

St Rose's/St Martin's Bereavement Charter

To be implemented following the death of a member of the St Rose's/St Martin's community

At St Rose's/St Martin's we recognise that everyone will grieve differently depending on their relationship with the person who has died, their level of understanding, previous experiences of loss, cultural background, faith and individual circumstances bereavement is a deeply personal experience.

Children and young people of different ages process grief differently, and members of our community may need support at any time.

This Bereavement Charter sets out the values, responsibilities, and practical commitments that guide how we support students, staff, and families following a death within our school and college community.

Our Commitment to Compassionate Support

We commit to:

- Creating an environment where grief is understood as a natural response to death.
- Offering consistent support across all phases of school and college
- Responding with dignity, sensitivity, and respect to every bereavement situation.
- Recognising cultural, religious, and individual differences in how people grieve.

Bereavement Lead & Team

Our Bereavement Lead is **Jo Pearch** (Lead Nurse/Senior Care Manager), she will coordinate communication, pastoral support, and referrals to specialist support where required.

The bereavement response team also includes

- **Sheila Talwar** – Principal
- **Vicky Dangerfield** – Head of School
- **Mike King** – Head of College
- **Julie Dyer** – Chair of Governors

Responsibilities include:

- Informing appropriate staff promptly and sensitively following a bereavement.
- Staff are asked to indicate their preferred method of communication regarding significant incidents when joining St Rose's. The bereavement

response team will have access to these forms to ensure communication is delivered appropriately.

- Liaising with other families affected by the bereavement
- Advising staff on appropriate responses
- Arranging additional pastoral support
- Monitoring wellbeing over time

Communication Protocols

When a death occurs that affects our school and college information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with data protection requirements and the wishes of the bereaved family.

With Families

- We will make sensitive contact with the bereaved family before making any wider announcement.
- Information will only be shared with consent and with respect for cultural or religious needs.

With Staff & Students

- Staff will be supported on how to communicate the news in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Staff will be consulted on what students in other class groups need to be informed.
- Students will be informed sensitively, in small groups or classes wherever possible.
- Rumour and misinformation will be actively addressed.

With External Agencies

- Where appropriate, the school or college will liaise with counsellors, educational psychologists, and safeguarding agencies.

Supporting our students with Special Educational Needs

Supporting a student when someone close to them has died is a difficult thing to do. It's natural to want to protect them, and when they have special educational needs or disabilities it can be more complicated as we need to ensure information is delivered in a way they can understand.

Regardless of their developmental stage, all children and young people regardless of their special educational needs or disabilities will experience a loss of some kind and will need support to understand what has happened and what changes they might expect in the future.

There are a few extra things to consider when telling a child or young person with special educational needs and disabilities that someone has died – such as their method of communication and their developmental stage rather than chronological age

- Consider their developmental level and understanding as this will help to determine their level of understanding around death
- Use clear, simple language appropriate for their developmental stage
- Use words like 'death' and 'died' rather than euphemisms like 'passed away' as these can be confusing for children
- Give information in small chunks
- Choose a calm place to tell them about the death
- Be prepared for questions and answer them honestly
- Repeat information and explanations to make sure they have understood

When talking to a child or young person with SEND about the death of someone close, one of the most important factors to consider is their functional age rather than their chronological age. This will help to determine what their level of understanding is around death and what language you should use.

However, it is also important to note that a child or young person with SEND might also present with a spiky developmental profile, meaning that they may be more developed in some areas and less so in others. If you aren't sure, speak to other people who are supporting them and together you can establish what they may be able to understand.

Support for Staff

- Access to supervision, counselling services, or wellbeing support will be provided if appropriate.
- Staff supporting grieving students will have access to guidance and resources.
- Leaders will ensure workloads are adjusted when needed.
- Staff experiencing a personal bereavement will be offered support and reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- New staff will be made aware of this charter as part of their induction process.

Responding to Sudden or Unexpected Death

We will work to our **Bereavement Response Plan. Flowchart on page 5** which includes:

- Immediate safeguarding considerations
- Coordinated communication
- Clear support for pupils most affected

- Advice for staff on trauma-informed responses
- Liaison with local authorities, NHS, or police where appropriate

The wellbeing of students and staff takes priority over normal routines during such events.

Remembering and Commemoration

Memorial activities will be considered carefully to ensure they are appropriate, inclusive and supportive of the wishes of the bereaved family.

This may include:

- Memorial spaces or books
- Attendance at funerals
- Student-led tributes
- Participation in remembrance activities

No student or staff member will be required to participate in memorial activities if they prefer not to.

Equality, Inclusion & Cultural Sensitivity

We will respect and uphold all faiths, cultural traditions, and personal belief systems relating to grief, mourning, and remembrance.

We will ask families how they would like the us to honour or discuss the death.

In keeping with Catholic beliefs, we recognise that death is understood as a transition to eternal life with God, and we will support students, families and staff through bereavement with sensitivity to Catholic practices such as prayer, funeral rites, and remembrance.

We acknowledge the importance of hope, community, and ongoing pastoral care, providing opportunities for reflection, collective worship, and emotional support during times of bereavement

We recognise that not all members of our community share the same faith or belief. Support will always be inclusive, respectful and responsive to individual preferences and practices.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

- The Bereavement Charter will be reviewed annually by the Bereavement response team.
- Impact and effectiveness of support will be monitored by the Bereavement Lead.

Visibility & Access

- This Charter will be published on our website.
- All staff, students, and families will be made aware of our bereavement support procedures.

Acknowledgments:

This charter has been informed by guidance and resources from Child Bereavement UK and Winstons Wish

Bereavement Response Flowchart

Death reported →
Inform Bereavement Lead →
Establish facts/safeguarding →
Contact family →
Agree information to share →
Identify affected students/staff →
Brief relevant staff →
Communicate with students →
Put individual support in place →
Consider family/funeral/memorial wishes →
Monitor → Review → Record learning