



Bereavement or Sudden Death Policy

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This policy should be interpreted in the context of other relevant College Policies and Procedures, particularly BCA Safeguarding Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (December 2017), BCA Safeguarding Annual Audit (December 2017) and the Single Equality Scheme (October 2017)

Purpose

Providing high quality education that gives our students the knowledge, skills and experience to be successful in their chosen career.

BCA Equality and Diversity Ethos Statement

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability, Socio-economic Disadvantage.

1. Introduction and Background

From time to time every college experiences the death of a student, member of staff or an extended family member. As young people spend the vast majority of their time at college, members of staff will be the primary source of care and support. Individuals and families react to bereavement in their own very unique ways. The trauma of bereavement can have a profound effect on the college community. It is important for our college to reflect upon an appropriate response to bereavement and to develop flexible contingency plans that reflect how the college could or should respond in a tragic situation.

The purpose of the Bereavement Policy is to help everyone involved at a time when there may be shock, upset and confusion, ensuring that there is as little disruption as possible, effective communication takes place and each member of the college community is supported to help them through a very difficult time.

This policy considers what is appropriate when a student, a member of staff or a member of the college community's close family member dies.

2. When a Death Occurs

The Senior Designated Safeguarding Person or Student Welfare Manager will be the primary point of contact with a family when a death has occurred. The SDSP/SWM will gather factual information regarding the death and will consult with the family regarding their wishes in sharing the information with the college community. It is important that factual information is shared in a timely manner so that assumptions and rumours are not spread, as they can only add to the family's distress. It is essential that relevant staff are informed as soon as possible, ideally before students. Students, when relevant, should also be told. This is best done in familiar groups by someone they know. Staff will need to have guidance on words to use and approach to take. Staff are encouraged to seek to identify students who may be particularly vulnerable.

3. The Death of a Student

In the case of the death of a student appropriate support should be provided for the whole college community. A book of remembrance could be set up in an appropriate location where the bereaved can come to express their grief and loss. If appropriate a meeting of remembrance, for relevant tutor groups, may be held. Support for staff who are directly involved with grieving students is important, and staff should have the opportunity to meet to provide an opportunity to share feelings and reactions. If the press are involved in reporting on the death, the Principal will consult with the Clerk to the Corporation regarding an official statement on behalf of the College.

In general it is best to have a minimum of disruption to the college timetable. The structure of the college day is important to maintain, but some flexibility may be required.

4. The Death of a Member of Staff

In the case of the death of a member of staff, appropriate support should be provided for the whole College community. A book of remembrance could be set up in an appropriate location where the bereaved can come to express their grief and loss.

A meeting of remembrance may also be held. Special support, including appropriate cover may be needed for staff who worked particularly closely with the deceased. The Principal will determine the appropriate period of time for these pastoral supports to continue. If the press are involved in reporting on the death, the Principal will consult with the Clerk to the Corporation regarding an official statement on behalf of the College.

In general it is best to have a minimum of disruption to the college timetable. The structure of the college day is important to maintain, but some flexibility may be required. Great sensitivity and care will need to be taken in determining how lessons will be covered immediately following the death.

5. The Death of a Family Member of the College Community

In the case of the death of a family member of a student, if the death happens while the young person is at college, a representative for the family, preferably a parent should come to the college to inform the student. Before notifying fellow students, the DSP/SWM should speak with the bereaved student's family to determine what information should be given to peers. Peers should be informed on how the bereaved student wants to manage what has happened (i.e. speak openly and take initiative, or let the bereaved student decide when to talk about the death.)

Following the death of a family member it can be expected that the bereaved student/member of staff may have a reduced capacity for college work. The bereaved student/member of staff may need extra help at a later time, when working capacity becomes normal again.

6. Funeral Procedure

When a funeral has been planned for the deceased, it is essential that the college is sensitive to the family's culture and abides by the family's wishes. The family may welcome involvement of members of the college community but equally, may wish to keep the funeral private. The Principal will identify which staff and students may want to attend and the practicalities of issues such as staff cover and transport. The Principal will also consult with staff and students in determining what is appropriate in terms of sending flowers, a collection and/or any further more permanent remembrance.