



**OUR LADY  
OF LOURDES**

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



# Bereavement Policy

## **Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust Mission Statement**

We are a partnership of Catholic schools and our aim is to provide the very best Catholic education for all in our community and so improve life chances through spiritual, academic and social development.

We will achieve this by:

Placing the life and teachings of Jesus Christ at the centre of all that we do.

Following the example of Our Lady of Lourdes by nurturing everyone so that we can all make the most of our God given talents.

Working together so that we can all achieve our full potential, deepen our faith and know that God loves us.

Being an example of healing, compassion and support for the most vulnerable in our society.

***'Blessed are those who mourn they shall be comforted'***

(Matthew 5:4)

# **The Good Shepherd Academy**

## **BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

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1. The Good Shepherd Academy mission statement

***Our mission is to develop our children with active and creative minds, a sense of understanding and compassion for others and the courage to act on their Catholic beliefs.***

***In our school community we celebrate our faith and we work together to achieve our personal potential by trying to live like Jesus and become the person he wants us to be.***

2. **Introduction and Aims**

2.1 **Introduction**

First and foremost is that the Good Shepherd Academy is dedicated to the well-being and care of all members of our community.

Bereavement is a painful time for all involved. In the Bible, we hear that at the death of his friend Lazarus, Jesus wept greatly. As a Christian Community, it is our duty to comfort and support one another during such times.

When this policy refers to bereavement, it is referring to someone who experiences a sudden significant change, loss or death; this could include the divorce of parents or carers, a move to a new area, the loss of contact with a close friend or family member etc.

Bereavement will affect each person in a different way and this policy does not an attempt to provide the perfect approach for all those affected by death. What this policy presents are guidelines to ensure that all those who experience a bereavement are treated with respect, compassion and sensitivity. This policy is to ensure that all students, families and staff have the opportunity to express their grief, as well as receiving all the necessary support and information they may need.

Bereavement is a normal part of life and should be treated in this way; it is not an illness or an end that to needs to be avoided. Therefore, within the curriculum of Science, Religious Education (R.E.) and Personal, Social and Health Education/Statements To Live By (PSHE/STLB); the process of life cycles and the reality of death and loss should be approached and explored; though great sensitivity should be given to those who are recently bereaved in these lessons.

As part of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust we firmly present the promise of eternal life, the Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ destroyed the power of death. As prayed in the preface of the dead from the Roman Missal we believe that life is changed not ended; therefore we should aim to instil this assured hope when we respond to bereavement within the life of our Academies.

Resources that can aid those implementing this policy are to be found in the Appendices of this document but we would like to take this moment to highlight the *Managing a Bereavement: Resource Pack* produced by the Nottinghamshire County or Nottingham City Council's Educational Psychology Service, RAINBOWS [www.rainbowtrust.org.uk](http://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk) and CRUSE [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk).

## 2.2 Aims

The Good Shepherd Academy Bereavement Policy is intended to put into practise the virtues and values of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust, that are expressed in our mission statements and can be seen in many other parts of the daily Academy life and ethos. Therefore, the main aim of the policy is to provide all members of our communities who experience bereavement with adequate and appropriate support. Such support should include:

- A. A safe environment for them to express their feelings and respond as they wish to their individual circumstances.
- B. Opportunities for the life of deceased members of the community to be celebrated and remembered.
- C. Space and time for the person to come to terms with their loss
- D. Immediate and on-going pastoral support for the bereaved.
- E. Access to specialist advice and support.

The policy also includes procedures and practises that should be implemented for these aims to be carried out. Though this will be a painful and difficult time for all involved, it is hoped that this policy will encourage our communities to be safe and caring environments for all affected.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The member of staff who will carry out the particular roles in managing the bereavement may vary between each institution due to differences in size, management or pastoral structures; however the management of a bereavement is a whole academy issue with each member playing their own part.
- 3.2 Governors and Academy Trust Directors are responsible for making sure this policy is implemented, reviewed and to support the Senior Management of the Academies where necessary.
- 3.3 The Head Teacher of The Good Shepherd Academy), in conjunction and with the support of its governing body, will have the overall responsibility for support and management in the event of a death or traumatic/significant loss. If they are not able

to carry out this task a member of the Academy's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will take on the role.

- 3.4 The Head Teacher of The Good Shepherd Academy or a member of the SLT, is responsible for ensuring the appropriate procedure (as detailed in 4. Procedures) are carried out correctly; particularly that:
- A. There is a first point of contact for the individual and/or the family.
  - B. The necessary levels of support are in place for the individual within the Academy.
  - C. There is a network of support for the wider Academy community.
  - D. Any external agencies and third parties involved are negotiated with.
  - E. All media enquiries are responded appropriately.
  - F. That the on-going progress of those effected is monitored.
- 3.5 Those nominated by the Head Teacher or those fulfilling their responsibilities as stated in 3.3 and 3.4, to carry out the pastoral care of an individual affected, should ensure that all necessary information is fed back to their line manager and the person responsible for managing the bereavement. It is important that all involved are kept informed of the care and support being given and any changes that is felt necessary to make.

#### 4. **Procedures**

- 4.1 Below are the procedures that should be implemented for the management of bereavements that may have different impacts on the Academy community. As stated previously each death, loss or significant change is an individual tragedy, each person should be given the opportunity to grieve in whatever way feels natural to them, some may need help discovering this.
- 4.2 The procedures set out below are designed to be guides to guarantee that each case is managed professionally. When these procedures refer to the Head Teacher, they also refer to whoever is managing the bereavement in their place, if the Head Teacher is unavailable see 3.3 of this policy.
- A. **The Death of a Student or Former Student**
- a. Head Teacher should be informed immediately by the person who has received the information and who the source of the information was.
  - b. Upon receiving this information, the Head Teacher should verify that the information is correct and accurate before taking any further action. This may include contacting the source of the information, members of the Academy who may be have more information or any appropriate third party/external agency.

- c. When the information has been deemed accurate the Head Teacher should contact the family to offer the Academy's condolences and offer support, particularly for any siblings in the Academy.
- d. The Head Teacher should then inform members of staff who were pastorally responsible for the student i.e. class teacher(s), the Lay Chaplain and Parish Priest who should also be informed so they can be ready to support staff and students of the Academy.
- e. The Head Teacher will then arrange for all other staff to be notified as appropriate. This can take the form of verbal communication through staff briefing or phone call or in written communication.
- f. If the student is still on roll, all other students who SLT feel is appropriate, will be notified. During term time this will be done through the SLT.
- g. The students who are in the same tutor group or class of the deceased, the tutor/teacher should be notified by the SLT with support from a Lay Chaplain or Parish Priest.
- h. The parents and carers of informed children will receive notification of the event via phone, text or written communication – the form of communication will depend on the circumstances of the case.
- i. If the student is not on roll but had left the Academy quite recently it may be appropriate to follow the procedure given above in paragraph 4.A.fg.
- j. If the circumstances of the student or former student's death will draw the attention of local or national media, the Head Teacher should arrange with Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust Central team for an agreed statement to be written outlining the Academy's response to the death and some details of their time at the Academy.
- k. If appropriate the Lay Chaplain and/or Parish Priest should contact the family which could include personally visiting the family with the Head Teacher to offer support.
- l. The Lay Chaplain or Head Teacher should offer the family the opportunity of a memorial in the Academy and co-ordinate the Academy's involvement, if welcomed, in the funeral including representation.
- m. The official memorial offered should firstly be a Mass due the great graces received by the bereaved and the deceased through the sacrifice of the Mass; however if for any reason this would not be appropriate, a Liturgy will be planned and the family invited. A Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased may be celebrated in private.
- n. If the family request the Academy's support, the Lay Chaplain should co-ordinate with the Priest celebrating the funeral on how this should be done. If the funeral is not a Catholic funeral, the Lay Chaplain should co-ordinate with the Minister, Religious Leader or the funeral directors planning the ceremony.

- o. If welcomed by the family the Lay Chaplain with the Head Teacher should arrange for a memorial in school grounds i.e. a tree, a bench, plaque etc.

**B. The Death of a member of Staff or former member of Staff**

- a. The Head Teacher should be informed immediately by the person who has received the information and who/what the source of the information is.
- b. Upon receiving this information, the Head Teacher should verify that the information is correct and accurate before taking any further action. This may include contacting the source of the information, members of the Academy who may have more information or any appropriate third party/external agency.
- c. When the information has been deemed accurate, the Head Teacher should contact the family to offer the Academy's condolences and offer support; particular for any children of the deceased within the Academy.
- d. The Head Teacher should then inform members of staff who worked closely with the deceased such as the line manager and other members of the department. The Lay Chaplain and Parish Priest should also be informed at this stage, so they can be ready to support staff and students of the Academy.
- e. The Head Teacher will then arrange for all other staff to be notified as appropriate, this can take the form of verbal communication through staff briefing or phone call or in written communication.
- f. If the deceased was still employed by the Academy, students will be notified (when considered appropriate to do so). During term time this will be done through the SLT. For the students who were in the tutor group or class of the deceased, this should be done by the Head Teacher, Lay Chaplain, Parish Priest or a member of the SLT.
- g. Parents and carers of informed children will receive notification of the event via phone, text or written communication – the form of communication will depend of the circumstances of the case.
- h. If the deceased was not employed by the Academy but had left quite recently it may be appropriate to follow the procedure given above; paragraph 4.B.f-g
- i. If the circumstances of the member of staff or former member of staff's death will draw the attention of local or national media, the Head Teacher should arrange with Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust Central team for an agreed statement to be written outlining the Academy's response to the death and some details of their time at the Academy.
- j. If appropriate the Lay Chaplain and/or Parish Priest should contact the family which could include personally visiting the family with the Head Teacher to offer support.
- k. The Lay Chaplain or Principal should offer the family the opportunity of a memorial in the Academy and co-ordinate the Academy's involvement, if



welcomed, in the funeral including representation. The official memorial offered should firstly be a Mass due the great graces received by the bereaved and the deceased through the sacrifice of the Mass. However, if for any reason this would be inappropriate, a Liturgy will be planned and the family invited. A Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased may be celebrated in private.

- l. If the family request the Academy's support, the Lay Chaplain should co-ordinate with the Priest celebrating the funeral on how this should be done. If the funeral is not a Catholic funeral, the Lay Chaplain should co-ordinate with the Minister, Religious Leader or the funeral directors planning the ceremony.
- m. The Principal may deem it necessary to close the Academy so that members of staff are able to attend the funeral. However, if the member of staff had left the Academy quite a long time ago, this may not be deemed necessary. Current staff wanting to attend the funeral should be given the opportunity to do so and the necessary procedures for staff absence followed.
- n. If welcomed by the family the Lay Chaplain with the Head Teacher should arrange for a memorial in school grounds i.e. a tree, a bench, plaque etc

C. The Death of a Governor, former Governor, Priest, or other member of the Academy

- a. The Head Teacher should be informed immediately by the person who has received the information and who/what the source of the information is.
- b. Upon receiving this information, the Head Teacher should verify that the information is correct and accurate before taking any further action. This may include contacting the source of the information, members of the Academy who may be have more information or any appropriate third party/external agency.
- c. When the information has been deemed accurate, the Head Teacher should contact the family to offer the Academy's condolences and offer support; particular for any children of the deceased within the Academy.
- d. The Head Teacher should then inform other Governors and members of staff who worked closely with the deceased. The Lay Chaplain or Parish Priest (unless of course it is the Parish Priest who has died) should also be informed so they can be ready to support staff and students of the Academy.
- e. The Head Teacher will then arrange for all other staff to be notified as appropriate, this can take the form of verbal communication through staff briefing or phone call or in written communication.
- f. If the Head Teacher deems it necessary, then the students should be informed. During term time, this will be done in the case of Primary Academies, via a member of SLT.
- g. Parents and carers of informed children will receive notification of the event via phone, text or written communication – the form of communication will depend of the circumstances of the case.

- h. If the circumstances of the deceased's death will draw the attention of local or national media, the Head Teacher should arrange with Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust Central team for an agreed statement to be written outlining the Academy's response to the death and some details of their time at the Academy.
- i. If deemed appropriate, the Lay Chaplain and/or Parish Priest should contact the family which could include personally visiting the family with the Head Teacher to offer support. The Lay Chaplain or Head Teacher should offer the family the opportunity of a memorial in the Academy and co-ordinate the Academy's involvement, if welcomed, in the funeral including representation. The official memorial offered should firstly be a Mass due the great graces received by the bereaved and the deceased through the sacrifice of the Mass. However, if for any reason this would be inappropriate, a Liturgy will be planned and the family invited. A Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased may be celebrated in private.
- j. If the family, or in the event of the death of a Priest the Diocese or Parish, request the Academy's support the Lay Chaplain should co-ordinate with the Priest celebrating the funeral how this should be done. If the funeral is not a Catholic funeral the Lay Chaplain should co-ordinate with the Minister, Religious Leader or the funeral directors planning the ceremony.
- k. The Head Teacher may deem it necessary to close the Academy so that members of staff to attend the funeral. However, if the deceased was no longer an active member of the Academy community it may not be deemed necessary. Staff wanting to attend the funeral should be given the opportunity and the necessary procedures for staff absence followed.
- l. If welcomed by the family the Lay Chaplain with the Head Teacher should arrange for a memorial in school grounds i.e. a tree, a bench, plaque etc
- m. If the deceased is a wider member of the Academy Community, such as a student or teacher in another local school or academy, the Academy's MP, local clergy etc. the Head Teacher should arrange for a letter of condolence to be written and sent to the relevant institution on behalf of the Academy. The Academy should also pay for a Mass to be said and a Mass card sent with the letter.

**D. Supporting a Bereaved Student (Death)**

- a. The member of staff receiving the information of student losing a loved one should pass the information to those who have pastoral responsibility for the student and the SLT.
- b. At this point the Lay Chaplain should be informed and either student services or the office staff so they can inform all teaching staff. All staff will be asked to be extra supportive and considerate to the student during this time.

- c. The Lay Chaplain or Head Teacher should contact the family and pass on the Academy's condolences. They should all inform the family of what support is available, particularly access to the Chapel or a quiet space for reflection.
- d. When the student returns to school, particularly if they are returning very soon after the death, they should be met by the Lay Chaplain or a member of staff well known to the student. They will then offer the student the various support structures available within the Academy.
- e. The progress of the student should be monitored over the coming months, this will include academic, social and general attitude.
- f. Bereavement will effect students in different ways, some will be able to work through at first but then be hit by the reality of the loss later on; others may have a sudden yet short traumatic response, while with others this could be sustained.
- g. When supporting a number of students, it might be an idea to create a group that can meet regularly to discuss their feelings and develop strategies to express grief while carrying on with life.
- h. If any member of staff has a concern for a student's mental or physical well-being they must contact the student's class teacher or form tutor who should in turn speak to the Head Teacher who will speak to the child's family.

**E. Supporting a Bereaved Staff Member (death)**

- a. The person receiving the information of a member of staff losing a loved one should pass the information to the Head Teacher and the person's line manager. At this point the Lay Chaplain should be informed and the office staff so they can inform all teaching staff.
- b. The Head Teacher, Lay Chaplain or Line Manger should contact the member of staff to pass on the Academy's condolences. They should all inform them of what support is available.
- c. Requests for compassionate leave of absence, including requests to attend a funeral, should be made on the completion of a leave of absence form where it is practical/possible to do so. The member of staff who oversees human resources should liaise with the Head Teacher in supporting the person through their bereavement.
- d. The Academy, if welcomed by the individual, will send representatives to the funeral. Staff who wish to attend should complete a leave of absence form following the usual procedure.

**5. On-going Care and Support (death)**

- 5.1 Paragraph 5.2 & 5.3 are in regard to students who have suffered a bereavement; 5.4 is in regard to members of staff and 5.5 & 5.6 to both.

- 5.2 The Class Teacher/Form Tutor will have daily contact with the student and should act as the primary source of support and link to the student's family. As and when they feel it is appropriate, they should keep the family informed of how the student is coping with the loss in school and can be informed by the family of the student's home life as well. Any concerns, continuing problems or need for further support should be raised with the SLT/SENCo; parents must be kept informed of any issues and support arising from these. This support must be considered on an individual level and be as and when it is required; the student must have access to this whenever they require it. CAMHS may also be involved. A record of all communication should be kept as a matter of good practise.
- 5.3 The Lay Chaplain, Parish Priest or R.E. Coordinator as well as offering pastoral support such as a listening ear, can offer spiritual support too. This can involve offering a quiet place for prayer and reflection, praying with the student, answering questions on the Catholic understanding of death and the afterlife. As well as directing the student through activities that can be found in Appendix 4 of this policy.
- 5.4 The Line Manager of a bereaved staff member should be the first point of contact for them. They should liaise with the Human Resources department in the Central Team to ensure that appropriate support structures are in place for allowing the member of staff to take a break from, return to or carrying on with their work within the Academy. They should closely monitor how the bereaved person is adapting to this loss and raise any concerns they have if they believe the individual is not coping well.
- 5.5 Bereavement Counselling may be offered initially or if deemed necessary over a sustained basis. The right path of counselling for the bereaved must be sort after, this may be within the Academy life, or it may involve outside agencies.
- 5.6 Significant change or loss: Academies need to be aware that a significant change in a person's life such as divorce, separation or movement, evoke a form of bereavement in a child or adult and must be handled as such. The affected person can demonstrate all of the distressing signs of bereavement. Paragraphs D and E's procedures may become applicable and the relative support must be offered.

## **7 Training**

- 7.1 It is important that all involved with the implementation of this policy feel comfortable and able to do so, therefore there should be adequate training provided for those who wish to access it.
- 7.2 For most staff this training will take the form of raising general awareness, ensuring members of staff know their responsibilities and who they should contact in given situations.
- 7.3 For staff particularly concerned with the management of a bereavement, they should be given the opportunity to undertake relevant training.
- 7.4 The charity CRUSE provides regional training on a regular basis their details can be found in Appendix 6.

## **8 Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

- 8.1 The Governors of each Academy within Our Lady of Lourdes Multi Academy Trust are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- 8.2 It will be reviewed annually.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Passages of Scripture for Bereavement

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” John 14:1-4

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Romans 8:16-17

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:23-26

“Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them,

and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:1-4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, Psalm 23:4

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. Romans 14:8

Appendix 2: Prayers for those who have died.

Eternal rest grant unto *(Insert name)*, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Lord Jesus,

I am very sad at the death of my friend/brother/sister/dad/mum, I feel very separated from them. I know that they are with you and you are looking after them. I also believe that you are everywhere, so where ever I go both you and my friend/brother/sister/dad/mum will be watching over me.

Amen

God,

I want to thank you for the life of *(insert name)*, for all the happy times we had together. When I am sad and missing them, help me to remember all these happy memories and that now they are happy with you in heaven.

Amen.

Dear Jesus,

We ask you to look after *(Insert name)* and bring them into your Kingdom of Heaven. We also pray for all their family and friends who are very upset.

Amen

Loving Father and God,

You sent your Son to us so that death would not be the end, you have given us eternal life so that life is now changed not ended. We pray for *(Insert name)* who has died, welcome him in paradise where there is no more pain, no more suffering and no more tears. Help all of us who miss them and are now very sad with their passing; give us strength to live our lives knowing that we will meet them again in heaven. Amen

Appendix 3: Poems to help bereavement.



### **Look for me in Rainbows**

Time for me to go now, I won't say goodbye;  
Look for me in rainbows, way up in the sky.  
In the morning sunrise when all the world is new,  
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.  
Time for me to leave you, I won't say goodbye;  
Look for me in rainbows, high up in the sky.  
In the evening sunset, when all the world is through,  
Just look for me and love me, and I'll be close to you.  
It won't be forever; the day will come and then  
My loving arms will hold you, when we meet again.  
Time for us to part now, we won't say goodbye;  
Look for me in rainbows, shining in the sky.  
Every waking moment, and all your whole life through  
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.  
Just wish me to be near you,  
And I'll be there with you.

Conn Bernard (1990). Vicki Brown

### **Do not stand at my grave and weep.**

Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glint on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you wake in the morning hush,  
I am the swift, uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circling flight.  
I am the soft starlight at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and weep.  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry.  
I am not there, I did not die!

Mary Frye (1932)

### **Turn Again to Life**

If I should die and leave you here a while,  
be not like others sore undone,  
who keep long vigil by the silent dust.  
For my sake turn again to life and smile,  
nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do  
something to comfort other hearts than thine.  
Complete these dear unfinished tasks of mine  
and I perchance may therein comfort you.

Mary Lee Hall

**Epitaph on a Friend**

*(Good for a teacher)*

An honest man here lies at rest,  
The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
The friend of age, and guide of youth:  
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,  
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd;  
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there is none, he made the best of this.

Robert Burns

#### Appendix 4: Activities for allowing children to express grief.

A. Writing a prayer:

It is in moments of great tragedy that many people turn especially to God, feeling powerless they turn to Him who is omnipotent. The prayer written by the child could be asking God to look after their loved one, hoping they are happy in heaven, for the repose of the deceased's soul, asking the deceased to look after them from heaven, thanking God for the life of the deceased. Encourage the child to write the prayer from the heart expressing everything they are concerned about.

B. Writing a letter to the deceased/parted:

Often a bereavement can come unexpected and leaving the child unprepared. They may feel like there were things that were left unsaid, if left unaddressed this could cause harm to the child, maybe leaving them with a strong sense of guilt or frustration. Encourage the child to write everything they want to say in a letter to the deceased, this could include feelings of: sorrow; anger; thankfulness or just an opportunity to say goodbye. This can also act as an on-going coping mechanism allowing the child to express different emotions as they move through the different stages of the grieving process

C. Drawing a picture:

This can be particularly affective for younger children and those who feel less able to vocabularies their feelings. The opportunity to draw allows the child to gain control again of the situation and also allows those supporting the child to be aware of what the child is thinking.

D. A memorial space:

This could be particularly helpful for a group of children who are grieving together. The space should be accessible to the students and marked clearly, maybe with a photograph, they should be able to place here flowers, pictures, prayers, candles etc. as signs of expressing this grief. After the funeral this should be carefully removed by informing the children beforehand and asking them to help plan a lasting memorial such as a tree, bench or plaque.

## Appendix 5: Beliefs of different faith traditions regarding death and the afterlife.

What is presented here is not meant to be an in-depth exploration of the beliefs of all major religions. Rather it is a short overview of the religious beliefs of the majority of the members of the Academy communities.

**Buddhism:** Buddhists do not believe in a God, so remembrances would not mention a deity. They believe in the concept of rebirth, after the person dies the Karma (the accumulated effects of a person's actions) will direct their next standard of life. Buddhist funerals are dignified but not sad events, and the body is usually cremated

**Christianity:** Christianity is focused on the promise of eternal life that is entered into after death, thanks to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Cremation or burial of the body is permitted. Most funerals will take place in a Church; Catholics Funerals can either be a similar service or a Mass. Depending on the denomination these funerals can be celebrations of life or solemn and reflective; flexible in content or a set liturgy. Catholics believed that it is important to pray for those who have died as this can aid in the soul's journey into heaven. Most protestant will not pray for the dead as they believe what happens to the soul after death is determined by their life and faith while on earth.

**Hinduism:** Hindus believe in reincarnation; they believe this is because it is the soul's desire to return to the Supreme Spirit (creator). To do this it must be clean and the purification takes a number of life times. Post-mortems are prohibited and adults must be cremated; though infants and young children may be buried. This should be done as soon as possible preferably the same day. White clothing is a sign of mourning.

**Islam:** The Islamic Faith has very particularly funeral rituals. They believe the soul leaves the body at the moment of death and the body then belongs to God. Cremation is not allowed as it believes it will prohibit the soul from returning to God. Muslims prefer to bury the body within 24 hours, women do not attend funeral services and men wear white clothing as a sign of respect.

**Judaism:** The Jewish scriptures do not make many references to the afterlife and there are divided thoughts upon it. Cremation is not permitted and it is disrespectful to delay the burial it should take place within 24 hours. There are four stages of mourning for Jews: the first is between the death and the funeral when the mourners should be released from all other obligations; the second is the week

after the funeral when the mourners stay at home and receive fellow Jews to pray with them; the third is the first month which allows for gradual return to normal life; the final period last eleven months when male mourners are required to recite the Kaddish prayer every morning.

Secular Humanists: Do not believe in a God or afterlife but highly value human life and personality. Humanist funerals remember and honour the person who has died while facing the finality of death with courage.

Sikhism: Hold similar burial rites and beliefs as Hindus; bodies are cremated not buried. White is the colour for mourning.

- Childhood Bereavement UK help children and young people (up to age 25), parents, and families, to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. They also provide training to professionals, equipping them to provide the best possible care to bereaved families. National Helpline **0800 02 888 40** (Freephone. Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm) <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>
- The Compassionate Friend- Nationwide network for bereaved parents and families; Tele: 0345 123 2304 [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)
- Cruse Bereavement Care- local support for children and young people, including practical and financial matters; 1:1 counselling: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/> Free helpline: 0808 808 1677
- Winston’s Wish Family Line- information; guidance; residential weekends 08452 030405; [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)
- Care for the Family- support for bereaved parents; organised and ran by those who have experienced a loss: [www.cff.org.uk](http://www.cff.org.uk); 029 2081 0800;
- Samaritans: (0)20 8394 8300; <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/>
- The Laura Centre- support for those who have lost a child; or school aged children who have lost a parent: 01162 544341; [www.thelauracentre.org](http://www.thelauracentre.org)
- Nottingham Bereavement Trust: 0800 435455 <https://www.bereavement-trust.org.uk/>
- Rainbows <http://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk> Telephone: 01372 363438
- Speech mark – ‘Helping children with Feelings’ [www.speechmark.net](http://www.speechmark.net)
- A series of books produced by Speechmark called *Helping Children with Feelings* goes through many different situations providing activities and guidance for children.

# GRIEF WHEEL

