support under the guidance of the headteacher.
- To have bereavement support training and cascade learning to other staff as required.
- To deal sensitively and confidentially with all aspects of the grief journey in the community.

## Outline Procedures

1. Contact with the deceased's family should be established by the Headteacher and their wishes respected in communicating with others. Factual information is essential to avoid rumour and confusion, whilst being sensitive to cultural and religious considerations. **The family may appreciate support from the local incumbent / local church. The parish can be an excellent source of support and guidance. They will be able to talk with the family and provide a crucial point of contact in supporting families in coming to terms with loss.**
2. Staff should be informed before pupils and be prepared (through prior training) to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed for each individual circumstance. (See 'Breaking the News' below)
3. Pupils who are affected should be informed, preferably in small groups, by someone known to them. (See 'Breaking the news' below)
4. A letter to all school families affected should be composed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to how it should be distributed and to whom.
5. The school should be aware that the school timetable may need a degree of flexibility to accommodate the needs and wellbeing of pupils affected by the situation. However, minimal disruption to the timetable also offers a sense of security and familiarity.
6. Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate.
7. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance may need to be agreed. Attention should also be paid to the needs of those remaining in school.
8. School should be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a pupil throughout their school life, so information should be recorded and shared with relevant people, particularly at transition points.
- 9: Sometimes it might be necessary to prepare a press statement. This should be prepared by the Headteacher following guidance from the diocese, local authority or MAT. It will be important to follow the protocols set out by the local authority or MAT and to avoid contact without taking advice first.

### Notwithstanding the conversation with the deceased's family the school might also consider:

- Consult the incumbent or local clergy to consider how the church, clergy and shared rituals can support the school/ family in coming to terms with loss.
- Identify an allocated quiet place where children, young people and staff can go if necessary. It is preferable for there to be minimum disruption to the timetable, but some flexibility may be required.
- Try to engender an awareness of when people need help and support, particularly those who worked closely with the person who has died and School Administrative Officers/ other administrative staff who are taking telephone calls, dealing with parents, etc.
- Ensure that nominated staff with responsibilities for supporting staff and pupils are available to do so. It may be necessary temporarily to provide staff cover for their normal activities.
- Through the nominated staff member responsible for liaising with the bereaved family, ascertain their wishes about the school's involvement in the funeral, if any.

## Guidelines for Breaking the News about a Death to Staff and Governors

- 1) Arrange a staff meeting, which should take place as soon as possible.
- 2) Inform the Chair of Governors as soon as possible and ask them to inform the governing body.
- 3) Discuss this with the clergy and invite them to be present when the news is broken.
- 4) Choose a prayer to say together (see Appendix 4 for useful resources below).
- 5) Impart only factual information. Never make assumptions or repeat what has been said by rumour.
- 6) Give news sensitively and empathetically, being aware that people may react in different ways.
- 7) Be aware of the relationships staff may have had with the person who has died.
- 8) Ensure that there is someone responsible for telling people who are unable to attend the staff meeting such as part-time staff, peripatetic staff and lunch time supervisors. Consider the best way of imparting the information to those absent, for example by making a home visit, by telephone, text or email, etc.
- 9) Identify individual members of staff who feel able to:
  - a. support other members of staff;
  - b. support groups of pupils.
- 10) The most appropriate person to support the pupils should be well known to them and trusted.
- 11) Identify a member of staff who will provide a letter for parents (depending on the outcome of conversations with the deceased's family)
- 12) Arrange a staff meeting at the end of the day to ensure staff are coping with the situation.
- 13) Identify any unresolved problems or ongoing issues.
- 14) Ensure that those staff who live alone have contact numbers of friends in case of need.
- 15) Identify and signpost sources of advice and support to access for help in coming to terms with the bereavement.

## Guidelines for Breaking News of the Death to the Pupils

- 1) Inform the pupils as soon as possible about the death.
- 2) Discuss this with the clergy and invite them to be present when the news is broken.
- 3) Where possible, the pupils should be informed in small groups i.e. class or tutor groups.
- 4) Identify those pupils who had a long term and/or close relationship with the person who has died, so they can be told separately.
- 5) If appropriate, a special assembly could be held at a later time in the day or the following day to remember the person who has died.
- 6) Those pupils who have had more involvement with the person who has died should be given the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences either within the group or in a one-to-one situation.
- 7) Allow the pupils to verbalise their feelings.
- 8) Allow the pupils to ask questions and answer them honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.
- 9) Allow the pupils to discuss the situation and share their experiences of death.
- 10) Be honest about your own feelings and talk about your relationship with the person.
- 11) Avoid using euphemisms.
- 12) Ensure the pupils understand that the death is nothing to do with anything they have said or done. It is in no way their fault.
- 13) Reassure them that not all people who are ill or have had an accident will die and that many people get better.
- 14) Conclude the discussion with a prayer or special poem to remember the person who has died and their family.
- 15) Put an appropriate time limit on the discussion. It is preferable to resume normal school activities as soon as possible, thus ensuring minimal disruption within the school.
- 16) Be available for any pupil who needs additional help and support.

“Jesus says, ‘Set your troubled heart at rest, trust in God always, trust also in me. There are many dwelling places in my Father’s home, if it were not so I would have told you.’” John 14:1

## Terminally Ill Pupils/Staff

- In the event of a pupil or member of staff becoming terminally ill, their wishes and those of their parents/guardians/next-of-kin should always be respected.
- Should the pupil wish to attend school, the class teacher may need to inform the class of the pupil's condition.
- Occasionally, the pupil may wish to talk to their classmates about their predicament themselves. Honesty about death and dying may be the best line of approach. Sometimes there is just no other way.

## Return to School

- For the bereaved pupil or member of staff, returning to school may be traumatic.
- Where there has been a close family bereavement, in most cases everyone (teaching, support staff, volunteers if appropriate and pupils) should be made aware of the situation before the pupil returns (providing the parents/guardians of the bereaved pupil agree).
- Staff should show appropriate compassion and allow expression to those suffering grief.
- Teachers should try to foster an environment that is compassionate yet disciplined.
- Family life at this traumatic time can be particularly distressing, routines upset, relationships strained and the future uncertain. For this reason, school routines should be kept as normal as possible in order to provide a respite.
- Staff should be aware of anniversaries as this can spark a revival of feelings of bereavement.
- Staff might keep an eye on those particularly affected by the death of a close associate.

## General Advice

- Have age-appropriate books about death in all classes as a matter of course, not just after a death and during bereavement, so that pupils begin to know and understand the vocabulary of death, e.g. 'Badger's Parting Gifts' which is suitable for primary aged pupils. (Include the reading of an age appropriate book about death into the start of year schedule so this resource is familiar to pupils). These help pupils articulate their fears and distress when the time comes.
- Learning about dying and death should be an ordinary part of the curriculum (Religious Education, particularly at Easter).
- Schools may need information and advice on the various death traditions and customs of faiths other than Christian. Inadvertent insensitivity or ignorance can cause great offence and add to a family's grief. (Some SACREs have issued valuable advice and the Diocese can advise on this).



## Talking to a Bereaved Pupil:

- Try to be available to listen and support if possible, arrange a one-to-one session with the nurture/wellbeing lead (or Family Support Worker if the school has one) or appropriate adult, as soon as possible after the pupil returns to school.
- Be calm and show them that you are listening and understanding by occasionally repeating what they have said and by acknowledging their emotions.
- If people feel like crying they should cry – crying is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of deep feeling.
- Beware of using platitudes e.g. “I know how you feel”, (people may feel offended that you presume to know how they feel).

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let the pupil know that you genuinely care.</li> <li>• Make time to be available and listen.</li> <li>• Accept all that the pupil is saying.</li> <li>• Allow them to express their feelings their way.</li> <li>• Let them know their feelings are normal.</li> <li>• Let them know that it is OK to cry.</li> <li>• Talk honestly and share your feelings.</li> <li>• Be honest.</li> <li>• Make eye contact.</li> <li>• Have appropriate physical contact.</li> <li>• Let them know that it is not their fault.</li> <li>• Be aware of the home situation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop the pupil talking.</li> <li>• Tell them how they should or should not feel.</li> <li>• Avoid contact.</li> <li>• Change the subject.</li> <li>• Deny your pain and feelings.</li> <li>• Point out things for which they should be grateful.</li> <li>• Be frightened of sharing your feelings.</li> </ul>

## Ways of Remembering

- Artwork.
- Draw pictures of the loved one.
- Write a letter to the person who has died, (What I would say to. . . )
- Write a poem for the person who has died.
- Make a memory box (possibly using Winston's resources).
- Write memories of the person who has died.
- Have a place where people can respond both as individuals and collectively, e.g. a Book of Remembrance or a space in the school where people can come and light a candle.
- Write prayers. Use circle time to say or read prayers.
- Hold a celebration / service of remembrance of the life of the person who has died. This can include the pupils and staff being part of the readings, sharing their prayers and memories and choosing the favourite hymns of the person who has died.
- Produce a memory booklet to support the celebration service / service of remembrance. The booklet could be written in the favourite colours of the person who has died.
- Frame some of the school's photographs of the life of the person who has died and display them around the school.
- Create some form of visual memorial for the person who has died, e.g. a bench, sculpture, water fountain, pebbles of words display, etc.
- Plant a tree for the person who has died.

## Developmental Cognitive Stages of Mourning

### Infancy (to Age 2)

- Children do not have the cognitive capacity to make sense of loss.

### Preschool (Age 2-4)

- Loss is seen to be temporary and reversible.
- **Egocentric.** Believe world centres around them. Lack cognitive understanding of death and related concepts. Limited language skills.
- **Concept of Death.** Death seen as reversible, as abandonment, not permanent. Common statements: 'Did you know my mum died? When will she be home?' Grief Response. Intensive response but brief. Very present orientated. Most aware of changes in pattern of care. Asking questions repeatedly.
- **Signs of Distress.** Regression: changes in eating and sleeping patterns, bed wetting, general irritability and confusion.
- **Possible Interventions.** Short, honest answers, frequent repetition, lots of reassurance and nurturing. Consistent routine. Play is an outlet for grief.

### Early Childhood (Age 4-7)

- Loss is seen to be temporary & reversible. Children sometimes attribute non-casual events to loss.
- **Gaining a Sense of Autonomy.** Exploring the world outside of self. Gaining language. Fantasy wishing and thinking. Initiative phase seeing self as the initiator. Concerns of guilt. Concept of Death. Death seen as reversible. Personification of death. Feeling of responsibility because of wishes and thoughts. Common statements: "It's my fault. I was mad and wished she'd die."
- **Grief Response.** More verbalisation. Great concern with process. How? Why? Repetitive questioning. May act as though nothing has happened. General distress and confusion. Signs of Distress. Regression: nightmares, sleeping and eating disturbed. Possible violent play. Attempts to take on role of person who died.
- **Positive Interventions.** Symbolic play using drawings and stories. Allow and encourage expression of energy and feeling through physical outlets. Talk about it.

### Middle Years (Age 7-11)

- Beginning to see loss as final and universal.
- **Concrete Thinking. Self-confidence develops.** Beginning of socialisation. Development of cognitive ability. Beginning of logical thinking.
- **Concept of Death.** Death seen as punishment. Fear of bodily harm and mutilation. This is a difficult transition period, still wanting to see death as reversible but beginning to see it as final.
- **Grief Response.** Specific questions. Desire for complete detail. Concerned with how others are responding. What is the right way to respond? Starting to have ability to mourn and understand mourning.
- **Signs of Distress.** Regression: school problems, withdrawal from friends. Acting out. Sleeping and eating disturbed. Overwhelming concern with body. Death thoughts (desire to join one who died). Role confusion.
- **Possible Interventions.** Answer questions. Encourage expression of range of feelings. Explain options and allow for choices. Be available but allow alone time. Allow for physical outlets. Listen and allow for talk about death.

### Preadolescent (Age 11-13)

- Attempting to understand the biological and emotional processes with loss and death.
- **Formal operational problem solving.** Abstract thinking. Integration of one's own personality. Concept of Death. A more 'adult' approach. Ability to abstract. Beginning to conceptualise death. Work at making sense of teachings.
- **Grief Response.** Extreme sadness. Denial. Regression. More often willing to talk to people outside of family and peer support. Risk taking. Traditional mourning.
- **Signs of Distress.** Depression. Anger often towards parents. Suicidal thoughts. Noncompliance. Rejection of former teaching. Role confusion. Acting out.
- **Possible Interventions.** Encourage verbalisation. Allow for choices. Encourage self-motivation. Listen. Be available. Do not attempt to take grief away.

### Adolescent (Age 13-15).

Attempting to integrate loss into emotional life and philosophical frameworks.

- As above.

### Adolescent (Age 15-18).

Increasing independence in transition to adulthood may distance adolescents from their family support network.

- As above.

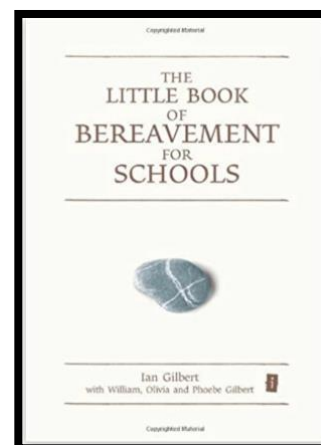
## Books to Support Schools, Adults and Pupils in Managing Bereavement

THREE books are of particular help to members of Staff:

- The Little Book of Bereavement: Ian Gilbert
- Where's my Mum now?: Brian Cranwell
- Children and Bereavement: Wendy Duffy

This is a particularly good resource for schools with older pupils:

<https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Death-Grief-and-Hope-Church-Army.pdf>



- Are You Sad, Little Bear? A book about learning to say goodbye -Rachel Rivett
- Dear Grandpa – Chris Lawson
- Emma says goodbye – Carolyn Nystrom
- Michael Rosen's Sad Book – Michael Rosen
- Missing Mummy: a book about bereavement – Rebecca Cobb
- Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine: your activity book to help when someone has died – Diana Crossley
- Rosie: coming to terms with the death of a sibling – Stephanie Jeffs and Jacqui Thomas
- Thinking of Heaven: prayers for the sad goodbye – Sophie Piper
- Water Bugs and Dragonflies: explaining death to young children – Doris Stickney
- Where did Grandad go? – Catherine House & Honor Ayers
- Where's my Mum now? Children's perspectives on helps and hindrances to their grief – Brian Cranwell
- Will I Live Forever? – Carolyn Nystrom

## Collective Worship on the theme of Saying Goodbye

### Introduction:

- It is always a good idea to hold a special service when there has been a death of a pupil or an adult in the school. It brings the school community together and enables them to share their memories and grief. Death can be after a long illness when there has been time to think and prepare or it can be sudden. In both cases, there is not always time to prepare something in advance. The outline below will give you a simple structure to follow or adapt.
- If members of the family wish to attend, it makes it more personal and they often find comfort in being present. Others may find it hard, but they should be offered the choice.

### Creating an atmosphere for worship:

- It is worth considering where the worship might take place. It might be in the school hall or perhaps in the local church. It might be that in the summer term it could be held outside.
- Thought should be given as to how an atmosphere can be created. It is often a lovely idea to have photographs of the deceased on a PowerPoint loop that the pupils can watch, reflect and remember as they enter. This should be discussed with the grieving family as it could cause distress. It might be more appropriate to have images of growth and hope from the natural world.
- It is also a good idea to set up a special table/altar with a special cloth, candle, a photograph and some flowers.

### Introductory music:

- There is a vast amount of appropriate music that can be used. It is a good idea to consult the classes as there may be some favourite music. It is a good idea to encourage the staff to contribute ideas.

### The act of worship:

- Welcome everyone and begin by explaining how important it is to remember.
- Give a brief factual input about the circumstances surrounding the death. Light the candle.
- Perhaps pupils and staff can alternate between memories of the person and bringing objects or pictures/drawings to remember the deceased and placing them on the table.
- It is often a good idea to have a special memory box prepared on the table. This can be used to place the objects in at the end and it can be presented to the family.

### Prayer and reflection:

- There are many published prayers for these times, but it is often prayers from the pupils themselves that have more meaning.
- It is also a lovely idea to have a large bowl of water or an empty basket. Pupils and adults can pick up a pebble, come forward and, using the pebbles as a vehicle for prayer, carefully drop their pebbles/prayers/thoughts about the person into the bowl or empty basket. It is important that all of the pupils have an opportunity to say goodbye.
- Hymns and songs / exit music: You may want to sing a hymn, but this is often difficult when pupils and adults are feeling sad. It might be that pupils leave to a favourite song.

## Appendix A – Examples of Possible Wording for Collective Worship

### Words of Introduction:

Coming together as a school today is very important. We are probably all thinking different things at the moment and have mixed emotions. Today we are going to remember and think about (name) who died (date). Our emotions run deep at this time. You may be feeling very sad, tearful, even angry that this person has been taken from us, maybe calm knowing they are now at rest, upset at what has happened. You may also be thinking 'I wish I'd said this to them..., I'm glad I knew them well'. Amongst all these emotions there are probably lots of fond memories, happy times, times of laughter and times of joy. Coming together today isn't easy for any of us, but it is important that we mark and celebrate (name)'s life.

### Lighting a Candle

Many schools choose to light a candle as a focal point for the collective worship.

These are examples and options for words that can be read by the leader or done in a responsorial way:

We light this light **as we look back with gratitude for what we have had**

We light this light **as we look forward with courage for what is to come**

We like this light **as we look upwards with confidence, to God**

**who is always with us.**

We will light a light, in the name of God the Father who made all things

We will light a light, in the name of Jesus the Son, who brings life and hope to all things

We will light a light, for the spirit of God, with us at all times.

We light this light to remember Jesus,

the light of the world, who lights a path for us to follow.

We can light a candle to remember

We can light a candle as a prayer beyond words

We can light a candle to symbolise that love is stronger than anything

We can hold those we want to remember in the light

### Possible Readings:

#### Psalm 23 verses 1-4

The Lord is my shepherd. I will always have everything I need. He gives me green pastures to lie in. He leads me by calm pools of water. He restores my strength. He leads me on right paths to show that he is good. Even if I walk through a valley as dark as the grave, I will not be afraid of any danger, because you are with me. Your rod and staff comfort me.

#### John chapter 14, verses 1-3

Jesus said, "Don't be troubled. Trust in God, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with me, so that you can be where I am.

#### Readings – specific to children

##### Matthew chapter 19, verses 13-15

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

**Mark Chapter 10, verses 14-17**

When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

**A Possible Story****Water bugs and Dragonflies**

Down below the surface of a quiet pond lived a little colony of water bugs. They were a happy colony, living far away from the sun. For many months they were very busy, scurrying over the soft mud at the bottom of the pond.

They did notice that every once in a while one of the colony seemed to lose interest in going about with her friends. Clinging to the stem of the pond lily, she gradually moved out of sight and was seen no more. "Look" said one of the water bugs to another, "one of our colony is climbing up the lily stem. Where do you suppose she's going?"

Up, up, up, she went slowly. Even as they watched, the water bug disappeared from sight. Her friends waited and waited but she didn't return.

"That's funny!" said one water bug to another.

"Wasn't she happy here?" Asked a second water bug.

"Where do you suppose she went?" Wondered the third.

No one had an answer. They were greatly puzzled. Finally one of the water bugs, a leader in the colony, gathered its friends together. "I have an idea. The next one of us who climbs up the lily stalk must promise to come back and tell us where he or she went and why"

"We promise", they said solemnly.

One spring day, not long after, the very water bug who had suggested the plan found himself climbing up the lily stalk. Up, up, up he went. Before he knew what was happening, he broke through the surface of the water and was falling onto the green lily pad above. When he awoke, he looked about with surprise. He couldn't believe what he saw. Startling changes had happened to his body with silver wings and a long tail. Even as he struggled, he felt an impulse to move his wings. The warmth of the sun soon dried the moisture from the new body. He moved his wings again and again and suddenly found himself up and above the water. He had become a dragonfly.

Sweeping and dipping in great curves, he flew through the air. But by and by, the new dragonfly lighted happily on the lily pad to rest. Then it was that he chanced to look below to the bottom of the pond. Why, he was right above his old friends, the water bugs! There they were, scuttling about, just as he had been doing sometime before.

Then the dragonfly remembered the promise: "The next one of us who climbs up the lily stalk will come back and tell us where he or she went and why." Without thinking, the dragonfly darted down. Suddenly he hit the surface of the water and bounced away. Now that he was a dragonfly, he could no longer go in to the water.

"I can't return!" He said in dismay. "At least I tried, but I can't keep my promise. Even if I could go back, not one of the water bugs will know me with my new body. I guess I'll just have to wait until they become dragonflies too. Then they'll understand what happened to me, and where I went." And the dragonfly went off happily into his wonderful new world of sun and air.

**A Prayer after the story**

Thank you, God, for the story of the water bugs and the dragonflies.

Thank you for the miracle that makes shiny dragonflies out of bugs.

Please remember \_\_\_\_, who has left the pond we live in.

Give him\her a good life too, in a wonderful new world of sun and air.

And then remember me, and let me some day be with him\her again too.

**Amen**



### Seeds of Remembrance

Leader: Take a look at these bulbs I have brought in today. They look dried up and dead, but we are going to plant them in a special place in the school grounds, knowing that when the spring comes, each bulb will start to shoot and grow into a beautiful flower. They will come to life again, just as Jesus did and bring colour and hope to our school grounds. I have also brought some packets of seeds for us to sow. We know the seeds will grow into flowers and we will think of our friend [name of pupil] as we watch those flowers grow. But I like to think that [name of pupil] has given us all seeds of a different kind. You can't see them, but we can feel the seeds which are our memories of [name of pupil] inside our hearts. I wonder what kind of memories [name of pupil] has left with you? Let us be quiet for a while and think of the seeds [name of pupil] has sown in our hearts.

### Possible Prayers

#### Dear Loving God,

Please comfort us in the sadness that we feel because .... has died. We miss them very much. Help us to be able to share our grief with one another. We ask you to be especially close to .....’s family. They must be finding this loss so very hard. Please console them during this time and give them strength to cope.

Thank you for the wonderful memories that we have. **Amen**

#### God the Holy Trinity,

We have prepared this space and we ask you to make it Holy as we gather here together to remember N. Please be with us at this sad time and help us to trust that you are with us.

We know that Jesus made ordinary things Holy and we ask that you will make this space Holy for us today. We know that Jesus came alive again on Easter Sunday and that Jesus promised, that because of his resurrection, we too will be alive in Heaven one day.

As we remember N give us faith and hope, we pray. **Amen**

#### Dear God,

In darkness and in light,  
In trouble and in joy,  
Help us to trust your love.

**Amen**

#### Lord Jesus,

You took children into your arms  
And blessed them.

Keep \_\_\_ who we loved, in your loving care, to live with you forever.

**Amen**

#### Please listen, God,

While we talk to you about \_\_\_ who has died. Take care of her\him, and please take care of us too.

Thank you for the times we had together.

Thank you for Jesus, who shows us his love.

He is close to \_\_\_ and he is close to us.

Thank you God. **Amen**

## Appendix B – Useful Resources

### General Resources

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/>

<https://www.winstonswish.org/>

<http://justb.org.uk/wordpress/> (Bereavement support based in Harrogate)

<https://www.cruse.org.uk> (Guidance for adults and children)

### Resources by Area of Focus

#### Understanding Grief

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/about-grief>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/how-we-grieve-and-what-may-help>

#### Support for Professionals & Schools

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-professionals>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Pages/Category/working-with-bereaved-families>

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-schools>

<https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/support-for-schools/>

#### Supporting a Bereaved Child

<https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/supporting-a-bereaved-child/>

#### Coronavirus specific Bereavement

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/coronavirus-supporting-children>



## Appendix C: Wording to support conversations with pupils

- Use simple, direct language appropriate to their level of understanding
- Use the terms 'died', 'dead', and 'death' – euphemisms such as 'we've lost Grandpa' or 'Grandma has gone to another place' are confusing. Children are helped to understand by hearing the language that fits this new experience
- Keep children informed about what has happened and what will happen (e.g. about the funeral)
- Check how much they have understood
- Answer questions openly. If you don't know an answer, say you will find out and come back to them. If you feel the answer is too difficult for them to hear, explain that honestly
- Repeat explanations more than once
- Reassure them that they are not to blame
- Allow and encourage the safe sharing of feelings and thoughts
- Listen to their feelings, worries, memories.
- Ways to explain to a child that someone has died

### Some suggested words

"We know that all living things will die someday. Flowers, animals, trees, butterflies, people all die eventually..."

"... however, the great majority of people will die when they are very old."

"Occasionally, someone will die before they are old because, for example, of an accident or serious illness."

"When someone dies, their body stops working and they are no longer able to do the things they could when they were alive, such as move or talk or hug or play."

"Sadly, [name] has died. Everyone wishes they had not died and had lived for many more years. However, their body was not able to keep working and so they died. Their heart stopped beating, their lungs stopped breathing and their brain stopped thinking, and so they died."

"We are very healthy and we're going to do all we can to keep that way, because I want to be around to [play with my great grandchildren/travel to Mars/celebrate the year 2100]."