

Ormiston Academies Trust

Flegg High Ormiston Academy

Bereavement policy

Policy version control

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. We understand that bereavement is faced by members of our school community at different times, whether this is the death of a family member, a friend or a member of the school community. We understand the importance of providing support to students, staff, governors and the wider school community during and after bereavement. This policy provides a framework whereby this support is provided and outlines how the school will respond to these sensitive situations.
- 1.2. In this policy, all mentions of 'the family' refer to the family of the deceased individual. The wishes of the family will always be considered when carrying out any of the actions outlined in this policy. If the family objects to any of the procedures, the school will work to ensure reasonable adjustments are made.
- 1.3. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Children Act 1989
 - Employment Rights Act 1996
 - Equality Act 2010
 - DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
 - DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'
 - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2018) 'Good Work Plan'
 - The Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Regulations 2020
 - Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018
- 1.4. This policy applies in the following circumstances:
 - The death of a student
 - The death of a student's parent
 - The death of an employee's family member
 - The death of an employee

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. Employee responsibilities

- 2.1.1. Undertaking any bereavement support training arranged by the line manager.
- 2.1.2. Seeking support from the Trust as appropriate.
- 2.1.3. Supporting colleagues and students following a death, as appropriate.

2.2. Line manager's responsibilities

- 2.2.1. Inform OAT by emailing communications@ormistonacademies.co.uk.

- 2.2.2. Liaising with external agencies, as appropriate (e.g. NHS, social workers, police).
 - 2.2.3. Informing governors and staff when a death occurs and arranging for students to be informed, as appropriate and with approval from the family.
 - 2.2.4. Being the first point of contact for staff, students and parents directly involved in a death, or designating this role to another appropriate member of staff.
 - 2.2.5. Responding to any enquiries from the media or the wider school or Trust community, or appointing a member of staff to undertake these duties.
 - 2.2.6. Ensuring staff have the necessary training to support bereaved students and to deliver sensitive news.
- 2.3. The nominated media spokesperson will be identified in conjunction with ormiston marketing and PLMR who will support the spokesperson throughout the process. The spokesperson's responsibilities will be:
- 2.3.1. Liaising with the media as required.
 - 2.3.2. Monitoring media and social media activity regarding the death.
 - 2.3.3. Respecting the family's wishes in relation to what information can be provided to the media. Also consider if there should be liaison with police (e.g. in the event of murder/suicide)

3. Initial response

- 3.1. If the family or member of staff contacts an academy to inform them of a death, the member of staff that answers the phone will transfer the call to the principal or the most senior member of staff available.
- 3.2. If the academy is made aware of the death through a source other than the family, the principal will contact the family either by phone or through a home visit.
- 3.3. If the death relates to a member of OAT HO, the line manager will contact the family.
- 3.4. The line manager will gather factual information about what has happened and establish the family's wishes with regards to what information will be communicated to the school/Trust community and how.
- 3.5. If a death affects an entire school, e.g. the death of a student or member of school staff, the principal will inform the family that staff and students will be informed as soon as possible.
- 3.6. If the death affects an individual member of staff, e.g. the death of a relative, the line manager will ask the member of staff if they would like this to be communicated to any of their colleagues. If it is decided that the death will be communicated, the line manager will discuss with the staff member what information will be communicated and how they would like it to be delivered.

- 3.7. If a death affects an individual student, e.g. the death of a parent, the principal of the school will ask the family if they would like this to be communicated to the school community. If it is decided that the death will be communicated, the principal will discuss with the family, and the student if possible, what information will be communicated and how the family would like it to be delivered.
- 3.8. If the death of a student's family member occurs while the student is at school, a member of the student's family will be asked to come to the school to inform the student of what has happened and to take them home. If this is not possible, arrangements will be made for a member of staff to take the student home.
- 3.9. The principal / line manager will contact any other agencies as required, e.g. the police and the Local Authority for Educational Psychologist support.
- 3.10. The principal will decide if any temporary variation needs to be made to the school timetable, e.g. rearranging or cancelling certain lessons.
- 3.11. In the event of the death of a principal, the Regional Director will be responsible for the duties outlined above.

4. Informing governors, staff & students

4.1 Staff and governors will be informed of the death before students.

- 4.1.1. All staff will be invited to a meeting by the principal as soon as practicable. For OAT HO Team, the line manager will notify their Executive Lead, and other team members in an appropriate manner, for example in a team meeting or individually. Be aware that some staff may have been particularly close to the deceased student/staff member
- 4.1.2. Absent staff, including part-time and peripatetic school staff where applicable, will be identified so they can be informed as soon as possible. If it is not possible for absent staff to be told in person, a phone call will be arranged. Consider contacting staff to whom the deceased may have been close to but who have left the school.
- 4.1.3. Any information provided to staff during the meeting will have prior approval from the family.
- 4.1.4. During the meeting, the line manager will:
 - Give a factual explanation of how the death occurred.
 - Allow time for staff to discuss what has happened and how they feel.
 - Liaise with PLMR to support media responses and be of support to the principal in this as required.
 - Identify what internal and external support is available to staff and governors.
 - For schools, discuss the arrangements for informing students, including whether all students will be told and who will be responsible for informing them.
- 4.1.5. School staff members who will be responsible for informing students about the death will be provided with a script which sets out what students should be told and includes information on how to answer some difficult questions.

- 4.1.6. The principal will create the script, with input from the family. OAT marketing team will assist with this if required.

4.2 Informing governors

- 4.2.1 Governors will be informed of the death before students.
- 4.1.7. The principal will inform the governors in the manner that they feel most appropriate.
- 4.1.8. Any information provided to governors during the meeting will have prior approval from the family.

4.3 Informing students

- 4.3.1 The principal will have a discussion with the family about whether all students need to be informed about the death.
- 4.3.2 If the death affects the whole school, e.g. the death of a staff member or student, the principal will strongly recommend to the family that all students should be informed; however, if the death does not affect the whole school, it may be more appropriate to just inform certain groups of students. Consider carefully which groups of children will or will not be told e.g. it may not be relevant/appropriate to tell nurse or reception children
- 4.3.3 The principal will make the final decision regarding which students will be informed.
- 4.3.4 Where possible, students will be informed about the death in small groups by a member of staff that is familiar to them at the same time.
- 4.3.5 Students with specific needs that may influence their response to being informed about the death will be identified and told separately. This may include the following:
- Students that had a long-term and/or close relationship with the individual who has died
 - Students with a history of loss
 - Students with SEND
 - Students who have difficulty managing their emotions or behaviour
- 4.3.6 Staff responsible for informing students will use the script provided to them.
- 4.3.7 To ensure all students are told about the death in an age-appropriate way, a number of scripts may be created and distributed to staff with clear instructions of which script to use for which year group/group of students.
- 4.3.8 Students will be given time to ask questions about what has happened and to talk about how they are feeling.
- 4.3.9 Any questions that are asked by students will be answered factually.
- 4.3.10 Students will be told where they can go to in school for support and will also be directed to any external support.

4.4 Informing students in a large group

- 4.4.1 If it is not possible to inform students about a death in small groups, the principal, in communication with the family, will decide if it would be appropriate to inform students in a large group, e.g. during an assembly.
- 4.4.2 Where an individual student has been bereaved, they will be asked if they want to attend the assembly and, if they do not want to be involved, appropriate support will be arranged for the student during and after the assembly.
- 4.4.3 The principal will tell the family and, where relevant, the bereaved student exactly what they will say and to whom.
- 4.4.4 The principal, with support from relevant staff, will deliver the information to students.
- 4.4.5 After students have been informed, they will go to their classrooms and be given time to express any thoughts or feelings about what they have been told.

4.5 Informing parents (schools)

- 4.5.1 The principal will have a discussion with the family about whether any parents need to be informed about the death.
- 4.5.2 If the death affects the whole school, e.g. the death of a staff member or student, the principal will strongly recommend to the family that all parents should be informed; however, if the death does not affect the whole school, it may be more appropriate to just inform parents that are directly affected, if any.
- 4.5.3 A nominated member of staff will compose a letter to parents about the death using the template in appendix 1. The letter will contain the basic, factual information about the death, information about how the school is supporting students, how they can support their children, and who to direct questions or concerns to.

5. Death in service (employee)

5.1. The death of an employee can be a traumatic experience for those who are left to deal with the loss of a colleague. The information below provides guidance to assist employees who are faced with the difficult situation of a colleague dying. It outlines the steps that the Trust and its employees should take following the death of a colleague.

5.2. Making final salary payments:

- EPM will determine whether or not the deceased is due any outstanding wages. This includes basic salary and any other remuneration accrued and owed to the deceased. The deceased's estate will also be entitled to be paid in respect of accrued holiday that was untaken at the time of death.
- EPM will calculate the deceased's final salary payment and pay it to their personal representative. The Academy HR/SBM (for academy staff) or OAT HR (for head office staff) should obtain proof

that the individual (normally the executor of any will) is the deceased's personal representative. It should obtain a receipt on behalf of the estate. EPM will complete a P45 form, indicating that the employee has died.

- Academy HR/SBM (for academy staff) or OAT HR (for head office staff) should consider whether or not to deduct any sums owed to the Trust by the deceased, such as loan repayments, from the final salary payment.
 - Academy HR/SBM (for academy staff) or OAT HR (for head office staff) should ensure that any letters enclosing payslips or forms that are sent to the deceased's family/next of kin are not addressed to the deceased.
- 5.3. A surviving spouse/civil partner or other dependents of the deceased may be entitled to receive a payment under a survivor's pension, if the deceased was a member of a pension scheme. The next of kin/appointed family member should be contacted to establish pension benefits and to also establish if there is a will.
- 5.4. If the staff member was in a pension scheme, a death certificate will be required. The next of kin should be contacted to request the death certificate. Academy HR/SBM (for academy staff) or OAT HR (for head office staff) will contact the pension fund and follow the guidance provided. If the staff member was not in a pension scheme then a death certificate is not required.

Other practical issues following the death of an employee

- 5.5. The line manager should ask the deceased's family/next of kin whether they wish to pack up their belongings or would prefer a close work colleague to do so instead.
- 5.6. It is also important to consider the cause of death when obtaining the equipment especially if the individual passed away due to a viral infection. In this scenario the school/Trust would need assess the risk appropriately.
- 5.7. It is important to ensure at the appropriate time (especially where remote equipment has been used frequently) that the deceased member of staff's IT account is suspended and emails are delegated as appropriate. This is not only to protect the security of the school and Trust systems, but also to help manage ongoing communications within the school and also externally.
- 5.8. For any death related to an incident which has the potential to give rise to a claim against the Trust, the appropriate insurance company should be notified.

6. Funerals

- 6.1. If appropriate, the line manager will discuss with the family whether any staff, governors or students are able to attend the funeral.
- 6.2. With the family's approval, the line manager will arrange for the Trust to be represented at the funeral and identify which staff (and students if applicable) may want to attend.
- 6.3. The principal and chair of governors will decide if it is necessary for a school to be fully or partially closed.

- 6.4. Transportation to and from the funeral will be arranged for staff (and students), as appropriate.
- 6.5. Necessary cover arrangements will be made for staff attending the funeral.

7. The Media and Social Media

- 7.1. Any communication with the media or social media activity will be agreed with the family.
- 7.2. Only the appointed media spokesperson will deal with media enquiries and communications. Staff, governors and students will not respond to any media enquiries themselves or make any public statements about the death.
- 7.3. In the event that staff are approached directly regarding the death, they should give the following statement: "I am deeply saddened by the news. Please contact the school or the Trust directly".
- 7.4. Staff, governors and students will not post any information about the death on social media. The media spokesperson will investigate any post made regarding the death and will refer any concerns to the principal.
- 7.5. If information about the death is circulated on social media prior to the Trust/school making an official statement, the line manager/principal and media spokesperson will release a statement on the Trust's/school's social media channels, with the agreement of the family, to prevent rumours from spreading.
- 7.6. Comments and other activity on Trust/school-posted social media statements will be monitored and moderated by the media spokesperson.
- 7.7. If staff, governors or students find any false, negative or malicious information being posted about the death on social media, they will report this to the principal/line manager.
- 7.8. If a member of staff is found to have been posting content on social media or providing information to the media that is false, negative or malicious, action will be taken in line with OAT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 7.9. If a student is found to have been posting content on social media or providing information to the media that is false, negative or malicious, action will be taken in line the school's behaviour policy.

8. Support

8.1 Support for the family

- 8.1.1 The principal/line manager will be the main point of contact between the Trust/school and the family, or another member of staff will be appointed to this role where necessary.
- 8.1.2 The principal will invite the family into the school to discuss how the school can best support them. A home visit can be undertaken if the family prefer this option in line with the home visiting policy.

- 8.1.3 The family's wishes and feelings will always be considered and respected when making decisions and conducting activities relating to the death.
- 8.1.4 Any support that is put in place will be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the family's needs and wishes. Support could include the following:
- Sending a letter of condolence
 - Giving the family the opportunity to collect any personal belongings of the person who has died
 - Inviting the family to commemorative events held by the school/Trust

8.2 Support for staff

- 8.2.1 Staff directly affected by the death, e.g. if they are a relative or close friend of the individual that has died, will be identified and the appropriate support will be put in place.
- 8.2.2 The level of support will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the line manager/principal, and may include the following:
- Ensuring the staff member is not left on their own
 - Arranging for lessons or other duties to be covered (schools)
 - Arranging for work to be covered (OAT HO)
 - Organising bereavement leave
 - Referral to employee assistance programmes, for example DAS counselling or similar.
- 8.2.3 A designated room, which may be the staffroom, will be made available to staff where they can go during break and lunchtimes to meet with other staff and share their thoughts and feelings.
- 8.2.4 Staff will be vigilant to the signs that indicate their colleagues have been affected by bereavement and will offer them support or speak to the line manager.
- 8.2.5 An employee with any concerns about the grieving process impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with either their line manager/principal or, for members of OAT HO, the Human Resources Department, to ensure that any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and put in place. In addition, to ensure that the employee is supported in their return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement or their duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with the prior agreement of line manager/principal.
- 8.2.6 The Trust recognises that the majority of people do not require counselling to cope effectively with their grief. However, for employees wishing to avail themselves of professional help in coming to terms with a significant loss, they should contact the support helplines (details available on the intranet, or via the School Business Manager).

8.3 Support for students that have experienced a significant bereavement, e.g. of a family member

- 8.3.1 A member of staff who is familiar with the student will be appointed to act as their main point of contact – the student will be made aware of who the staff member is.

- 8.3.2 The principal or an appropriate member of staff will contact the student's family to discuss whether the student will be attending school.
- 8.3.3 Any support put in place for a student will be student-led, based on their needs and wishes.
- 8.3.4 When deciding what support will be put in place for a student, the impact the death will have on the student will always be considered in the context of pre-existing factors. The following contextual factors will be considered:
- The circumstances surrounding the death, e.g. was it under traumatic circumstances, was the death expected, or did multiple people die?
 - The relationship between the student and the person who has died.
 - The ability of the student's family to support them following the death, e.g. if a student's parent has died, how able is the surviving parent to support the student?
 - Family factors such as size, financial state, structure, style of coping, communication and stressors that affect the child.
 - The support the student has from their peers and other organisations and people.
 - Characteristics of the student, including their age and any SEND they have.
- 8.3.5 The student will be a part of discussions regarding who should be informed about the death and how, where appropriate.
- 8.3.6 If a student chooses to attend school immediately after a bereavement, they will be allowed a flexible timetable and staff members will be made aware that the student may not be able to work to their usual capacity. The designated staff member will keep in communication with the student's family to inform them about how the student is doing.
- 8.3.7 If the student is absent from school following the bereavement, they will be made aware of who has been informed about what has happened and what they were told.
- 8.3.8 The designated staff member will make regular contact with the student during their absence.
- 8.3.9 The principal, designated staff member, student and the student's family will make arrangements for the student's return to school, e.g. a phased return.
- 8.3.10 If a death occurs soon before or during a time where the student will take an exam, the principal will report the circumstances to the exam board who will decide if special considerations apply.
- 8.3.11 Any safeguarding concerns regarding a bereaved student will be dealt with in line with the OAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9. Bereavement pay and leave (employees)

- 9.1. OAT acknowledges that bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death of a relative. However, the process of grief, the natural reaction and adjustment to loss and change may take a significant time and will be personal to each individual.

- 9.2. Staff who lose a child under the age of 18, or suffer a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy, irrespective of how long they have worked at the Trust, will be given a minimum of two weeks' paid bereavement leave.
- 9.3. Staff may take bereavement leave as either a single block of two weeks, or as two separate blocks of one week, each taken at different times across the first year after their child's death.
- 9.4. Any member of staff who loses a child under the age of 18, and has been employed with the Trust for six months or more, will be able to claim statutory pay for the period of bereavement leave.
- 9.5. Any member of staff who loses a child after 24 weeks of pregnancy, or during maternity leave, will not lose their entitlement to maternity leave and pay.

10. Behaviour issues (students)

- 10.1. Staff will remain vigilant to the following behaviours that a student may display immediately after the death of someone close to them:
 - Inability to concentrate
 - Lack of motivation
 - Tiredness and irritability
 - Heightened sensitivity to comments and remarks
 - Inability to take others' feelings into account
 - Anger, frustration or aggression
 - A general change in behaviour, e.g. becoming unnaturally quiet or withdrawn
 - Anxiety
 - Being easily upset by events that would normally be trivial to them
 - Physical complaints, such as headaches, stomach aches and a general tendency to be prone to minor illness
- 10.2. The student's designated staff member will keep in contact with the student's family and share information about how the student is behaving at school and home.
- 10.3. Where appropriate, any challenging behaviour displayed by bereaved students will be addressed using the individual graduated response outlined in the Behaviour Policy. It is helpful to retain routines and consistency; however, care should be taken to ensure that the Behaviour Policy is still appropriate under the circumstances and adapted as necessary.
- 10.4. A record should be made of anniversaries and days with regards to the death which may act as a trigger for challenging behaviour.
- 10.5. Any incidents of bullying, where a bereaved student is the victim or perpetrator, will be addressed in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy taking into account the student's needs and circumstances.

- 10.6. All staff members will remain vigilant to signs that a bereaved student is facing difficulties in relation to their psychological, physical and social development and will refer the student to pastoral staff who will put appropriate support in place.

11. Specific Circumstances

The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed for all deaths affecting the Trust/school community and individual students; however, specific measures will be implemented for certain circumstances.

11.1 Pre-bereavement – when a family member is not expected to live (students)

- 11.1.1 If a student's family member has an illness where they are not expected to live, their family will make the school aware of the situation and the school will ensure the appropriate support is in place.
- 11.1.2 A designated member of staff will meet with the student, as agreed with the family, to provide the student with an opportunity to talk about what is happening and how they are feeling.
- 11.1.3 All staff will remain vigilant to signs that the student is facing challenges in relation to their psychological, physical and social development and will refer any concerns to the principal who will ensure appropriate support is put in place.

11.2 Students with a life-threatening illness

- 11.2.1 Students with life-threatening illnesses will be encouraged to take part in school routines as much as possible, and the school will continue to expect the usual standards of behaviour as appropriate.
- 11.2.2 The principal, the student and their family, and other relevant staff members (e.g. a member of pastoral staff) will decide how to share the news that a student is terminally ill with the school community.
- 11.2.3 Other students will be informed about how they can best support the student in the most appropriate way.
- 11.2.4 If the student is receiving treatment from a local hospice or hospital, the key professional responsible for the student will be identified and the principal will contact this person for advice and support as necessary.

11.3 Suicide

- 11.3.1 Once notified of a suspected suicide, the Trust/school will respond within 48 hours.
- 11.3.2 The line manager, or other appointed member of staff, will contact the police or the family as soon as possible to confirm details and offer support.

- 11.3.3 If the family does not wish the cause of death to be disclosed to the school/Trust community, the school/Trust will state that the nature and cause of death are still being determined and that additional information will be forthcoming.
- 11.3.4 If the death is subject to an ongoing investigation, the line manager will check with the police before speaking about the death with students who may need to be interviewed by the police.
- 11.3.5 The script that staff will use to inform students of the death (where applicable) will be factual while avoiding excessive detail about the suicidal act itself.
- 11.3.6 Immediate emotional support will be arranged for any students (where applicable) and staff who require it.
- 11.3.7 A designated room, which may be the staffroom, will be set up where students (where applicable) and staff can go to if they are struggling with the news.
- 11.3.8 Liaison with the media will be managed by the media spokesperson.
- 11.3.9 Any information distributed to the school/Trust community and media regarding the death will:
- Be factually correct but not include detail of the cause of death or method used.
 - Not romanticise, glorify or vilify the death.
 - Not include details of any suicide note.
 - Not include speculation over the motivation for suicide.
- 11.3.10 Research indicates that students who have been directly affected by suicide are at an increased risk of taking their own life. Staff will report any concerns about students to the principal and the appropriate support will be put in place or a referral to specialist services will be made in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 11.3.11 Any memorial activities conducted by the Trust/school will be held within an appropriate amount of time; following this, any memorial material will be given to the family.
- 11.3.12 Staff and students (where applicable) will be warned about the risks of un-moderated online memorials (e.g. those on social media), such as their comments becoming public without their permission and online memorials attracting negative comments.

11.4 Cultural and religious behaviours

- 11.4.1 The school will keep in mind the cultural attitudes and behaviours relating to a death and will make sure these needs are taken into consideration when putting support in place for those affected, including the length of bereavement leave for members of staff.

11.5 Forces' families (students)

- 11.5.1 The needs and feelings of bereaved forces' students will always be considered prior to any school activities relating to the armed forces, e.g. commemorating Armed Forces Day, and additional support will be put in place for students as required.

11.5.2 Appropriate support will be implemented for bereaved forces' students, particularly during times of change.

11.5.3 Bereaved forces' students will be protected from any unwanted media attention and there will be a designated area in school that the student can go to if they are feeling overwhelmed.

11.6 A death involving murder or manslaughter (students)

11.6.1 The line manager will contact the police or the family to establish the facts about what has happened.

11.6.2 A designated staff member will be available to talk to the student (where applicable) to help them to answer any questions they may get from their peers about what has happened.

11.6.3 Research indicates that students who have been bereaved due to murder or manslaughter can be at significant risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Any concerns relating to the student will be addressed in line with the appropriate school policies.

11.6.4 Media personnel will not be permitted onto a school site at any time.

12. Remembrance activities

12.1. Following a death in the Trust/school community, the Trust/school may conduct some remembrance activities, e.g. a remembrance assembly.

12.2. The family will always be consulted prior to any remembrance activities being planned and will be invited to take part in the activities.

12.3. All members of the school community, including staff, governors, students and parents, and where applicable, Head Office staff, will be invited to take part in remembrance activities.

12.4. All remembrance activities will be planned so that they are respectful of the culture and religious beliefs of the family.

13. Managing transitions (students)

13.1. Information about students that have been bereaved will be recorded.

13.2. This information will be shared with relevant parties at key transition points, including the following:

- If the student moves school
- When the student moves to secondary school
- If the student moves class
- When the student will be taught by a new teacher

14. Teaching about bereavement and grief (students)

- 14.1. Different aspects of the curriculum will be used to discuss relationships, feelings and emotions, and to think about how to manage these in relation to family events and death.
- 14.2. Before delivering any lessons that cover topics of death and bereavement, the teacher will consider how the lesson may affect the bereaved students they are teaching.
- 14.3. Bereaved students and their families will be consulted over whether it is appropriate for them to attend lessons about death or bereavement, and alternative arrangements or additional support will be put in place as required.
- 14.4. Where appropriate, the teacher will discuss what the lesson is going to cover with the student and will work with the student to design activities that the student feels they are able to get involved with.
- 14.5. Any lessons covering topics of death or bereavement will take account of religious and cultural beliefs.

Appendix 1

Letter to family

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

This letter is to be sent out after contacting the family

[DATE]

Dear [NAME],

Thank you for your time earlier and once again on behalf of the whole school community, let me express our deepest condolences at this difficult time.

I can't imagine the pain that you are going through, and there are no words to express the depth of the sadness that we all feel for you and your family.

[INSERT PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER e.g. I would also like to take the opportunity to reiterate what a well-liked, dedicated and inspiring person XXXXX was. She gave a huge amount to her pupils and was a supportive colleague and friend to all. Her loss will be felt hugely by everyone at the academy.]

As discussed, we will continue to be guided by you and respect your wishes in how we communicate this tragic news to the school community.

It is important to us that we are providing you with any, and all, the support we can in the coming days and weeks, so please do not hesitate to get in touch, if there is anything we can do.

We will continue to keep in touch and support you in any way we can.

With sincerest sympathy,

[NAME]

Principal

[ACADEMY NAME]

Appendix 2

Letter to all staff – loss of pupil

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

[DATE]

Dear colleagues,

It is with great sadness that I must inform you that one of our pupils, has sadly passed away [INSERT DETAILS AS APPROPRIATE].

All of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with [NAME]'s family and loved ones at this difficult time.

[NAME], [insert personal tribute e.g. was a popular and well-liked member of our school community and a talented XXXX. I know this loss will be felt by everyone].

When someone dies, people may experience a range of different feelings, such as sadness, anger, and confusion - which are all normal. What is most important is that we care for and support each other and our pupils at this difficult time.

We have put the following support [Please insert details] in place for staff at the academy who might wish to access it. Please also find enclosed some [leaflets/resources] that may prove helpful to you.

We know that this news will impact our pupils greatly and it is important that we try to answer their questions as best we can, using age-appropriate and honest language, as well as providing any additional support they may require. Please contact [an appropriate staff person/counselor] if you have specific concerns about a pupil or see anyone particularly struggling to process this tragic loss.

In memory of [Insert Name], the academy will be [indicate here what activity or activities the school is planning or remove section if not relevant].

I am sure you will join me in sending our deepest condolences to XXX's family at this difficult time and as always thank you for your ongoing support. We will share details of the funeral arrangements, once we have them, for those who may wish to attend.

I hope we can all be of comfort and support to each other at this difficult time.

Your sincerely,

NAME

Principal

INSERT ACADEMY NAME

Appendix 3

Letter to LGB – loss of pupil

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

[DATE]

Dear Governors,

We are very sorry to have to share the tragic news that one of our pupils / students, **XXXXX**, has sadly passed away.

All of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with **[NAME]**'s family and loved ones at this difficult time.

[NAME], [insert personal tribute e.g. was a well-liked and popular member of our school community and a talented **XXXX**].

I am writing to update you on the actions we are taking to support everyone in our school community to deal with this tragic loss, at what will be a difficult time for many of our staff and students / pupils.

Actions we will be taking are:

- Inviting you to an exceptional Local Governing Body meeting **[INSERT DATE AND TIME]**
- Liaising closely with **[INSERT NAME]** 's family to ensure that messages given to the broader school community are agreed and sensitive
- Communicating this (and how to appropriately support children) to all staff members first, this includes communicating with our Regional Director and National Director of Education
- How to communicate this with honesty and age appropriate language to all children
- Signposting staff, students/ pupils and parents to any additional support and resources they may need to deal with this tragic loss

Over the coming days and weeks, we will be handling this tragic news and supporting our staff, pupils and the whole school community in line with our Bereavement Policy. I attach a copy for you to read, so you can support the process.

I am sure you will join me in sending our deepest condolences to **XXX's** family at this difficult time and as always thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

NAME

Principal

INSERT ACADEMY NAME

Appendix 4

Letter to board of trustees – loss of pupil

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

[DATE]

Dear OAT Trustee,

We are very sorry to have to share the tragic news that one of our pupils / students, **XXXXX**, has sadly passed away [INSERT DETAILS AS APPROPRIATE].

All of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with [NAME]'s family and loved ones at this difficult time.

[NAME], [insert personal tribute e.g. was a well-liked and popular member of our school community and a talented XXXX].

I am writing to update you on the actions we are taking to support everyone in our school community to deal with this tragic loss, at what will be a difficult time for many.

We have been in contact with the family's next of kin to offer our condolences and agreed how they would like this information to be communicated across the school community. We will be offering them all the support we can at this difficult time.

Over the coming days and weeks, we will be handling this tragic news and supporting our staff, pupils and the whole school community in line with the attached Bereavement Policy.

I am sure you will join me in sending our deepest condolences to [NAME]'s family at this difficult time and as always thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,

NAME

Principal

INSERT ACADEMY NAME

Appendix 5

Letter to parents – loss of pupil

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

[DATE]

Dear parents and carers,

We are very sorry to have to share the tragic news that one of our pupils has very sadly passed away [insert details as appropriate] and I wanted to let you know that we have today shared this news with your child.

All of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with the family, loved ones and friends at this difficult time.

Many of you will have known XXXXXX, [insert personal tribute e.g. she was a popular and well-liked member of our school community and a talented XXXXX].

I know that this will come as a shock to you and that you and your children – particularly those in the same class or year group – will be incredibly saddened. When someone dies, young people may experience a range of different feelings, such as sadness, anger, and confusion - which are all normal. We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language, and we will continue to do so, as well as providing every support that we can to you and to our pupils.

There are also a number of organisations that provide bereavement support to children such as Child Bereavement UK at childbereavementuk.org or ChildLine, which can be reached on 0800 1111 or at childline.org.uk.

I am sure you will join me in sending our deepest condolences to [NAME]'s family at this difficult time. If you or your child need any support in dealing with this loss, please do not hesitate to get in touch and we will endeavour to help you to access this.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]

Principal

[ACADEMY NAME]

Appendix 6

Letter to all staff – loss of staff member

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

[DATE]

Dear colleagues,

It is with great sadness that I must inform you that a member of our staff and valued colleague, **XXXXX**, has sadly passed away [INSERT DETAILS AS APPROPRIATE].

All of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with [NAME]'s family and loved ones at this difficult time.

[NAME], [insert personal tribute e.g. was a talented and dedicated teacher and popular member of our school community, well-liked and respected by pupils and colleagues alike and I know this loss will be felt by everyone].

When someone dies, people may experience a range of different feelings, such as sadness, anger, and confusion - which are all normal. What is most important is that we care for and support each other and our pupils at this difficult time.

We have put the following support [Please insert details] in place for staff at the academy who might wish to access it. Please also find enclosed some [leaflets/resources] that may prove helpful to you.

We know that this news will also impact our pupils greatly and it is important that we try to answer their questions as best we can, using age-appropriate and honest language, as well as providing any additional support they may require. Please contact [an appropriate staff person/counselor] if you have specific concerns about a pupil or see anyone particularly struggling to process this tragic loss.

In memory of [Insert Name], the academy will be [indicate here what activity or activities the school is planning or remove section if not relevant].

I am sure you will join me in sending our deepest condolences to **XXX's** family at this difficult time and as always thank you for your ongoing support. We will share details of the funeral arrangements, once we have them, for those who may wish to attend.

I hope we can all be of comfort and support to each other at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

NAME

Principal

INSERT ACADEMY NAME

Appendix 7

Letter to LGB – loss of staff member

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

[DATE]

Dear Governors,

We are very sorry to have to share the tragic news that a member of our staff and valued colleague, **XXXXX**, a **TEACHER/JOB TITLE** has sadly passed away [INSERT DETAILS AS APPROPRIATE].

All of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with **[NAME]'s** family and loved ones at this difficult time.

[NAME], [insert personal tribute e.g. was a talented and dedicated teacher and popular member of our school community, well-liked and respected by pupils and colleagues alike].

I am writing to update you on the actions we are taking to support everyone in our school community to deal with this tragic loss, at what will be a difficult time for many of our staff and pupils.

Actions we will be taking include:

- Inviting you to an exceptional Local Governing Body meeting [INSERT DATE AND TIME]
- Liaising closely with **[INSERT NAME]'s** family to ensure that messages given to the broader school community are agreed and sensitive
- Communicating this (and how to appropriately support children) to all staff members first, this includes communicating with our Regional Director and National Director of Education
- How to communicate this with honesty and age appropriate language to all children
- Signposting staff, pupils and parents to any additional support and resources they may need to deal with this tragic loss

Over the coming days and weeks, we will be handling this tragic news and supporting our staff, pupils and the whole school community in line with our Bereavement Policy. I attach a copy for you to read, so you can support the process.

I am sure you will join me in sending our deepest condolences to **[NAME]'s** family at this difficult time and as always thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]

Principal

[ACADEMY NAME]

Appendix 8

Letter to board of trustees – loss of staff member

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

[DATE]

Dear OAT Trustee,

We are very sorry to have to share the tragic news that a member of our staff and valued colleague, **XXXXX**, a **TEACHER/JOB TITLE** has sadly passed away **[INSERT DETAILS AS APPROPRIATE]**.

All of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with **[NAME]**'s family and loved ones at this difficult time.

[NAME], **[insert personal tribute e.g. was a talented and dedicated teacher and popular member of our school community, well-liked and respected by pupils and colleagues alike]**.

I am writing to update you on the actions we are taking to support everyone in our school community to deal with this tragic loss, at what will be a difficult time for many.

We have been in contact with the next of kin to offer our condolences and agreed how they would like this information to be communicated across the school community and we will be offering them all the support we can.

Over the coming days and weeks, we will be handling this tragic news and supporting our staff, pupils and the whole school community in line with the attached Bereavement Policy.

I am sure you will join me in sending our deepest condolences to **[NAME]**'s family at this difficult time and as always thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,

NAME

Principal

INSERT ACADEMY NAME

Appendix 9

Letter to parents – loss of staff member

TEMPLATE LETTER TO BE TAILORED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

[DATE]

Dear parents and carers,

We are very sorry to have to share the tragic news that [NAME], a much-loved and gifted member of staff has sadly passed away [insert details as appropriate] and I wanted to let you know that we have today shared this news with your child.

All of our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with the family and loved ones at this difficult time. Many of you will have known [NAME], [insert personal tribute e.g. she was one of those people who everyone liked. She was a brilliant science teacher and very popular with her pupils, not least her Year 11 tutor group, and her colleagues].

I know that this will come as a shock to you and that you and your children, who we informed earlier today, will be incredibly saddened. When someone dies, young people may experience a range of different feelings, such as sadness, anger, and confusion - which are all normal. We have tried to answer their questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language, and we will continue to do so, as well as providing every support that we can to you and to our pupils.

There are also a number of organisations that provide bereavement support to children such as Child Bereavement UK at childbereavementuk.org or ChildLine, which can be reached on 0800 1111 or at childline.org.uk.

I speak for everyone connected with the school in saying that we will always remember [NAME] extremely fondly, and I am sure you will join me in sending our deepest condolences to the family at this difficult time.

If you or your child need any support in dealing with this loss, please do not hesitate to get in touch and we will endeavour to help you to access this.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]

Principal

[ACADEMY NAME]