

COVID-19 Advice for Schools / Settings – Loss & Bereavement



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Introduction

The aim of this document is to offer advice to schools and settings across Wakefield District about how you can support a child if someone they know or a loved one becomes seriously ill or dies with COVID19 (or suspected COVID19). The document also offers advice regarding children & young people's experience of loss and how you can support a child in this context.

Due to school closures, schools may not currently be able to offer as much support as they usually would to children who are going through difficult times. With closures and social restrictions in place, it is important for schools to consider how best they can offer support to children and their families when someone they know is seriously ill or dies with COVID19. This may be in person for those children and young people still attending school, or remotely for those who are at home.

The situation with the pandemic is unprecedented and ongoing. Families are perhaps more socially isolated now, at a time when they crucially need their support network in the face of serious illness or the death of someone they know. Parents may be feeling overwhelmed and may reach out to school staff for help in supporting them and their child. Sometimes, talking to a familiar and trusted adult outside of the home environment can be helpful for a child or young person.

School staff will also be feeling vulnerable and will be reminded of their own vulnerability whenever they provide support to others. They will empathise and identify with the bereaved and this will be will be upsetting at a time when the school's usual well-being support is disrupted.

In addition to the advice and guidance within this document, schools & settings can also contact the Wakefield Educational Psychology Service, via their named Educational Psychologist or via the contact details below:

Email: eps@wakefield.gov.uk

Telephone: 01924 307403

WHEN SOMEBODY A CHILD KNOWS IS SERIOUSLY ILL OR HAS DIED FROM COVID-19

There is a lot of talk about COVID-19, serious illness and death all around us at the moment. Children can pick up on what is being discussed and this can become worrying for them if not addressed directly. It is natural to want to protect children from difficult feelings, but lots of children will benefit from having someone to talk to about what is going on, to help them make sense of it and to be reassured.

At this time, children and their families will need even more support from their social network but may find themselves more isolated due to the COVID-19 social distancing rules. It is more likely that parents or carers will be the ones to talk to and share news with their child, rather than school staff, but children may want to talk about this further and ask questions to adults they trust in school.

When a child experiences the death of someone they know and are close to, it is always difficult. The current situation with COVID-19 may make it even harder for children and families to cope and for schools to support them. COVID-19 has disrupted the normal grieving process for families and usual comforts and breaks from the grief may not be available.

We have included information about children's understanding of death and some 'key ideas' to help you have these difficult conversations.

Key ideas for talking to children about serious illness or death due to Covid-19

Experience shows that children cope with sad news best when they are with someone they know. School staff are often significant people in a child or young person's life and can have an important role to play in providing a safe environment in which children can show their grief or other emotions.

The first thing to consider is where and when you're going to start a conversation. Think about what time of day the child is most able to listen and concentrate, and whether you can go to a space with minimal distractions. Try to have conversations in a relaxed and neutral place if this is possible.

It is important to accept that we won't have all the answers. A good place to start, where possible, is to have a conversation with a child's parent or carer. This will help you to establish the facts, such as what they already know as well as what the parent

may not want them to know yet. Try to avoid offering false reassurances, such as telling the child that an unwell person will be ok or make a full recovery.

It is common for children who experience a death to feel worried that the same thing might happen to other loved ones. With COVID-19, this worry may be even more intense because many people have caught the virus. The child may benefit from receiving reassurance from school staff about what they can do to keep themselves and others safe and well.

When speaking to the child, consider using the steps of the *CONNECT model* from *Emotion Coaching*, to offer emotional support (please contact the Educational Psychology Service for more detailed information on each step). In brief, the steps involve:

- **Checking-in (with the moment and your feelings)** – be aware of your own emotions before supporting a child. This situation can bring up difficult feelings for us all, it may remind you of grief or make you feel worried about yourself or loved ones. If you are able, find a time that you feel strong enough to manage whatever the child or young person wants to talk about and to answer their questions.
- **Opportunity for teaching** – how can a child be helped to cope with their emotions? (Refer to the psycho-educational information provided within this document about common reactions and helpful ways of coping) Be patient - you may have to repeat the information many times. Be proactive (if you can) - have information ready for possible questions. Be honest, specific and straightforward - it is acceptable to say you do not have all the answers. Assure children and young people they will be kept updated.
- **Noticing their bodily reactions and feelings** – really listen and learn how the child expresses their emotions, what they say and their tone of voice.
- **Normalising, labelling and validating** – normalise their emotions by talking about them, reflecting back and referring to common feelings. Let them know that it is normal to laugh and cry. Reassure them it is okay to lighten the mood by remembering old times and stories.
- **Empathising** – by accepting the emotional reaction and supporting the child to find ways to cope. Feelings should be acknowledged, believed and discussed. Try not to make comments such as “you don’t really mean that” or “it will be okay soon”.
- **Consider setting limits** – a child’s behaviour may be different at this time. Help them to know how to respond in more helpful ways.

- **Team work** – problem solve together and explore helpful ideas with the child or young person around what they could do to manage their emotions. It is alright to ask the child or young person what he/she needs or what may help them. Be prepared that a child or young person may want to ask more questions later.

When talking to groups of children, school staff should agree on what information to share at a staff briefing. Preferably, information should be shared with children and young people at the same time. Relaying the information to vulnerable pupils and children absent from school also needs to be considered. The information should contain appropriate language and factual information only with clear, concise, “bite size” explanations delivered in a calm manner.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S UNDERSTANDING OF ILLNESS

In the context of covid-19, children may have relatives or friends who are unwell or even hospitalised. Children may become anxious or worried about what could happen in the future to themselves or others they know.

“Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Anxiety is a natural human response when we perceive that we are under threat. It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.”

[Mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)

Presented below are children & young people's understanding of illness and the possible worries or anxieties which they may experience and the behaviours which may communicate these based upon developmental stages. This information is informed by research, but the age categories are for guidance only, use your judgement of individual children to inform an appropriate response.

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|---------------------------|--|
| 0-3 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children at this age will not understand what causes illness. They will find understanding illness difficult unless they can see it, such as a person sneezing. |
| 4-7 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children will find it difficult to understand a concept which they cannot picture in their mind. They will focus on what is happening in the here and now or soon.• They will understand illness in terms of simple symptoms, like a cough or runny nose but find it difficult to understand that the symptoms of illness can be different, for example, that some coughs are okay and others can be serious.• They will be starting to understand that you can catch some illnesses and behaviours such as washing your hands can help to keep you healthy.• They can be confused and think you can catch all illnesses and that behaviours such as washing your hands stop you getting ill. |
| 7-12 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They have an understanding that illness can be lots of different symptoms, and that lots of things go on inside their body which they can't see.• They understand that medicines and following doctor's advice can help them get better but still need a lot of help and prompting to follow advice.• They are more able to understand concepts of time and permanence, and will understand that death happens to everyone and is permanent. |
| 13 years and above | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teenagers can understand the different causes of illness, that illnesses can be very different and can understand the role of stress and worry on the body. |
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- They can understand a lot of information about illness, and what their friends are doing and saying may impact on how they behave.
 - They are likely to look at their own sources of information and parents become less defining in how they think about information and how they behave.
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What children & young people may say or do...and how you might respond

0-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not understand why adults are scared, worried or sad. • Show their distress at change in routine through: being more clingy, changes to their toileting, eating or sleeping habits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on structure and routine, keeping things as normal as possible. • Stick to short sentences and focus on the here and now, such as what you are doing today and tomorrow. • Don't use complicated explanations.
3-7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might hear them playing out illness-related stories with their toys and some of the things they do may be confusing or not accurate. • Children may blame themselves or think something was their fault (e.g. grandma is ill because I did not wash my hands). • Carry on with playing even when things around them may be difficult (e.g. if a loved one is unwell). • Children may 'fill in the blanks' with their imagination or seemingly illogical or inaccurate explanations if they do not know. • They may ask a lot of questions repeatedly as they try to make sense of information they have heard with their limited understanding of illness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use play and stories to shape a child's understanding, where necessary and appropriate. Characters in the story can be used to correct misunderstandings. • Help your child label and name their emotions by labelling and naming yours.
7-12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not wanting to voice concerns for fear of upsetting parents, friends or others. • Difficulty verbalising distress – they may not know why they feel worried or stressed. • They are more likely to experience stress as physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and normalise different feelings appropriately and talk about what you are doing to help with worries or feelings. • Ensure explanations are accurate and explain differences between conditions, e.g. children may have heard that having a cough might be

	<p>symptoms, like a headache, a stomach ache or wanting more physical contact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will ask more questions about the impact on other people or on wider changes to life than younger children. 	<p>worrying, and they will need to understand that not all coughs are worrying.</p>
<p>13 years and above</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might ask fewer questions of adults, and turn to other sources of information such as social media, their friends and news outlets. • There might be increased awareness of how illness and health behaviour fits with what is important to them. • They might be more concerned with social, moral and emotional aspects of illness and how illness is having a broader impact. This might lead to more distress and sadness than in younger children. • They might want to find ways of helping others. • They may generalise concern to family or wider social group or focus on immediate family or classmates.¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer space for support and discussion. • Provide them with information from reputable sources. • Offer and suggest activities which distract from the situation. • Set small targets • Signpost them to valid support groups/ websites for their independent research. • Children may benefit from being given the opportunity to help others. Even if they are limited in what they are able to do to support their loved ones, positive contributions towards others can: help them feel less powerless, foster shared empathy and feel more connected.

¹ British Psychological Society (2020). Talking to Children about Illness.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH

Children can experience a mix of different feelings when they experience a death. Some of the emotions they may experience include: anger, sadness, guilt, fear and shock. The way a child grieves can look very different to how adults grieve. For example, children can seem really upset about the death and soon after, appear happy or talk about other things before experiencing sadness again. They jump in and out of their grief and this is normal but can be confusing for adults.

The way children respond to death is different for each child based on their cognitive and emotional development, their understanding of Covid-19, and experience of loss and/or bereavement. The information in the following table highlights the differences in understanding of death using a developmental perspective and provides useful ways in which school staff can help a child or young person who may be affected by death.

Developmental perspective	School staff can help by:
<u>Birth to two years:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not understand the finality of death • Able to miss the presence of primary caregiver • Reacts to loss by crying, change in eating/sleeping habits • May appear detached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a clear routine wherever possible • Being a responsive, consistent, comforting and loving caregiver • Being sensitive to child's fear of separation
<u>Two to five years:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not understand the finality of death, believes it is reversible • Limited vocabulary to express grief and so may display feelings through behaviour and play • May show increased interest in things that are dead • Repetitive questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing reassurance • Establishing a clear, consistent routine wherever possible • Providing short, honest explanations of death and answers to questions. Use words 'dead' and 'died' and avoid euphemisms like 'passed away'. • Providing physical and emotional nurturance. • Increase flexibility whilst maintaining boundaries

- Opportunities for play
- Give choices wherever possible

Six to nine years

- Starting to understand finality of death
- Believes death can only happen to other people
- May personify death as ghosts or monsters and engage in magical thinking
- May start to have nightmares about death and may be curious about what happens to the body
- May feel that they caused the death
- May have strong feelings of loss (including physical sensations such as tummy aches and headaches) but limited vocabulary to express feelings
- May need permission to grieve (boys in particular)
- Explain death honestly using concrete language 'death' 'died', avoiding euphemisms like 'passed away'.
- Opportunities for creative play
- Allow children to talk about experience and ask questions
- Providing physical and emotional nurturance.
- Give choices wherever possible
- Providing consistency and routine wherever possible, including clear boundaries but with some flexibility
- Maintaining connection between school and home
- Acknowledging feelings, listening to their fears and providing reassurance

Nine to twelve years

- Understanding of the finality of death
- Realisation that death can happen to them begins to develop
- May be curious about the physicality of death
- Have more developed vocabulary but may not be willing to express feelings.
- May mimic mannerisms of the deceased to identify with them
- Short attention span
- When grieving, they might struggle to interact with their friends and may be more dependent on their family for support.
- Answer questions clearly and accurately using concrete language 'death' 'died', avoiding euphemisms like 'passed away'.
- Providing variety of activities for expression.
- Providing consistency and routine wherever possible, including clear boundaries but with some flexibility
- Give choices where possible
- Model expressing emotions and self-care
- 'Normalise' student's experience through reassurance of natural feelings and suggestion of books with characters who have experienced loss.
- Respect child's need for solitude, whilst monitoring in case becomes isolation
- Seek professional help for concerns around self-harm and/or suicidal thoughts

Thirteen to eighteen years

- Understands death
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- Death can affect both school and home relationships
 - Can express feelings but may choose not to. They might try to keep busy to push away their feelings, they may express anger or withdraw.
 - May philosophise and search for the meaning of life and death
 - May appear to be coping
 - May take the role of 'comforter'
 - The young person may try to take on adult responsibilities and try to hide their emotions to protect the adults around them.
 - Raised risks of engaging in dangerous/risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol misuse and sexual promiscuity.
 - Maintain routines and set clear expectations with some flexibility
 - Allow expressions of emotions without trying to change/fix them
 - Honest answers to questions
 - Provide choices where possible
 - Adjust expectations for concentration/task completion where necessary
 - Support with connecting with groups
 - Model appropriate expression of grief and self-care
 - Ask open ended questions and actively listen
 - Seek professional help for any concerns around self-harm and/or suicidal thoughts
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Be aware that a child may experience the death of a parent/carer from COVID-19. It is important to consider the additional trauma that a child will be experiencing as a result of this. When someone outside the household dies, there will be more opportunity for routines to carry on as normal. However, with the loss of a parent/carer there can be many changes at home, which will add to the difficulties the child or young person experiences. Other family members may also require additional support at this time.

Never underestimate the positive effect that concern and support from a caring, familiar adult can have on a child. Remember that parents, friends, peers and staff are all key supporting people for children and young people. Make use of as many of them as possible; however, face-to-face contact will be more difficult and this network of support will inevitably be smaller or more distant than usual for children and young people.

SUPPORTING YOURSELF AND EACH OTHER

This document provides advice and guidance on how to talk with and support children and young people who may experience loss & bereavement related to COVID-19. But in order to be of help to the child, you need to be mindful of your own well-being and must first take care of yourself. Dyregov (2008, pp 181-2), identifies the following points for promoting self-care:

- Learn about reactions that may be experienced by helpers who work with grief or crisis.
- Anticipate that you will experience emotional reactions if you are supporting children in grief or crisis; usually these reactions will subside over the following days and weeks.
- Remember that you cannot carry the child's grief for him or her, but you can help or support the child to express his or her grief.
- Be careful not to take on too much at the same time.
- Have someone you can share the responsibility with, or someone you can seek advice from.
- Contact professionals if an event has shaken up both you and others. It can then be useful to arrange a meeting where you go through your impressions and reactions in detail.
- If you feel like crying, don't prevent yourself from doing so. This is a normal way to release your feelings and is not a sign of weakness.
- If the intensity of your feelings adversely affects your daily life, do not hesitate to contact your GP.

Take steps within school to support each other (staff/colleagues). People frequently worry about saying the wrong thing to someone who has experienced a loss / bereavement and can avoid mentioning the death or making any reference to the person who has died. This often shows that a person is trying to be considerate, but it is important to remember that the bereaved person may be feeling lonely and your concern may help them to feel cared for. It can be helpful to pause before speaking and think about how the person who is grieving might hear what you are planning to

say: for example, some people might find the phrase 'he has gone to a better place' more upsetting than comforting. It is often useful to remember that simply listening can be the most helpful thing to do. Dyregrov (2008, p182) identifies the following points as present in peer support:

- Knowing about reactions in such situations.
- Actively contacting the person and being willing to listen and talk to him or her, and by acknowledging the feelings and thoughts that are expressed.
- Offering your company without being intrusive.
- Having patience, and accepting they may need to talk extensively about their involvement.
- Refraining from phrases such as, "It could have been worse", "Time heals all wounds", "You will feel better tomorrow." and so forth.
- Anticipating that a person engaged in such a task may not have full working capacity, and might need someone to ease his or her normal workload for a period.
- Tactically advising him or her to seek professional advice if it is obvious that he or she has problems dealing with the situation on their own.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SOMEONE A CHILD KNOWS IS SERIOUSLY ILL OR HAS DIED FROM COVID-19

Communicating that a person is seriously ill or has died can be challenging at any time, it is likely that COVID-19 will result in an extra layer of complexity. There are some complicating factors about serious illness or even deaths from COVID-19 that may affect children.

Unpredictability

It's not only very old, very frail people who are seriously ill or dying. The person they know may have been a little frail before they contracted the virus or they may have appeared perfectly well.

Suddenness

People may become sick and die quite rapidly; children will have little time to adjust to a rapidly changing future.

Distance

Children won't be able to spend time with their seriously ill or dying relative, won't be able to touch or hug them or even be in the same room.

Fear

People may react to the news that this person had died with fear rather than showing compassion to another's feelings.

Separation

Children and young people will be physically distant from those who might support them – friends, teachers, wider family.

Support structures

The current disruption of normal routine may mean children and young people have fewer places in which to switch off and focus on something else: for example, school, sports club, etc.

Anger

Children and young people may feel angry about things they perceive to have contributed to this death: people being slow to self-isolate, lack of equipment etc.

Anxiety

While children and young people will worry about other family members dying after any death, in the present situation, such anxiety is sharper and less easy to soothe.

Constant reminders

It will be hard for children to avoid hearing other stories of people affected by COVID-19.

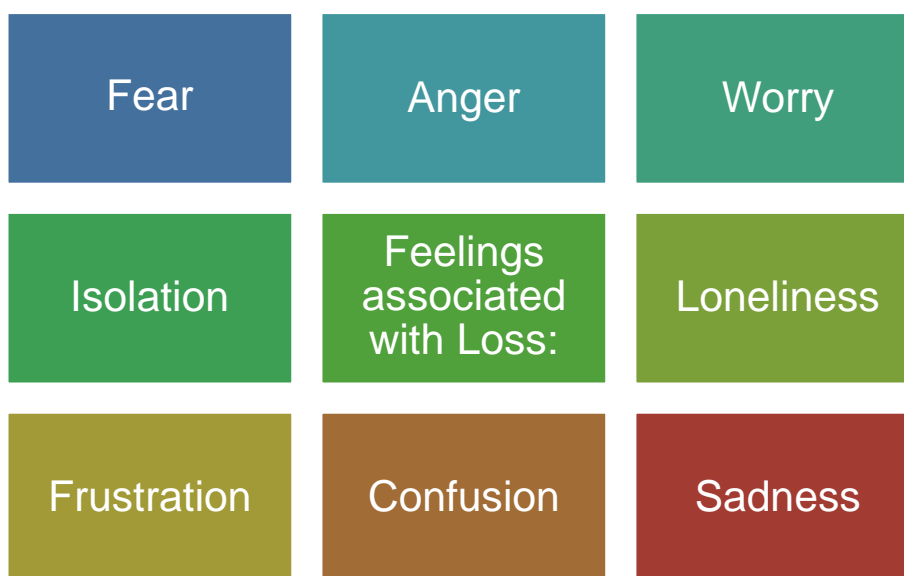
Absence of rituals

With heavy restrictions on funerals, children and young people will have less chance to 'say goodbye' in a formal sense.

Some of these factors can make it more complicated to talk about. For example, it will be harder to explain why their special person died, (when perhaps someone else with similar symptoms didn't) as there is much still unknown about how the virus works. It may also feel harder to assure children that other people they know won't die yet.

LOSS ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19

Not only are there the tragic losses of life and loved ones for children and young people to deal with, but there is also dealing with the loss of aspects of their life prior to the school closures and social distancing measures. As a result children and young people will be dealing with many new feelings.



Loss of routines

Children and Young People require a routine for example, getting up at 7am to go to school for 8.30am to 3pm, meeting friends and family, having tea, going to bed. This gives them a structure and framework that they can rely on, giving them feelings of safety and comfort. It is important to try to maintain as much structure and routine as possible, such as, fixed mealtimes, playtimes etc. Making a weekly schedule so that they can see what is coming next can help to provide a sense of comfort.

Loss of friendships and social contact

Social distancing and school closures means that children and young people cannot meet with friends and family, missing out on the face to face contact. Older children and young people may be able to use social media to communicate with their friends, however younger children will likely need support from adults to get in touch with their friends through letter writing or digital / video calls (e.g. Zoom, WhatsApp video, Houseparty, etc.).

"I don't know what to do. I've been having suicidal thoughts. I can't meet up with my friends because of the Coronavirus...I have nothing to do at home and I feel trapped"

Girl 12-15 (ChildLine)

Loss of Safety

Home is not always a place of safety for some vulnerable groups. Contingency plans have been developed by Social Service and charities such as Woman's Aid. In Wakefield, concerns regarding a child's safety is made via the Single Point of Access (SPA) 0345 8503 503 or by contacting social_care_direct_children@wakefield.gov.uk

Loss of significant school events

Events that children and young people will have been preparing for and looking forward to will have suddenly been cancelled – SATS, GCSEs A levels, school proms, transition events to different Key stages. This will give students feelings of disappointment and missing out on key life events.

Further resources are available at:

[Coping with Unexpected Endings and Loss booklet](#) – aimed at teaching staff to share with parents / carers

[Managing Unexpected Endings & Transitions booklet](#) – A practical guide to support pupils and students to manage change during periods of disruption

REMEMBRANCE

The current guidelines in place around the coronavirus pandemic have affected the way family members, friends and members of the wider community have been able to support each other during times of grief. The way we are able to support each other, for example, through funerals, memorial services, meeting up in special places or other shared events or through simply offering comfort through a hug have had to change. These face to face interactions are restricted at the moment and may mean that children, young people and families are finding it difficult to cope and may therefore need additional support. Those who have a loved one die in this period probably won't have the chance to make the choices they normally could and may have to say goodbye in a different way.

School staff are often significant people in a child or young person's life and have an important role to play when helping them during a bereavement. Parents and carers may be finding it difficult to support their child emotionally when they too are grieving and as such they may need more support from school in order to help their child.

Consider the following:

- Speaking to parents to find out how the child and family are coping, and understand what the child has been told (including anything that parents do not want their child to be told.)
- Find out what arrangements are in place for the funeral or any planned memorials as this may help to know when the family may need additional support and to decide what that support might look like.
- Use your judgement to know what is appropriate to say according to the child's age and level of understanding.
- Use the CONNECT steps outlined previously, to provide empathy and emotional support to the child as well as their parents or carers.

Saying Goodbye

For those children and young people who can't attend a funeral or say goodbye in the way that they would wish to during the current pandemic it may be helpful for them to remember the person who has died in other ways.

Some ideas are:

- Getting children to contribute to a funeral with drawings, letters, music, poetry or choosing the flowers.
- Helping to plan a memorial event for the future.
- Writing a message to be read out at the funeral.
- Sending pictures, messages or film clips to share within extended family or close friends.
- Taking part in an event at home such as sharing memories of the person, lighting a candle.

[Winston's Wish](#) offer further support around helping children and young people say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible.

Some more ways of remembering those who have died

- Blow some bubbles and imagine they can carry a message to the person who has died.
- Plant some bulbs, flowers, tree, or shrubs in a place that holds special memories of the person who has died (the person's favourite plant or flowers in their favourite colour).
- Prepare their favourite meal.
- Listen to their favourite music.
- Put something in a memory box or other special place in which to keep things as reminders of the person, for example, photos, shells.
- Create a digital memory board of special photos or post them on social media.
- Ask other people for their memories of the person who died and begin to compile their 'life story'.

- Write a letter, poem or a song. A starter could be something like, *'If you came back for just 5 minutes, I'd tell you...'*
- Having conversations with others either face to face, through video or phone, sharing memories of the person who died.
- Donating to a relevant / favourite charity in memory of a person, or setting up a charity page.

Collaborative projects for the school community

- Audio or film messages which can be collated in classes, tutor groups, year groups or as a whole school message. These could also be recorded and sent to school digitally.
- Individual works of art based on a theme such as season, time of day, special place, hobby, sport.
- Compiling a cookbook in memory by contributing favourite recipes.
- Making a jigsaw wall where pupils can write messages or create decorated jigsaw pieces.
- Setting up an online memorial or fundraiser in memory.
- Helping other people by sharing ideas about what has helped them at this time, and creating an information guide for bereaved pupils or the school community.
- Creating a memorial garden.
- Celebrate the interests or talents of a person through, for example, dedicating a sports event, maths challenge, story writing competition etc to them.
- Having a bench/ seat to sit on and reflect or lay a special paving slab in a patio.
- Share written memories and place them in a memory jar, they can be read out in assembly, class, put online with permission.

Supporting children and young people through difficult times

Whether offering support to those who are currently in school or through other means it is important to:

Keep talking and keep listening to what children are saying about the death of someone close to them, for example, their thoughts about not being able to attend a funeral. Keep in touch with pupils, for example through social media, apps and phone calls. Offer additional check in times for children who are especially vulnerable. Keep in touch with parents and carers. Ask the family what support they might want, for example, this could be by sharing links / resources with family members, support around telling the wider community.

Acknowledge how strange and difficult the current situation is, rather than trying to make it better. Listen to worries and fears. Be as clear as possible about the support you can offer as a school and the support that is available within the wider community.

Please also be aware that those school staff offering support to bereaved families may themselves be finding this time difficult and have experienced a bereavement. It is important that school staff also receive support.

Encourage routines to be kept up, for example following the routines of a school day or keeping to bed times and meal times. This will bring a sense of normality and structure to the day.

Reassure children and young people by providing reassurance where possible and be honest.

Reach out for support through colleagues / friends via video chat etc. Access resources on websites such as Child Bereavement UK. Make time to do something for you that helps you to relax and takes your mind off worrying news and information. Take time to look after yourself.





Returning to school

Sometimes children and young people appear to cope surprisingly well with bereavement and loss but react later when the initial attention has died down and they face the reality of changed circumstances. It is important to keep this in mind and be aware of possible behaviour changes that may be seen in children and young people. Some of these changes may be displayed as anger and frustration, lack of a response, mood swings, tiredness, regression and loss of skills. These changes are a normal part of grief but it is important to be aware of them. Children and young people will differ in how long it takes them to work through grief and continue with everyday life. Grief never completely leaves us and there will be times, even years later, when emotions may resurface.

It is normal for the process of grieving to take some time, but if, over time you are concerned that a child or young person is finding it difficult to get on with normal life,

Speak to their parents or carers and consider seeking additional support. You could contact the organisations listed below for advice. You may also seek advice if you are concerned that the child or young person's grief is delayed or that they are denying their grief altogether.

INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE

 <p>STAR Giving hope through grief.</p> <p>STAR Bereavement Support Services Wakefield</p> <p>https://www.starwakefield.org.uk/</p> <p>Provides a range of bereavement support services to children and young people in Wakefield.</p> <p>Current Contact Details (May 2020): 07599 640 714 Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm</p> <p>Email: claire@starbereavement.co.uk</p>	 <p>An online resource for children and young people in Wakefield.</p> <p>https://wf-i-can.co.uk/</p> <p>Advice and support for those under 13 & those over 13.</p> <p>Information on: Managing feelings; Domestic Abuse; When someone or something you love dies; What's happening locally; Looking after someone?</p> <p>Crisis under 13: https://wf-i-can.co.uk/u13/in-crisis/</p> <p>Crisis over 13: https://wf-i-can.co.uk/o13/crisis/</p> <p>Live Chat – available soon</p>
 <p>WINSTON'S WISH WW Giving hope to grieving children</p> <p>www.winstonswish.org/</p> <p>Provides support to bereaved children, young people, families, and adults supporting a young person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible. - How schools can support children and young people. - Supporting bereaved children and young people. - Talking to children when someone is seriously ill with coronavirus. <p>National Helpline: 08088 020 021 Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm Email: ask@winstonswish.org</p> <p>Crisis Messenger service: available 24/7 for urgent support Text WW to 85258.</p>	 <p>https://www.cruse.org.uk/</p> <p>Offer support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies.</p> <p>Factsheets available include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy read factsheets - Grieving and isolation - Children and young people - What to say to someone who is bereaved - Funerals - Help for Schools <p>National Helpline: 0808 808 1677 Mon – Fri 9:30am – 5pm (excluding bank hols) Extended hours: Tues, Wed & Thurs. open until 8pm Local Cruse services available</p>



Childhood
Bereavement
Network

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

A hub for those working with bereaved children, young people and families across the U.K.

- [Staying connected when someone is seriously ill](#)
- [Cards for children and young people with suggestions of how friends, family, school staff could help to support them.](#)
- [Supportive words and emoji's from children who know how bereavement feels.](#)

Find Local Support: services providing support for bereaved children near you



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

Help for children and young people (up to 25), parents and families, including training for professionals.

The website contains guidance films and information to support families and schools in supporting children during the COVID 19 pandemic.

- [Support for Pupils](#)
- [Managing Bereavement: A Guide for Schools.](#)
- [Managing a death in the school community.](#)
- [Online Learning for professionals](#)

Call: 0800 02 888 40 Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm

Email: support@childbereavementuk.org

Live Chat:

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

**grief
encounter**

supporting bereaved children & young people

www.griefencounter.co.uk

Provides support to children and families who have been bereaved.

Coronavirus resources includes:

- [Coronavirus: Supporting bereaved children and young people](#)
- [Telling children and young people someone has died from coronavirus](#)
- [How to say goodbye when attending a funeral isn't possible](#)

Call: 0808 802 0111

Mon – Fri 9am-9pm

Web Chat: <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/>

Email: grieffalk@griefencounter.org.uk

SAMARITANS

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

Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

- [If you're worried about your mental health during the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)
- [How we can help schools](#)
- [How we can help Educational Professionals](#)
- [How we can help young people](#)
- [If you're worried about someone else](#)

Call: 116 223 – available 24 hours

Email: jo@samaritans.org

[Finding a local branch](#)



<https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/>

The UK's leading charity fighting for children and young people's mental health.

- [Grief and Loss for young people: What is grief, working through your grief, where to get support?](#)
- [For adults to support grief and loss.](#)
- [Talking with a child about death or loss.](#)

Call the Parent Helpline: **0808 802 5544**
Mon – Fri 9:30am – 4pm

For young people: available 24/7 if you need urgent help **Text YM to 85258**



<https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/>

Cruse has a special website for young people called [Hope Again](#). A feature of this site is a message board where young people can share their experiences and receive replies from trained young supporters.

Information and support includes:

- [Personal stories](#)
- [Advice when someone dies](#)
- [Video Stories](#)
- [Families Stories](#)
- [Advice for Parents / Guardians](#)

National Helpline: 0808 808 1677

Mon – Fri 9:30am – 5pm

Email: hopeagain@cruse.org.uk



<https://www.themix.org.uk/>

Support service for young people under 25.

Help young people take on any challenge they're facing - from mental health to money, from homelessness to finding a job, from break-ups to drugs

Call: 0808 808 4994

7 days a week from 4pm – 11pm

Email: <https://www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/email-us>

1-2-1 chat – speak to a member of the team
[Discussion Boards Available](#)







<https://help2makesense.org/>

Offers information and support to young people



Stories, Videos, Podcasts for young people.

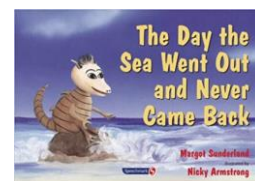
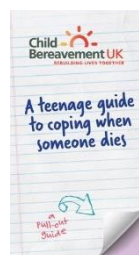
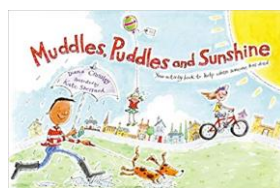
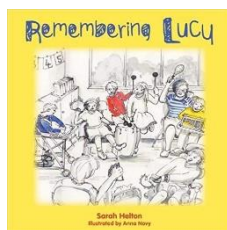
 <p>https://www.childline.org.uk/</p> <p>Support for children and young people</p> <p>Current Contact Details: these changed on 20th March 2020 during the pandemic (no longer daily, 24 hours).</p> <p>Call: 0800 1111 Daily 9am to midnight</p> <p>Online: 1-2-1 chat - chat with a counsellor online about whatever's worrying you 9am – 10:30pm</p> <p>Message Board Available - share your experiences, have fun and get support from other young people in similar situations.</p> <p>Ask Sam – something on your mind? Or need some support?</p>	 <p>http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/health-care-and-advice/public-health/mental-health-wellbeing</p> <p>Mental Health and Wellbeing Support including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A young person's guide to managing difficult feelings - Supporting a child or young person with stress, depression or suicidal thoughts
 <p>https://www.kooth.com/</p> <p>Free, safe and anonymous online support for 11 to 24 year olds. Mon – Fri from 12pm to 10pm.</p>	 <p>https://healthyyoungmindspennine.nhs.uk/</p> <p>Information for young people, parents / carers and professionals.</p>

Resources for Bereaved Children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- [Supporting children with SEND](#)
- [A guide to supporting pupils through bereavement](#) – see section 10: Supporting pupils with additional needs
- [HAND-IN-HAND Supporting children and young people who have a learning difficulty through the experience of bereavement booklet](#)
- [Managing Bereavement: A Guide for Schools](#) – special educational needs p48
- [Guidelines that can be used by practitioners, families and carers to ease the process of breaking bad news to people with learning difficulties](#)
- Video link from Child Bereavement UK: [Supporting a bereaved child with autism spectrum disorder](#)
- [Bereavement resources from the National Autistic Society](#)
- [Supporting young people and adults through times of change](#) – Down's Syndrome Association
- [Dealing with a bereavement](#) - mencap



Books written for children to help them cope with grief



- **'Something Bad Happened: A Kid's Guide to Coping with events in the News'** by Dawn Huebner. How to process different world events (ages 6-12).
- **'The Day the Sea Went Out and Never Came Back'** by Margot Sunderland. A story for children who have lost someone they love (ages 4-12).
- **'Draw on Your Emotions'** by Margot Sunderland. A resource to help people express and communication their emotions.

- **'What To Do When You're Scared & Worried: A Guide for Kids'** by James Crist. A help guide to processing fears and worries (ages 9-13).
- **'The Way I Feel'** by Janan Cain. Explores feelings and a helpful way to talk about emotions with young children.
- **'A Terrible Thing Happened'** by Margaret Holmes. A story for children who have witnessed violence or trauma (ages 4-8).
- **'Missing Mummy'** by Rebecca Cobb. Covers some of the worries and fears a young child may have after a death (ages under 5).
- **'When Dinosaurs Die: A guide to understanding death'** by Laurie Brown & Marc Brown. Helps primary aged children understand what death means and how best to cope with their feelings.
- **'Michael Rosen's Sad Book'** by Michael Rosen. A personal story. The author describes feeling sad after the death of his son (ages
- **'Remembering Lucy: A story about loss and grief in school'** by Sarah Helton. The story will help those children with SEND understand feelings caused by death and loss (age 3+).
- **['A Teenage Guide to Coping When Someone Dies'](#)** by Child Bereavement UK. Practical advice and guidance for a young person managing confusing emotions when someone important in their life dies.
- [Books and resources by age available at Winston's Wish](#)
- [Books and resources for bereaved children and young people, including those with special educational needs](#) – Child Bereavement UK

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