



70 per cent of primary schools have at least one recently bereaved pupil on rollⁱ. Effective strategies for managing bereavement and loss take a whole school approach. This paper looks at the policy context for promoting the well-being of bereaved pupils and addressing bereavement and loss in the curriculum.

Curriculum

The school curriculum can provide opportunities for pupils and their teachers to explore experiences and feelings associated with bereavement. In particular, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) gives pupils and teachers a forum for discussing relationships, feelings and emotions, and for thinking about how to manage these in relation to family events. Non-statutory guidance for PSHE at Key Stages 3 & 4 refers specifically to teaching pupils about the impact of bereavement, as well as other changes to family circumstances such as divorce or separation. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has produced a national standard for PSHE, along with guidance on assessing pupils' progress and achievement.

For more information:

Teachernet www.teachernet.gov.uk/pshe [England only]

Non-statutory framework for PSHE
www.nc.uk.net/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=6004&Subject/@id=4212 [England only]

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority www.qca.org.uk/pshe [England only]

Healthy Blueprint for Schools: advice on using the wider curriculum to promote healthy lifestyles
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthyliving/ [England only]

SEAL

The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) resource provides a whole-school framework for developing primary school pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills (SEBS). SEAL teaching materials are designed to be flexible so that the programme can be delivered through the wider school curriculum, PSHE or through the National Healthy Schools Standard. The materials are organised under a number of key themes, some of which are particularly useful for addressing the impact of bereavement. Themes 1 and 2, 'New beginnings' and 'Getting on and falling out', deal with self-awareness and empathy, and help children explore feelings of happiness, sadness, anxiety, fear and anger. Theme 4, 'Good to be me', helps students to understand and manage the impact of their emotions on their behaviour, and to develop assertiveness. Theme 4, 'Relationships', is of most obvious relevance, exploring emotions within the context of the family and friendship, and dealing specifically with bereavement and loss. SEAL teaching and learning materials are currently being piloted in secondary schools.

For more information:

Teachernet: information and learning materials for SEAL
www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/socialandpastoral/sebs1/seal/ [England only]

The Standards Site: curriculum resources
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/banda/seal/ [England only]

The SEAL resource – www.bandapilot.org.uk/

National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS)ⁱⁱ

The NHSS aims to support pupils to develop healthy behaviours, raise pupil achievement, reduce health inequalities, and promote social inclusion. Achieving Healthy School status assists schools in evidencing their contribution to the Every Child Matters five outcomes for children, which is assessed as part of the OFSTED school inspections. The Government wants every school to be working towards achieving Healthy School status by 2009.

To achieve Healthy Schools status, schools are required to use a whole-school approach and involve the whole school community to make achievements in four core areas, including promoting emotional health and well-being. Schools should support pupils in understanding and expressing their feelings, and build their confidence and emotional resilience, by:

- identifying vulnerable individuals and groups and set up strategies for providing support to them and their families;
- providing clear, planned curriculum opportunities for pupils to understand and explore feelings; and
- developing a confidential pastoral support system providing support and advice, especially at times of bereavement and other significant life changes.

Evidence shows that poor emotional, mental and physical health inhibits educational achievement.ⁱⁱⁱ Research to date suggests that schools' participation in the National Healthy Schools programme has the potential to raise standards, and studies demonstrate a link between Healthy School status and positive attitudes to school.^{iv}

For more information:

National Healthy School Standard www.healthyschools.gov.uk [England only] Includes contact details for local staff

DfES and DH (2005) *National Healthy School Status: A Guide for Schools* www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/cat.php?catid=842 [England only]

Health Development Agency (2004) *Promoting Emotional Health and Wellbeing through the National Healthy School Standard* www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/PDF/139641_HDA_Complete.pdf [England only]

Teachernet [England only]
www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/n/nhss/

Building an evidence base for Healthy Schools
www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/evidenceofimpact [England only]

Bullying, attendance and behaviour

Bereaved children report experiences of being bullied because of their bereavement. They can experience difficulties with concentration and a lack of interest in school. Bereavement can interrupt a pupil's school attendance, and may be linked with school exclusion.

As well as their duties in relation to the well-being of pupils, schools must safeguard and promote their pupils' welfare, and DfES guidance relating to this duty refers specifically to bullying^v. Under new legislation^{vi}, schools will be required to develop a behaviour policy, through consultation with pupils and parents, which should aim to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. Local Authorities' Children's Trusts, established under the Children Act 2004 and the Every Child Matters programme, can play a key role in challenging bullying through local shared strategies and the provision of anti-bullying support services.

For more information:

DfES (2006) Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (comes into force 1 January 2007)
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/AD6343FE3EF01D9FC86617FE11940A48.pdf [England only]

Teachernet
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/
also contains links to DfES guidance and initiatives relating to school behaviour and attendance
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/ [England only]

Ofsted (2003) Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools
www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/3235.pdf [England only]

Personalised teaching and learning

A central theme in the Government's education reform programme is the personalisation of learning and teaching in all school settings. This aims to ensure that children's individual needs are addressed, both in and outside the classroom, and that every pupil is able to learn in a safe and secure environment. Measures to support personalised learning include: parental involvement; specialised support for pupils with extra or specific needs; improved support in the transition from primary to secondary school; ICT-supported learning; and more choice and flexibility in the curriculum. The Assessment for Learning (AfL) framework can help teachers and learners evaluate an individual pupil's progress and take decisions about next steps. This can be supported by the Pupil Achievement Tracker (PAT), which allows schools to analyse pupils' performance against national results.

For more information:

QCA Assessment for Learning resources – www.qca.org.uk/afL [England only]

Teachernet: Assessment for Learning and Pupil Achievement Tracker – www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/afL/ [England only]

The Standards Site – www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning/ [England only]

DfES (2004) Department for Education and Skills: Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners – www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/5yearstrategy/ [England only]

DfES (2005) Higher Standards, Better Schools for All: More Choice for Parents and Pupils – www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/schoolswhitepaper/ [England only]

School Emergency-Management Plan

All LEAs are required to have an emergency or critical incident plan. Schools can get help from the local critical incident team to develop an emergency-management plan for dealing with incidents such as fire and flooding, assault and harassment, or accidents resulting in death or major injury. When developing its plan, a school should consider the provision of bereavement support for pupils and staff.

For more information:

Teachernet on Emergency Planning
www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies/ [England only]

Every Child Matters

The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme, launched by the Government in 2003, aims to provide support for every child aged 0-19 so that he or she can:

- be healthy,
- stay safe,
- enjoy and achieve,
- make a positive contribution,
- and achieve economic well-being.

These five outcomes were formalised in law in the Children Act 2004^{vii}. Under new legislation, schools will have a duty to promote the well-being of its pupils in terms of these five outcomes, tying schools firmly into the Every Child Matters framework.^{viii} Five aims have been identified under each outcome, and those of particular relevance for bereaved children and young people are:

- be mentally and emotionally healthy (be healthy);
- be safe from bullying and discrimination (stay safe);
- have security and stability and be cared for (stay safe);
- attend and enjoy school (enjoy and achieve);
- achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation (enjoy and achieve);
- form positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate (make a positive contribution);
- develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges (make a positive contribution); and
- live in households free from low income (achieve economic well-being).

Sections 10 and 25 of the Children Act also provide the framework for Children's Trusts, through which local authorities must work with relevant partners – such as the police, health service providers and youth offending teams – to deliver integrated services that are centred around the child. A number of tools have been developed for the delivery of child-centred integrated services, which may be useful to schools in providing support to children who have been bereaved:

- The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a tool for assessing a child's needs where there are concerns that he or she may not be thriving. The common assessment can be carried out by specialist staff through extended schools, and in discussion with the child's family. When assessing the child's family environment and emotional and social development as part of the CAF, the practitioner should take into account any experiences of bereavement or loss.

- Where a child is in contact with a range of service providers, the lead professional coordinates provision, and acts as a single point of contact for the child and their family. Many practitioners can take on the lead professional role, including midwives, health visitors, youth workers, educational welfare officers, school nurses or learning mentors.

For more information:

The Every Child Matters website provides relevant documents and guidance www.everychildmatters.gov.uk [England only]

Extended Schools

The Government has stated that, by 2010, all children, and their families and communities, should have access to a core offer of extended services provided by, and through, schools before and after the school day. Schools are expected to work together, and in partnership with local and voluntary sector providers, to deliver:

- 8am – 6pm childcare services;
- out of school hours activities, such as homework clubs, sports or arts classes;
- parenting support (see below);
- referral to specialist support services (this could include bereavement services); and
- community access to ICT, sports and arts facilities and adult learning.

OFSTED found that the main benefits of extended services to children, young people and adults were: enhanced self-confidence, improved relationships, raised aspirations and better attitudes to learning.

For more information:

DfES (2005) *Extended Schools: Access to opportunities and services for all*

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/8509/Extended-schools%20prospectus.pdf [England only]

Ofsted (2006) *Extended services in schools and children's centres*
www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Publications_Team/File_attachments/extended2609.pdf [England only]

Teachernet [England only]

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools

The Extended Schools Support Service (TESSS)

www.continyou.org.uk/tesss [England only]

Parenting Support

As part of the Extended Schools core offer, parents should be able to access support in, or through, their children's schools. This includes referrals to specialised support services, such as home visiting, parenting programmes, family therapy, or more specifically, bereavement services. Research has shown that schools which work well with parents enjoy: improved levels of achievement, more positive pupil attitudes and behaviour, increased parental participation, and a greater willingness among parents to share information with the school⁸.

For more information:

DfES (2006) Parenting Support

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/9911/Parenting_Support_knowhow_leaflet.pdf [England only]

Information Sharing

The Government has identified information sharing as central to effective early intervention, child protection and the delivery of integrated services to children and young people. Guidance on information sharing stresses the need to:

- be open with children, young people and their families about how and why information may be shared (unless this would place an individual at risk of significant or serious harm);
- consider the safety and welfare of the child or young person when deciding whether to share information about them;
- seek advice when in doubt;
- ensure that the information to be shared is accurate, up-to-date, necessary and being shared securely with only those who need to know; and
- record reasons for a decision to share information or not.

By 2008, all children's services authorities in England, and their partners, will be required to establish and operate databases to facilitate information sharing in relation to children and young people⁹. The index will allow practitioners, including specific members of school staff, to access contact details for other professionals providing services to a child or young person. Having identified a relevant practitioner, it is up to the practitioners to decide whether to share information. A record will be kept on every child, including basic information and relevant contact details, but not personal or medical records.

For more information:

DfES (2006) *Information sharing: Practitioners' guide* (and other reading) [England only]
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/informationsharing/
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/index/

The School Workforce

The Every Child Matters programme included the development of a set of Common Core Skills and Knowledge for all professionals working with children and young people. Every professional should have a basic level of knowledge and skills in terms of: effective communication and engagement; child and young person development; safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child; supporting transitions; multi-agency working; sharing information. The knowledge required to support children and young people going through transitions specifically includes knowing about the likely impact of bereavement. The Teacher Training Agency has committed to incorporating the core skills and knowledge into existing occupational standards and qualifications.

For more information:

HM Government (2005) *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce* –

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/37183E5C09CCE460A81C781CC70863F0.pdf [England only]

How can schools respond?

Think about the well-being of bereaved children and young people across the whole school. Give a senior manager responsibility for this provision, which involves:

- proactive, flexible pastoral support
- curriculum development
- a system for managing and communicating important information about bereavements
- staff training and support
- referrals and partnerships with childhood bereavement services
- policy development.

Resources and further reading

Childhood bereavement services

Local childhood bereavement service can advise on providing pastoral support and developing the curriculum, and can give information on how faith and culture may affect the customs, beliefs and bereavement support needs of children and their families. Search for your nearest service at <http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/>

The website also has details of the Childhood Bereavement Network's campaign *Grief Matters for Children*, together with video resources, innovative 'I can... you can't' postcards for bereaved children to use as prompts for support, and further suggested resources.

Local contacts

Several key contacts can be contacted through your local authority

- Healthy Schools coordinator
www.healthyschools.gov.uk
- PSHE advisor
- Educational Psychology Service
- Critical incident team

Websites

Winston's Wish

The schools/professionals section includes an information pack, strategy for schools to aid the writing of a policy, and lesson aids referenced to National Curriculum requirements at key stages 1-4.
<http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/>

Cruse Bereavement Care

Resources and training for school professionals
<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/> [for adults]
<http://www.rd4u.org.uk/> [for young people]

Child Bereavement Trust

Training and resources for those working in schools
<http://www.childbereavement.org.uk/>

Books

Childhood Bereavement: developing the curriculum and pastoral support

Gill Frances and Nina Job (2004) National Children's Bureau Covering areas in the curriculum where death and bereavement can be introduced, this book also discusses ways of supporting bereaved pupils. It draws on good practice from a variety of schools, including a special school.

Grief in School Communities: effective support strategies

Louise Rowling (2003) Open University Press

This book aims to help individuals and school communities to create environments in which grief, while a difficult experience, is seen as a normal life event. It demonstrates the components in a school that can be used to support grieving individuals in times of personal crisis and to support whole school communities when traumatic incidents occur.

Lost for Words

John Holland et al (2005) Jessica Kingsley Publishers (JKP)
A loss awareness training package designed for teachers and carers. With full tutor's notes and overheads.

The Forgotten Mourners. Guidelines for working with bereaved children

Susan C Smith, Margaret Pennells (1999) JKP
Aimed at teachers and social workers, this book outlines children's grieving and discusses secondary losses and helping techniques

Remember Me

(2004) Penhaligon's Friends and Cornwall Child and Family Service
Guidance and photocopiable checklists for schools dealing with childhood bereavement, loss and critical incidents.

Zoe Renton, Lisa Payne and Alison Penny, March 2007

ⁱ Holland, J (1993) 'Childhood Bereavement in Humberside primary schools' *Educational Research* 35 (3)

ⁱⁱ This programme extends to England only

ⁱⁱⁱ Healey, K. (2004) *Linking Children's Health and Education: Progress and Challenges in London*. London: The King's Fund.

^{iv} Ibid.; NFER and Thomas Coram Research Unit (2004) *Evaluation of the Impact of the National Healthy School Standard*

^v This duty was legislated for in section 175 of the Education Act 2002, and extends to schools in England and Wales only.

^{vi} Sections 88 and 89, Education and Inspections Act 2006 [these provisions relate to England and Wales]

^{vii} Sections 10 and 25, Children Act 2004. Except provisions relating to Children's Commissioners in the four nations, and other minor provisions, the Children Act 2004 extends to England and Wales only.

^{viii} Section 38, Education and Inspections Act 2006 [this provision relates to England and Wales]

^{ix} Bastiani, J (2003) *Involving parents, raising achievement* DfES

^x Section 12, Children Act 2004 [The Index will cover England only]

Supported by:

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THE WORK CONTINUES

The Childhood Bereavement Network is hosted by the National Children's Bureau, Registered Charity No. 258825

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