

BEREAVEMENT POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation		
Created	April 2020	Vice Principal
Last Review	April 2023	Pastoral Leads, Vice Principal
Approved	April 2023	Principals and Heads
Next Review	April 2024	Pastoral Leads, Compliance Manager

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS. This Policy should be read in conjunction with Thomas's Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct, Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bereavement is an experience which will be faced by everyone at some point. Within a school community there will almost always be some pupils who are living with bereavement – or sometimes the entire school may be impacted by the death of a pupil, member of staff or someone who is an intrinsic part of the community. The term 'bereavement' refers to the process of grieving and mourning and is associated with a deep sense of loss and sadness. Empathetic understanding within the familiar and secure surroundings of school can be of benefit in providing support in difficult and upsetting circumstances.

Most grieving children do not need a 'bereavement expert', they need people who care. Schools, just by carrying on with their usual day-to-day activities while being aware of the bereavement, can do a huge amount to support a grieving pupil.

The purpose of this policy is to give all staff confidence in recognising and adopting a particular procedure. It should be noted that a universally accepted procedure outline will, in itself, not enable everyone to feel comfortable in dealing with the practicalities of death and bereavement. To this end, the school will maintain a list of staff who have indicated a willingness to offer support in this way.

2. AIMS

The aims of this policy are:

- to give a framework and guidance in how to deal sensitively and compassionately with a bereavement;
- to support pupils and/or members of staff before (where applicable), during and after bereavement;
- to enhance effective communication and clarify a pathway of support between members of staff, pupils, the family/carers and the community;
- to identify key staff within the school who can offer support with a bereavement;
- to offer staff training on grief counselling and how to manage bereavement situations;
- to have clear expectations about the way the school will respond to a death, and provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for all.

In acknowledging these aims Thomas's recognises:

- that grief may not always be apparent to the onlooker, but its invisibility makes it no less real;
- that differing religions/cultures view death and bereavement from different perspectives and all viewpoints should be taken into consideration and given equal value in the school environment;
- that the death of a child has huge repercussions beyond the immediate teaching/care team of that child and every effort should be taken to inform and deal sensitively with the far reaching contacts.

One of the main concerns must inevitably be the immediate family of the deceased and, as a school, Thomas's states its commitment to any such family as may need practical, emotional and ongoing support.

3. PROCEDURES

When someone dies in the school community, whether the death is one that affects an individual pupil or of someone known to the whole school community, the school's response will be remembered by everyone affected, child or adult. It will depend on individual circumstances and the needs of pupils, staff and the wider school community.

3.1 Family bereavement

When the school is informed of a family bereavement or loss the following actions should be considered:

- The Head (or a senior member of staff nominated by the Head) should contact the family to offer appropriate support.
- They will ask the family how much and what the child already knows and how they have been involved and explain how the school can be involved to support the child and the family. A child's true understanding of death is fairly dependent on their age, see Appendix 1, and this should be acknowledged when considering guidance.
- When the death affects an individual pupil, they should be asked how they would like the news to be shared. Do they want everyone, no one or just their close friends to know?
- Other members of staff may need to be involved, eg; the Deputy Head Pastoral, School Medical Lead or Counsellor.
- A selection of resources available in school can be of benefit, eg; stories to gently introduce young children to the concept of death. Novels and poems offer young people a chance to learn through reading, listening and discussion.
- Members of staff, in particular a pupil's class teacher, should maintain close contact. This gives opportunities to discuss concerns but also remember that successes are equally important and can provide reassurance. Grieving children and young people can display altered behaviours in different situations. Good communication with home will help school be aware of this and provide a more realistic picture of how the pupil is coping.

For members of staff experiencing close family bereavement, compassionate leave and ongoing support will be arranged in line with the Staff Absence Guidelines.

3.2 *The death of a pupil or member of staff*

In the event of a pupil or member of staff dying it is important that all people who are close to the deceased are told in a sensitive and supportive manner rather than risk them hearing it “on the grapevine”. In both cases, discussions should take place with the family and their wishes taken into account as to what information they wish to share with the school. A simple confirmation of death may be required until more details are available. The school can help to prevent speculation and rumours, as well as be a source of support for the family and school community.

3.3 *Initial Response*

- If the school is open the Head will inform the Senior Leadership Team and administrative staff as they need to help in the next part of the process.
- If the information comes outside working hours, the person who receives the news will inform the Head who will then tell the Senior Leadership Team and any others who need to know initially, bearing in mind the impact of hearing such news not in person.
- Members of staff should generally be told before the pupils. In particular teachers who had a particularly close relationship with the deceased. They should then be given time to process the news and start to grieve in an appropriate private space. See Appendix 2.
- Pupils may be told in small groups, or as a larger gathering depending on the circumstances. See Appendix 2.
- After the news has been made known, it may be appropriate to have a break in the timetable to allow the community to process the news and take some time out.
- It is also appropriate to let parents know in order that they can support or comfort their children.

3.4 *The first few days*

In the first few days after a death of a pupil or member of staff, Thomas’s will aim to provide stability and normality as far as possible, although some flexibility may be necessary.

- Where possible a safe space will be allocated to allow anyone to take time out to grieve and manage overwhelming feelings.
- Nominated staff with responsibilities for supporting staff and children will have their normal activities covered if necessary.
- The needs of administrative staff who are taking telephone calls and dealing with parents will also be taken into account.
- It may be helpful to hold a special assembly to bring the school together to acknowledge what has happened, to reflect on and remember the life of the person who has died and to normalise and share grief. It can also give the message that it is okay to be sad but equally alright to not be affected and to inform pupils and staff of any support that is available.
- Anyone who wishes to attend should be able to be there: teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and where space and logistics allow, any family who may wish to attend. Many families find comfort in other people organising something special and appreciate being there. Others may not wish to participate but should be given the opportunity to do so.

- A special assembly should have a clear beginning, middle and end, explaining the purpose and length of the assembly. There should be a brief reminder of the circumstances surrounding the death and when it happened. Pupils may like to participate to feel involved and have a sense of doing something positive.

A temporary tribute/book of condolence may be set up, in a safe accessible area where pupils can be supervised. The family should be offered the opportunity to visit the school if they wish to, or the school can take photographs to share with them later. Staff and pupils should be consulted before removing any temporary tribute, giving notice to prepare them beforehand.

Support for pupils may be provided by school staff, external agencies or local services. The School will advise teachers to be alert to any pupils who are struggling with their grief and keep in close contact with their families to work together to support and comfort them.

Supporting bereaved pupils can be very stressful for staff who may themselves be struggling with their own reactions and emotions. At certain points in time, some members of staff may be more vulnerable due to circumstances in their own lives and they should be encouraged to speak up if they are finding the situation unmanageable in order that they can themselves be supported.

Each school employs a qualified School Counsellor. At the point of any bereavement involving a member of the wider school community, the School Counsellor will work in close collaboration with the Deputy Head Pastoral team and other relevant members of staff to put in place any support that may be required. This may include taking a professional advisory role and providing therapeutic support to pupils, parents and staff. It may also involve supporting the Pastoral/Wellbeing Lead in commissioning external support from outside agencies (e.g. bereavement charities, social care) if necessary.

3.5 *Funeral*

Staff and pupils may wish to attend the funeral; this may depend on who has died and their relationship with the family. The school should communicate with the family to find out whether they welcome members of the school community before confirming any arrangements.

If the family consent, the Head should ensure that all staff are asked if they wish to attend the funeral. It may be that not all members of staff are able to attend due to staffing ratios, if the school remains open, but should this be the case, decisions will be made according to the nature of relationships between people and the person who has died.

Pupils may express a wish to attend or take part in the funeral service, but they should only do so with the prior agreement of the deceased's family, relatives or next of kin, as well as the agreement of their own parents/carers. Consideration will need to be given as to their supervision and decisions made as to whether they attend with parents/carers or as part of a school group.

The Head or in the case of unavoidable absence, the deputy, will always attend the funeral as a mark of respect and to represent the school.

After the service staff and pupils should be encouraged to meet and express their thoughts and feelings as such services are important in the grieving process

3.6 *After a bereavement*

For a bereaved child or member of staff, returning to school can be traumatic. It is an indication that life is "normal" yet their lives feel anything but.

- It may be helpful to meet with the pupil and family to discuss their return to school. This could be with a familiar adult such as their class teacher, or the Deputy Head Pastoral or the Head. The purpose of this meeting should outline:
 - Acknowledge the death;
 - Find out how the pupil would like to share the news;
 - Ask if the pupil would like to choose a member of staff with whom they feel to have a close attachment to be their point of contact within the school;
 - Organise a safe space for the pupil to go if they feel overwhelmed by their grief and need “time out”. How will they inform staff of this? For example a “time out” card, a non-verbal sign or message. How will this be communicated to all staff?
 - Set guidelines for communication – with the pupil, with members of staff and between home and school;
 - Consider providing support for peers when they have a bereaved friend.
- Where there has been a close family bereavement, or following a meeting as suggested above, everyone (teachers, support staff, volunteers if appropriate and pupils) should be made aware of the situation before the pupil returns (provide the family agree).
- Teachers should try to foster an environment that is compassionate, yet disciplined. Family life at this time may be distressing with routines upset and the future uncertain. As such school routines should be kept as normal as possible.
- Bereaved pupils need time. It may be many months before they can fully cope with the pressures of school work again. They will be grieving for life and the loss will always be with them. Teachers should explain to other pupils how the bereaved child may be feeling and encourage them to be openly supportive.
- It should also be noted that grief may impact a pupil's progress. Some pupils may work really hard and put themselves under extra pressure to succeed, while others may find it difficult to focus in class. There may be changes in behaviour that need to be managed.
- Staff should be aware of anniversaries and significant days such as Mothering Sunday or Fathers' Day as this can spark a revival of feelings of bereavement. There will also be other, more personal, dates such as a birthday or anniversary of death that it would be helpful to note, so that additional support can be given at these times.
- Over time it is helpful to share information about a pupil's circumstances so that they do not need to repeat their story at each transition point. Transitions can include, changing class, year or teacher or moving to a new school.
- It should be remembered that even when deeply sad, children still need to be children. Loss and grief are very grown up experiences. School offers the chance to play, laugh, sing and generally just be a child without feeling guilty.

3.7 *Talking about bereavement*

People are often at a loss as to what to say or do to help a child who has been bereaved by the death of someone important to them. Every situation is different, and children will be affected to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the circumstances of the death and the nature of the relationship they had with the person who has died. For a child who wishes to, school staff can provide an opportunity to talk about what has happened with a familiar and trusted adult in relative peace and calm. When a parent

or sibling has died, children can try to spare their surviving parent by hiding their own grief and appearing to be OK. School is often seen as somewhere safe to express this grief. The following guidance may be useful:

- Do not avoid the subject, it can make matters worse. It is better to explain what has happened in a sensitive way to avoid rumours and whispers. Use the correct words 'death' and 'dead' rather than euphemisms such as 'lost', 'passed' or 'gone to sleep'.
- Try not to judge: Grief is a very personal experience. Every child and young person will grieve differently, even those from the same family. Teenagers in particular resent assumptions being made as to how they should be feeling and what they should be doing.
- Check out the facts: Staff should familiarise themselves with the circumstances surrounding the death. Communicate with the family and make sure that what is said will not conflict with the family's wishes. Different information from home and school will confuse a pupil and complicate their grief.
- Acknowledge what has happened: Do not be afraid to use the word 'death', 'I was very sorry to hear of the death of your ...'. A card to a bereaved pupil from his/her class is often appreciated and helps to keep up contact with school if they are not attending.
- Responses will vary: Adults should not assume that a lack of reaction means that they do not care. Initially, the full reality may not have sunk in. Young people can feel that they have to be seen to be coping as a sign of maturity. They should be allowed to express emotion and feelings and staff should not be afraid to share their own feelings of sadness.
- Children and young people need honesty. Although sometimes difficult, it is better to answer questions truthfully. If a child asks a difficult question, rather than answering straight away, ask the child what they think.
- Be prepared to listen: Schools are busy places and time may be limited, but an offer to spend a bit of quiet time with a pupil who clearly wants to talk will be greatly appreciated. Some will welcome the opportunity to just sit with a teacher and say nothing; for others it is enough to know that someone is keeping a lookout for them. If teachers are discussing something in class that will refer to the person who has died, they should not be afraid to do so. Avoiding references to the person who died might be perceived as a denial that they ever existed. If not sure, teachers should check with the bereaved pupil first, letting them know their intention.

3.8 *Remembering*

It may be appropriate and/or desired by the family to have a more lasting memorial in school. The Head or nominated person may wish to discuss suggestions for how to remember the deceased, for example a tree, special garden, piece of artwork or a bench. Pupils may also wish to be involved with plans. There will need to be an awareness of sensitivities of any future requirement for removal, relocation or replacement.

3.9 *Terminally ill pupil/member of staff*

Anticipated death can be as hard to deal with as sudden and unanticipated loss. Children and adults who are not expected to live may benefit enormously from normal routines such as attending school whilst they are still able to do so. This can present

challenges for the school community. Sensitive but honest communication between the family and professionals involved will help overcome most of these challenges.

In the event of a child or member of staff becoming terminally ill, their wishes and those of their parents/guardians/next-of-kin should always be respected. However the following guidance is useful:

- Pupils and adults who are constantly in and out of hospital should be welcome to attend school as far as their illness allows, to give an opportunity to have some normality in their lives. Continuing to take part in school routines as much as possible can give a feeling of achievement, with the emphasis on living rather than dying. It can also give back a sense of identity as a person rather than a patient.
- For children, the school and family (including the sick child) should decide together how to share the news that a pupil is terminally ill. It is not easy, but an open and honest approach is usually the best way.
- Classmates who have had the situation explained to them may be supported by being involved, for example by giving them jobs such as wheelchair pushing. These tasks should be shared and not become the responsibility of just one pupil.
- If the child is receiving treatment from a local hospice or hospital, it may be possible to call on a nurse or social worker whose job includes visiting schools to explain to pupils about a friend's illness and treatments involved. This should help alleviate any worries that fellow pupils may have. It is helpful for the school to at least identify the key professional responsible for the ill pupil and how to contact the professional for advice and support.
- Young people deal with difficult situations much better when truthful explanations are given regarding absences, changing appearance, lack of energy, treatments and exclusion from activities such as sport. Being naturally curious, classmates will ask questions, and these should be answered sensitively but factually.
- On occasions the child may wish to talk to their fellow classmates about their illness themselves. Honesty about death and dying may be the best line of approach. However the class teacher should be prepared to answer questions and reassure pupils.
- Teachers should aim to further maintain a sense of normality by continuing to expect usual standards of behaviour within the pupil's limitations. This helps to reduce feelings of favouritism amongst other pupils.
- The school will offer information to parents and carers on what to say to children when someone is dying. They may have concerns surrounding their own children being upset or made anxious by a classmate who is seriously ill. It can help to give reassurance that children and young people will have fewer anxieties if presented with the truth, rather than having to make up what is happening. With consent from the family of the sick child, information on the illness and treatments will help other parents and carers to understand and feel informed. The realisation that their children are contributing to an increased quality of life for the sick pupil may create a more positive approach.
- Teachers should try to support pupils by taking a lead in helping the class decide how to deal with an anticipated death. For example, the question of what should be done with the pupil's desk and the pupil's school work needs to be considered as well as how to ensure that the pupil's memory is preserved.

3.10 *Other circumstances.*

Every death is hugely personal and unique to those affected by it, however it occurs and for whatever reason. Further information on how to support death due to different circumstances can be found at www.childbereavementuk.org. A list of other resources can be found in Appendix 3.

4. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice.

DfE Guidance: 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2022)

DfE Departmental Advice 'Counselling in schools; a blueprint for the future (February 2016)

Bereavement UK website

Child Bereavement UK website

Winston's Wish website

Samaritans' website

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Children's understanding of death

Appendix 2: Guidance on speaking to children about the death of a pupil or member of staff

Appendix 3: Useful resources and links

APPENDIX 1: CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH

(FROM CHILD BEREAVEMENT UK, April 2023)

Children and young people mature at different rates and their understanding and responses to bereavement are likely to be based as much on their experience of life as on their chronological age. The age band categories given are guidelines only.

Children aged 2 to 5 years

Young children are interested in the idea of death in birds and animals. They can begin to use the word 'dead' and develop an awareness that this is different to being alive. Children of this age do not understand abstract concepts like 'forever' and cannot grasp that death is permanent. Their limited understanding may lead to an apparent lack of reaction when told about a death, and they may ask many questions about where the person who has died is and when that person will come back.

Children at this age expect the person to return. Young children tend to interpret what they are told in a literal and concrete way; therefore, it is important to avoid offering explanations of death such as 'lost', 'gone away' or 'gone to sleep' that may cause misunderstandings and confusion. Provide honest answers to their questions but do not feel you have to tell them everything in detail or all at once. Information can be built on over time.

Children may have disrupted sleep, altered appetite, less interest in play and may become more anxious about separation even when being left with familiar adults. There may be regression in skills such as language or toilet training.

Children of primary school age

Between the ages of 5 and 7 years, children gradually begin to develop an understanding that death is permanent and irreversible and that the person who has died will not return. Children who have been bereaved when they were younger will have to re-process what has happened as they develop awareness of the finality of death.

Children's imagination and 'magical thinking' at this age can mean that some children may believe that their thoughts or actions caused the death, and they can feel guilty. Not being given sufficient information in age-appropriate language can lead them to make up and fill in the gaps in their knowledge.

Children increasingly become aware that death is an inevitable part of life that happens to all living things. As a result, they can become anxious about their own, and others', health and safety.

Children at this age need honest answers to their questions that can be built on over time, and opportunities to express their feelings. They can need reassurance that nothing they said or thought caused the death.

Teenagers

Adolescence is a time of great change and grief impacts on the developmental task of moving from dependence to independence. Young people are moving from familial ties to increased involvement with peers. It can be difficult to ask for support while trying to demonstrate independence. Young people do not like to feel different from their peers in any way and being a bereaved young person can be extremely isolating. The support of peers with similar experiences can be very powerful.

Teenagers will have an adult understanding of the concept of death but often have their own beliefs and strongly held views, and may challenge the beliefs and explanations offered by others.

Some young people may respond to a death by becoming more withdrawn, some may 'act out' their distress while others cope with the awareness of their own mortality through risk-taking behaviour in an attempt to get back some control where life feels out of control for them. Others may take on adult responsibilities and become 'the carer' for those around them. Keeping to the usual boundaries of acceptable behaviour can be reassuring for bereaved young people.

Young people who have been bereaved at an earlier age may need to re-process their grief as they think about and plan for their future and fully understand the impact of life without the person who died.

APPENDIX 2: GUIDANCE ON IMPARTING NEWS ABOUT A BEREAVEMENT

Guidelines for breaking news about a death to staff and principals

- Arrange a staff meeting which should take place as soon as possible.
- Impart factual information. Never make assumptions or repeat what has been said by rumour. Give news sensitively and empathetically, being aware that people may react in different ways.
- Be aware of the relationships staff may have had with the person who has died.
- Other members of the school community should also be informed, such as:
 - Part time staff not in school that day;
 - Principals;
 - SEN team;
 - Peripatetic and support staff;
 - Other departments, eg transport, catering;
 - Previous school staff who worked closely with the child or teacher;
 - Any other professionals who may have been involved, eg Educational Psychologist.
- Consider the best way of imparting the information to those absent e.g. by doing home visit, by telephone, text or email etc.
- Identify individual members of staff who feel able to: a) support members of staff b) support groups of children. The most appropriate person to support the children should be well known to them and trusted.
- Identify a member of staff who will liaise with the individual's family, to deal with staff condolences and any funeral arrangements (if necessary).
- Identify an appropriate member of staff who will take telephone calls and/or direct them as appropriate. Try to establish a "protected" telephone line to ensure free flow of accurate information. Telephone line providers may provide an additional line if the situation requires one.
- Arrange a staff meeting at the end of the day to ensure staff are coping with the situation.
- Identify any unresolved problems or ongoing issues.
- Ensure that those staff who live alone have contact numbers of friends in case of need.
- Identify sources of advice and support to access for help in coming to terms with the bereavement

Guidelines for breaking news of the death to the children/young people

- Inform the children/young people as soon as possible about the death.
- Where possible, the pupils should be informed in small groups i.e. class or tutor groups
- Identify those children who had a long term and/or close relationship with the person who has died so they can be told separately. If appropriate, a special assembly could be held at a later time in the day to remember the person who has died.
- Start by acknowledging that you have some sad news to give
- Be honest. Give the news stating simple facts, using the words 'dead/died', not euphemisms
- If known, and with the permission of the family, explain briefly where and when the death occurred

- If facts are not known, say so, and that you will endeavour to find out. If rumours are rife, say which of these are not correct, if known. Where appropriate, remind pupils of their responsibilities and the impact of posting on social media
- Allow the children/young people to ask questions and answer them honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.
- Allow the children/young people to verbalise their feelings.
- Allow the children/young people to discuss the situation and share their experiences of death.
- Be honest about your own feelings and talk about your relationship with the person without eulogising them.
- Those children/young people who have had more involvement with the person should be given the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences either within the group or on a one-to-one situation.
- Ensure the children/young people understand that the death is nothing to do with anything they have said or done. It is in no way their fault.
- Reassure them that not all people who are ill or have had an accident will die and that many people get better.
- Acknowledge that not everyone will be feeling sad and that is okay
- Put an appropriate time limit on the discussion.
- Conclude the discussion with a prayer or special poem to remember the person who has died and their family.
- Allow a break in the timetable for pupils to process the news and take a little time out.
- If appropriate give pupils something practical and positive to do such as making cards, contributing to a book of condolence, writing or drawing messages, creating a piece of artwork
- Be available for any child/young person who needs additional help and support.

APPENDIX 3: USEFUL RESOURCES AND LINKS FOR RESPONDING TO BEREAVEMENT

Child Bereavement UK

Website: www.childbereavementuk.org
Email: support@childbereavementuk.org
Helpline: 08000 288 840 (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)
Live Chat: via website (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)

Winston's Wish

Website: www.winstonswish.org.uk
Email: ask@winstonswish.org
Helpline: 08088 020 021

Cruse Bereavement Care

Website: www.cruse.org.uk
Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk
Helpline: 08088 081 677

The Samaritans

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/>
Email: jo@samaritans.org
Helpline: 116 123

UK Trauma Council

<https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/traumatic-bereavement>

Books dealing with death and loss

UNDER 5 YEARS

Someone I know has died. Author: Trish Phillips

Innovative activity book with interactive features written for bereaved children to do by themselves or with adult help. For pre-school and early years.

Missing Mummy. Author: Rebecca Cobb

Beautifully illustrated and with moments of wonderful warmth, this is a touching, honest and helpful book about the death of a parent. With minimal text, it covers some of the worries and fears that a young child may have after a death, offering reassurance and hope.

I Miss You: A First Look at Death. Author: Pat Thomas

This book helps children understand that death is a natural complement to life, and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings for them to have.

When Dinosaurs Die – A guide to understanding death. Authors: Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown

A comprehensive, sensitive guide for families dealing with the loss of loved ones.

What Does Dead Mean? Authors: Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas, OBE

A book for young children to help explain death and dying, based on the many questions that children ask. This book looks at questions such as why 'Why can't doctors and nurses make people better?', and offers practical help for children, as well as guidance for parents and carers when a child is bereaved.

Is Daddy Coming Back in a Minute? Author: Elke Barber & Alex Barber

Alex is only three when his father has a heart attack. All on his own, Alex manages to get help but his beloved Daddy dies at the scene. Explains sudden death to pre-school children using words and illustrations they will understand.

Suzie Goes to a Funeral. Author: Charlotte Olson

Join Suzie as she goes to Grandma's funeral and says goodbye. Suzie can help explain to a child who may be anxious about going to a funeral for the first time.

5 – 11 YEARS

Remembering. Author: Dianne Leutner. Illustrated by: Daniel Postgate.

It's part book, part scrapbook and was created to help keep a child's memories alive after the loss of someone special and to give children a place to return to whenever they wish.

Waterbugs and Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Young children. Author: Doris Stickney

Written from a Christian perspective, this acclaimed book can be used to help explain the concept of death to young children. The story illustrates that death is inevitable, irreversible but natural.

Badger's Parting Gifts. Author: Susan Varley

After Badger dies his friends gradually come to terms with their grief by remembering all the practical things Badger taught them, and so Badger lives on in his friends' memories of him.

Always and Forever. Author: Alan Durant

When Fox dies the rest of his 'family' are absolutely distraught. How will Mole, Otter and Hare go on without their beloved friend? But, months later, Squirrel reminds them all of how funny Fox used to be, and they realise that Fox is still there in their hearts and memories.

Benny's Hat. Author: Juliet Clare Bell

Benny's Hat deals quietly with the huge subject of a sibling dying, from the viewpoint of the sister. It shows how children and young people might deal with serious illness and death differently to adults.

Stewart's Tree. Author: Cathy Campbell

This book for children aged 3+ helps explain sibling loss shortly after birth, and provides guidance for adults written by qualified clinicians.

Ben's Flying Flowers. Author: Inger Maier

When Emily loses her brother after a long illness, she feels alone, angry, and very, very sad. With the understanding and support of her parents, Emily learns what helps her sadness and also learns that remembering Ben and their happy life together builds healthy and helpful images that soothes her sad feelings and provide much comfort to her and her family.

Michael Rosen's Sad Book. Author: Michael Rosen

A very personal story that speaks to adults as well as children. The author describes feeling sad after the death of his son and what he does to try to cope with it.

Goodbye Mog. Author: Judith Kerr

The final book about Mog the forgetful cat. It tells how her family grieve her loss and then begin to move forward in their lives, while always remembering their beloved pet.

The Tenth Good Thing about Barney. Author: Judith Viorst

A book looking about death from the perspective of a child. Though dealing with the death of a pet, it helps children deal with the reality of any death, including why we have funerals. This book does not have religious overtones, so it can be used by families with all different sets of beliefs.

Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine: Your Activity Book to Help When Someone Has Died. Author: Winston's Wish

Offering practical and sensitive support for bereaved children, this book suggests a helpful series of activities and exercises and aims to help children make sense of their experience by reflecting on different aspects of their grief.

The Scar. Author: Charlotte Moundlic

A little boy responds to his mother's death in a genuine, deeply moving story leavened by glimmers of humour and captivating illustrations.

Mum's Jumper. Author: Jayde Perkin

If Mum has gone, how do you carry on? Missing her feels like a dark cloud that follows you around or like swimming to a shore that never comes any nearer. But memories are like a jumper that you can cuddle and wear. And Mum's jumper might be a way to keep her close.

The Memory Tree. Author: Britta Teckentrup

After fox dies his friends begin to gather in the clearing. As they share their memories, a tree begins to grow, becoming bigger and stronger, sheltering and protecting all the animals in the forest, just as Fox did when he was alive. This gentle and comforting tale celebrates life and the memories that are left behind when a loved one dies.

I Miss My Sister. Author: Sarah Courtauld

The beautiful and expressive colour illustrations help to guide the child through the different emotions they may encounter following the death of a sibling, as well as the different categories of grief over a period of time.

YOUNG PEOPLE (13 upwards)

What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies? Author: Trevor Romaine & Elizabeth Verdick

Suggests ways of coping with grief and offers answers to questions such as 'Why do people have to die?' and "How can I say Goodbye?"

Still Here with Me: Teenagers and Children on Losing a Parent. Author: Suzanne Sjoqvist

This book is a moving and thoughtful anthology of the experiences of thirty children and teenagers who have lost a parent. In their own words, children and young people of a variety of ages talk openly and honestly about losing their mother or father.

From a Clear Blue Sky. Author: Timothy Knatchbull

A powerful survivor's account of the IRA bomb that killed the author's 14-year-old twin brother, his grandparents and a family friend, published on the 30th anniversary of the atrocity.

Teenage Guide to Coping with Life after Death: Helping teenagers through the death of the Mum, Dad, Sister or Brother. Author: Grief Encounter

This guide is to introduce young people to some ideas, to Grief Encounter, and to other things that may help. Grief Encounter aim to help young people feel less alone, acknowledge what they are going through, and to help them feel back in control.

Grief Encounter. Author: Shelley Gilbert

The focus is on the death of a parent, but suitable for the loss of a sibling, grandparent, friend. Author recommends that the book is used with an adult, at least initially.

The young person's guide to grief and loss. Author: Ann Atkin

The book draws on tried and tested bereavement support resources, which have been re-worked in order to appeal to people in the 13-25 years age group.

WHEN A GRANDPARENT HAS DIED

Granpa. Author: John Burningham

Winner of the Kate Maschler Award, this poignant tale of friendship and loss is one children will long remember.

Grandad's Ashes. Author: Walter Smith

This beautifully illustrated picture book for children aged four to eight tells the story of four children who embark on an adventure to find their Grandad's favourite place.

Grandad's Bench. Author: Addy Farmer

This is a beautiful, sensitively told story of love and loss and of a special relationship between grandfather and grandson.