

GUIDE TO THE WINSTON'S WISH EXAMPLE BEREAVEMENT POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

In partnership with



Purpose of the example policy

"Death neither obeys the school timetable nor appears on it... it enters the classroom without knocking."

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

It is inevitable that schools will work with children, young people and adults affected by death in one way or another. The immediacy and enormity of these experiences may vary, but in each situation, schools have a key role to positively support those affected. It is also important to understand the links between bereavement, separation and loss, and links to research on risk and resilience (including adverse childhood experiences research).

Death is still for many a taboo subject that raises anxieties, concerns and a fear that we 'might get it wrong' or say 'the wrong thing'. This is particularly the case in relation to suicide. Suicide is a leading cause of death for young people in the UK and it is a possibility that suicide will impact on school communities.

The purpose of this example policy is to support settings to develop their own policy that will support children, families and staff in school when a death in the school community has occurred and in doing so to be aware of, and sensitive to, individual, family, cultural and religious factors that influence people's responses to both death and suicide.

It is recommended that all education settings have a Bereavement Policy that will enable appropriate and effective responses to be made in the event of a death within the school community.

In addition to this policy there are also a range of resources and templates available on the Winston's Wish website: <https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/support-for-schools/>

Developing this example policy for your setting

It is hoped that this policy can be adapted by a range of educational settings for all ages including colleges and early years settings. However, to simplify things the term 'school' is used throughout. Similarly, the text refers simply to 'pupil' rather than 'pupil / student' etc. Settings for older children may wish to use 'student' instead in their guidance.

Schools will need to give careful thought in the adaption and adoption of this example policy so that it genuinely reflects practice. Text in **coral** is there to prompt the review or development of the text in the example.

Key members of the school should be involved in the development of its bereavement policy, including members of the school's senior leadership team. If appropriate this also should include those with lived experience of bereavement and faith and community leaders. A small working party may be helpful for this purpose.

Dissemination and training

Education settings will want to consider how to ensure all staff are aware of the policy and to provide training to key staff to support them in implementing the training. Please see the [Winston's Wish training offer](#), including a free online training course for school staff.

Review

This example policy will be regularly reviewed. We recommend that education settings review their policy every two-three years.

To feedback on this policy and suggest improvements please email [**info@winstonswish.org**](mailto:info@winstonswish.org)

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