

PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL BEING SUPPORT FOLLOWING BEREAVEMENT

Including death of a child.

WHEN A CHILD
DIES

[CRUSE – DEATH OF A
PUPIL](#)

[CRUSE – SUPPORT FOR
SCHOOLS](#)

[NHS – SUPPORT FOR
PARENTS/CARERS](#)

[GOV.UK – WHAT TO DO
IF A CHILD OR BABY
DIES](#)

**THE EDUCATION
PEOPLE**

The Education Safeguarding Service will continue to support schools through the statutory process to be followed in the event of a death of a pupil or of a sibling of a pupil. If you require further information, please call your Area Safeguarding Advisor or refer to the KCC emergency planning guidance, sent to you by your Area Education Office.

INTRODUCTION

Many children and young people will have questions and worries about the coronavirus, but those who have experienced the death of someone important or who have an ill family member will be particularly affected. The information contained in these pages details sources of support for all ages, including those who may have experienced the loss of a child.

In addition, Beck Ferrari, STLS district team and KEPS have provided answers to those initial questions that you yourself may have. They have provided information about those things that you will want to consider as you welcome back to school those children and young people who may be experiencing loss and grief, in the immediate, the first few weeks and longer term. We are grateful to them for such comprehensive advice and guidance.

[CRUSE – COPING WITH TRAUMA AND LOSS](#) – someone close to you may have died in sudden and/or traumatic circumstances. You may have witnessed the death, or the deaths and injury of others. This leaflet explains some common reactions and sources of help.

[CRUSE – RESTORING HOPE](#) – This leaflet is about what you can do to help yourself, how others can help you, how you can help other people who may be struggling to cope after the death of someone close and where you can get more advice and support.

[CRUSE – HELP IS AT HAND](#) – support after someone may have died of suicide.

[CRUSE – CORONA VIRUS GRIEF AND TRAUMA](#) - If someone dies of coronavirus or complications resulting from the virus, a number of things may be particularly hard for family and friends to deal with.

[CRUSE – A CHILD'S UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH](#) - is different at different stages of development. Helpline: 0808 808 1677.

[Rewrite Your Story](#), to help support carers who may have suffered Psychological distress whilst working in care homes

**KENT EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE
(KEPS)**

our Crisis Support Service Co-ordinators **support school/school staff** to support children who are dealing with significant events in their life concerning grief or loss.

**A HAVEN OF
NORMALITY**

**CHILD BEREAVEMENT
ADVICE FOR TEACHERS**

**COPING WITH
DISASTROUS EVENTS**

**DEATH AND LOSS IN
SCHOOLS**

Where there is a need for longer term support, referral to an appropriate agency will need to be made as necessary. Additional support from KEPS beyond the initial crisis response is available to schools through traded services. This can include Cognitive Behavioural Approaches, supporting individuals or group based psychological interventions.

Office hours:
03000 41 01 00

Out of Hours:
03000 41 01 01

HELPING CHILDREN MANAGE GRIEF AND LOSS

HOPE AGAIN is a website for young people going through a bereavement, where you can find information, read other people's experiences, and add your own.

The Kent-based charity **HOLDING ON LETTING GO** helps young people (6 – 16) to cope with the death of someone close to them. Workshops available.

SLIDEAWAY (Age: 5-19) Area: West Kent offer workshops
WINSTON'S WISH has developed classroom resources regarding Covid19 and bereavement. They also provide general information.
CHILD BEREAVEMENT CHARITY offers information and advice.
YOUNG MINDS – supporting your child with grief and loss.




THE CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE'S COUNSELLING SERVICE are offering up to 12 sessions of bereavement support for children and young people aged 4-19 who are bereaved as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Access via the **online portal** or 03001234496.

This offer has been specifically tailored to the different circumstances that children now find themselves in and the provision will aim to reduce the long term impact, particularly on emotional wellbeing and mental health, from this trauma event.




A new text service for children, young people and adults needing immediate mental health support. This can be accessed by texting the word "Kent" to 85258. This is a 24/7 text service provided by **SHOUT** and the Crisis Text Line as part of the Kent and Medway Release the Pressure campaign.



THESE E-LEARNING SESSIONS: offer Bereavement support that is aimed at professionals working with children, co-created by parent 'experts by experience'.

-  **DEATH and LOSS**
-  **LOSS and GRIEF**
-  **TRAUMA and COPING**

The resources found below are aimed at professionals supporting end of life care and bereavement.

-  **PRACTICAL SUPPORT AFTER A BEREAVEMENT**
-  **SUDDEN DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT**
-  **CHILDREN and BEREAVEMENT**

This **link** will take you to a list of related topics under 'end of life care' which includes breaking bad news, using the telephone to break bad news, communicating with children about the death of a parent.

HOW CAN I PLAN AND PREPARE FOR ANY BEREAVED PUPILS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL?

(More specific advice relevant to the age-group you are managing can be found in the links at the end of this document.)

- ✚ Check your Bereavement policy is up to date and reflects COVID-19 if appropriate to do so (see Small Steps document or Child Bereavement UK for sample policies if your school does not yet have one).
- ✚ Download the Small Steps document to share with any staff
- ✚ Make a “bereavement box” so you have resources to hand to support a bereaved pupil (See Small Steps and below)
- ✚ Collate resources available e.g. information leaflets for staff, parent/carers, books for staff and workbooks or story books for children. (See booklist)
- ✚ Ensure you are aware of any children where bereavement has occurred within the family. Gently seek to find out about the circumstances of the death and what your pupil knows about it. Consider any cultural implications to understanding and supporting the family’s grief (eg. background, religion).
- ✚ Consider accessing staff training to help build understanding and confidence. (See Training below)
- ✚ Provide supervision for staff who may be experiencing their own anxieties, as well as supporting children, at this time
- ✚ Consider setting up a bereavement support group within districts/ collaborations

WHAT CAN I SAY OR DO TO SUPPORT ONE OF MY PUPILS WHO HAS BEEN GRIEVING THROUGH THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD?

Checking in with families by phone can remind them that you are there and help you keep liaison going prior to return.

Grieving through the lockdown has the potential to have made things more challenging for bereaved families as they have had to manage without much of their support network and with far less to distract them. (To find out more see Bereaved Family Voices below)

WHAT CAN I SAY OR DO TO SUPPORT A NEWLY BEREAVED PUPIL WHERE SOMEONE HAS DIED DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?

It can be really helpful for families to know you are thinking of them and can make a big difference to families to know that school genuinely care and are interested in supporting their child. You could send a card and follow up with a telephone call:

“I am so sad to hear about How are you all managing at the moment? Is there anything school can do at this stage to support your child? How are you and your child feeling about returning to school?”

You might want to send a small ‘comfort package’ with some items to support the child. It might include as an example:

Bubbles – to fill the sky with wishes
Colouring in – when you want to be peaceful
Tissues – to catch a tear
Forget me Not seeds to sow in memory
A Teddy Bear for when you need a bear hug

STAFF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

| | |
|---|--|
| KEPS – Free Webinars Grief and Loss in Schools | More details to follow via Kelsi and LIFT |
| Beck Ferrari – Bespoke webinar Bereavement Training for schools and settings | Contact: beckferrari@gmail.com Various dates available terms 6 and 1 |

WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IF THE PERSON DIED FROM COVID-19?

If you find that the family were bereaved by COVID-19 you will be mindful of the difficult circumstances in which such a death occurred as well as the challenges for people in saying goodbye at end of life and in planning funeral services.

You may want to signpost families to helplines, specific support from bereavement organisations and to publications to support children in understanding this.

See booklist and organisations below.

WHAT PLANS DO I NEED TO MAKE FOR A BEREAVED PUPIL TO RETURN TO SCHOOL?

- ✚ Discuss with the family about the pupil's return to school letting them know that staff will be made aware of their bereavement.
- ✚ Find out whether they would like their child's peer group to be told in advance. Ask if there is anything that they or their child are concerned about.
- ✚ Outline any support the school may be able to offer- remember to check with the pupil what they would like.
- ✚ Signpost the family to support organisations.
- ✚ For many children, school is a place of normality and routine but right now there are additional challenges in making school feel normal.
- ✚ Bereaved children would benefit from being with familiar staff and peers, although with social bubbles being proposed as schools reopen, this may be more difficult to achieve.

WHAT SUPPORT COULD I SET UP FOR A GRIEVING PUPIL?

Support can be set up but needs to be adapted to the wishes of the returning pupil. When so much around a child has changed it can be hard if others set out to control what they should do with their grief.

You might wish to consider having named staff (not just one) on hand to provide support. Remember that your ideal member of staff for such a role (warm, caring and empathic) may not be the same as the pupil's.

Prepare to adapt!
Decide on spaces that could be used if a pupil wishes to have some time out of class- both indoors and outdoors within safety parameters. Agree these with the pupil on return. Would they like anything available in these places to support them?

CONSIDER A BEREAVEMENT BOX (age appropriate) that might include:

- ✚ A blank photo frame for decorating (card, foam, wood)
- ✚ Puppets to encourage conversation
- ✚ Water balloons to fill and burst outside to let go of feelings
- ✚ Wooden spoons with wool and fabric offcuts to make two sided feelings faces
- ✚ Foam hearts for decorating with ribbon to hang
 - ✚ Beads to thread to make a coping bracelet with each bead representing a key person for support
 - ✚ Feathers and voile bags with feathers representing memories
 - ✚ Mindful colouring activities
 - ✚ Jar, salt, chalk etc for a memory jar

WHAT EXTERNAL SUPPORT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO BEREAVED PUPILS AND THEIR FAMILIES?

Most children with good support from their family, friends and school will adjust and manage their grief. Many children, along with their families will benefit from accessing group support within their school and/or from bereavement organisations (see below).

A few may have more difficulties with their grieving journey because of challenges within the home environment, the traumatic nature of the death and factors that make it difficult for the child to make sense of the death.

These children may require more specialist therapeutic support on top of that provided by the school. Research suggests that being bereaved from COVID-19 increases the risk of more complicated grief. Pupils bereaved by COVID-19 who require it will have access to counselling sessions funded by KCHFT (details to follow).

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT SUPPORTING BEREAVED PUPILS?

There are many excellent resources to develop staff understanding about child bereavement and to provide families with helpful information. Many have specific help for bereavement by COVID-19 - A good place to start is:

| | |
|---|--|
| CHILD BEREAVEMENT UK | Schools Information pack Additional Guidance about COVID-19 and video clips |
| WINSTON'S WISH | Guidance on supporting children with coronavirus |
| GRIEF ENCOUNTER | Supporting bereaved young people |
| KENT EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE | School Support Services – resources available from Kelsi |
| SMALL STEPS – SUPPORTING BEREAVED YOUNG CHILDREN IN EARLY YEARS SETTINGS | A support guide for pre-school settings to help a child with their grieving journey. |
| SLIDEAWAY | Toolkit for Schools |
| BECK FERRARI | Contact for consultation or training – beck.ferrari@gmail.com |

WHAT BOOKS COULD I READ TO HELP ME UNDERSTAND CHILDREN'S GRIEF AND WHAT MY SCHOOL CAN DO?

| | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| THE LITTLE BOOK OF BEREAVEMENT FOR SCHOOLS | Ian Gilbert | A personal account of how schools tried to support one family after the death of their mother, containing 'must know' advice and structured into 15 points for schools to follow |
| A CHILD'S GRIEF | Winston's Wish | An accessible guide for parents and professionals |
| GRIEF IN CHILDREN: A HANDBOOK FOR ADULTS | Atle Dyregrov | An excellent handbook providing advice and strategies for understanding and supporting a grieving child |
| Time4Me. | | interactive workbook to be used with children and an adult. It is designed to facilitate conversations around the death of a significant person |

Other Resources supporting Emotional Wellbeing

[Staff Wellbeing](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing Vulnerable Pupils](#)

[CYP Kent Emotional Wellbeing flow chart](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing in Education; including Universal and Transitions](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing Support for Primary School Aged Children - Covid19](#)

[Practical Resources for parents and carers](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing – Highly Anxious Students](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing – Young People](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing - SEND](#)

All resources are also hosted on [Kent Resilience hub Covid 19](#) pages and young people can access content at [Moodspark](#)