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BEREAVEMENT POLICY (PRIMARY)

Accord MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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Approvals

Name	Position	Signature	Date
A Warboys	CEO	A Warboys	14 July 2025
A Lancashire	Chair of Trustees	A Lancashire	14 July 2025

Document History

Version	Date	Author	Note of Revisions
1	July 2021	Primary DSLs	N/A
2	July 2022	Primary DSLs	Guidance to support schools on funeral attendance. Removal of Covid addendum.
3	October 2023	Primary DSLs	Removal of obsolete website links
4	September 2024	Primary DSLs	Section 5.5 added and minor SPAG.
5	July 2025	Primary Headteachers	No materialistic changes

1. Introduction

This policy is intended to reflect our positive ethos as an inclusive Academy and contributes to the caring community we wish to nurture. It is hoped it will contribute considerably to the emotional health and wellbeing of our Academy community. The main purpose of the policy is to ensure that all pupils, families and members of staff faced with bereavement, are provided with support.

2. Policy Aims

The Accord Multi Academy Trust (the Trust) recognises the considerable impact a bereavement has on families, and in particular children. The purpose of this policy is to support pupils, families and staff, before (where applicable), during and after bereavement. The Trust is committed to enhancing effective communication between staff and families and identifying key staff and agencies who could offer support where appropriate.

3. Roles

3.1 The Academy Education Committee (AEC) / Board of Trustees

The role of the AEC and Board of Trustees is to approve and review the policy annually and ensure its implementation through senior leaders.

3.2 The Headteacher

The main duties of the Headteacher are to:

- ensure the overall implementation of the policy.
- monitor progress and liaise with external agencies as appropriate.
- respond to media enquiries or appointing a member of staff to undertake these duties.
- be the first point of contact for family, pupils, staff, and parents/carers directly affected with the death or designating this role to another appropriate member of staff.
- keep the AEC fully informed.

3.3 Pastoral Staff (including Mental Health First Aider, SENDCo and Learning Mentor or other equivalent job roles)

The main duties of Pastoral Staff are to:

- attend bereavement support training.
- offer support and online training to other staff.
- support pupils, staff and parents/carers as directed by the Headteacher.
- support staff members in communicating the news of a death as directed by the Headteacher.
- make referrals for pupils, staff and parents/carers to receive support, for example Seasons for Growth.

3.4 The PSHE Lead

The role of the PSHE Lead is to ensure that death is covered in PSHE lessons, and that vocabulary of death is used, for example die and dead.

4. Procedures to follow in the event of a Bereavement

- If the family telephones the Academy to inform them of the death, the call should be transferred to the Headteacher or the most senior member of staff available. If the Academy is made aware through a source other than the family, the Headteacher will contact the family by phone no later than 24 hours later as far as is reasonably possible taking into account weekends or school closure periods.
- Factual information will be gathered in relation to the death and the wishes of the family will be respected in communicating with others.
- If a death affects the entire Academy, e.g. the death of a pupil or member of staff, the Headteacher will inform/agree with the family when and how staff and pupils will be informed.
- If a death affects an individual pupil, e.g. the death of a parent, the family's wishes will be followed in relation to communication with the Academy community.
- The Headteacher will decide if any temporary variation needs to be made to the Academy timetable.
- Staff and Governors should be informed in a meeting wherever possible, arranged by the Headteacher before pupils are informed.
- Staff should be prepared to share information in age-appropriate ways, as agreed in each individual circumstance. What and how the children are told will be agreed with the Headteacher.
- Pupils who would be most affected by the death or with specific needs, should be informed preferably in small groups by someone who they know. Any questions asked by pupils will be answered factually.
- A decision about which parents/carers or if all should be informed, will be made by the Headteacher taking the family's wishes into consideration. A letter, containing the basic factual information and how the Academy is supporting the pupils, should be written at the earliest opportunity and a decision made as to whom, and how, it should be distributed.
- Minimal disruption to the Academy timetable offers a sense of security and familiarity, however a degree of flexibility may be needed to support the wellbeing of the children affected by the situation.
- Staff affected by the death will be offered ongoing support as appropriate on a case by case basis with support from the HR department if required.
- Funeral attendance should be at the request of the family and any discussion of the funeral arrangements should be instigated by the family.
- The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will decide if it is necessary for the Academy to be fully or partially closed in the event of a funeral.
- Where necessary, and in agreement with the family, a press statement should be prepared by the Headteacher if this is felt necessary and appropriate to the

circumstances. Guidance will be sought the central Accord Trust team. Only the appointed person should communicate with the media.

- The appointed person will monitor and moderate social media statements. Any false, negative or malicious comments made by staff or pupils will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour or Disciplinary Policies.
- Following a period of time, the Headteacher will contact the family in relation to any support the Academy can provide and in relation to any activities taking place in the Academy relating to the death. The family's wishes in relation to any activities will be followed.
- The Academy should be aware that the impact of bereavement follows a child throughout their Academy life, so information should be recorded and shared with relevant people, particularly at transition points.

5. Specific Circumstances

The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed for all deaths however specific measures will be implemented for special circumstances.

5.1 Pre-bereavement (when a family member is not expected to live)

The family should make the Academy aware of any illness where the person is not expected to live so that Academy staff can provide appropriate support as required and be vigilant in monitoring signs that the pupil is feeling distressed.

5.2 Pupils with a life-threatening illness

Pupils with a life-threatening illness will be encouraged and supported to take part in Academy routines as much as possible.

The Headteacher, with the pupil and family, will decide if, when and how to inform other pupils of the illness.

The Headteacher or a designated member of staff responsible for the pupil will liaise with other agencies about medical treatment and for advice and support in how best to meet the needs of the child in the Academy.

5.3 Suicide

The Academy will respond to a suspected suicide within 48 hours as far as is reasonably possible taking into account weekends or school closure periods and the specific circumstances of the event.

The family's wishes will be followed when communicating with the Academy community in relation to the death. If the family do not wish the cause of death to be disclosed, the Academy will inform the community that the cause of death is still being determined.

Staff will be informed of the death first and factual information only will be shared but avoiding excessive detail.

Any information shared with the Academy community and media will be factually correct but not include details of the cause of death or method used and will not include speculation over the motivation for suicide.

Research indicates that pupils that have been directly affected by suicide are at an increased risk of taking their own life. Staff should report any concerns through the appropriate channels.

5.4 Cultural and religious behaviours

The Academy 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.

5.5 Forces Families and Remembrance Activities

The needs and feelings of bereaved forces' pupils will always be considered prior to any Academy activities relating to the armed forces, e.g. Remembrance Day.

A designated staff member will support the pupil to help answer any questions from peers. Pupils will be monitored closely and concerns reported following the appropriate channels.

The family will always be consulted prior to any activities being planned and will be invited to take part. All activities planned will be respectful of the culture and religious beliefs of the family.

5.6 Contextual

Considerations will be made for events that could trigger feelings of undue stress such as Fathers Day, Mothers Day, anniversaries etc. An awareness of family context will be shared with appropriate staff to prevent additional trauma.

6. Useful Websites

www.mindmate.org.uk
www.winstonswish.org
www.childbereavementuk.org
www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk
www.samaritans.org
www.hopeagain.org.uk
www.youngminds.org.uk
www.griefencounter.org.uk
www.thecalmzone.net
www.supportline.org.uk/problems/bereavement.php