St Giles C.E. Primary School

Traumatic Events

Introduction

At St Giles CE Primary School, our Christian vision guides the way we care for one another during times of joy and times of sorrow.

We believe every child is uniquely valued and loved by God. Through compassion, hope, dignity and service, we seek to ensure that children and families experiencing loss are supported with sensitivity, understanding and care.

Our school community strives to be a place where children feel safe to express emotions, ask questions and receive support throughout their journey of grief.

At St Giles CE Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional wellbeing, safety and development of all children. This guidance has been reviewed in line with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and reflects our commitment to ensuring every child is valued, protected and supported during times of loss, grief and trauma.

In 1989, governments across the world adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), recognising that all children have the right to be treated with dignity and fairness, to be protected, to develop to their full potential and to participate in decisions which affect them.

The Convention sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that every child under the age of 18 is entitled to enjoy.

Key Articles

Article 2 - Non-Discrimination

Every child has the right to be treated equally regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender, disability, family background or any other status.

Article 28 - Right to Education

Every child has the right to an education. Schools must ensure that discipline respects children's dignity and promotes their wellbeing.

Article 29 - Goals of Education

Education should develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to their fullest potential whilst promoting respect, understanding, responsibility and care for others and the environment.

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- Support parents and carers in understanding children's responses to bereavement and traumatic events.
- Provide practical strategies to help children cope with loss and change.
- Signpost families to professional sources of support where required.
- Promote the emotional wellbeing, resilience and mental health of children.
- Ensure that bereaved children continue to feel safe, valued and included within the school community.

How St Giles CE Primary School Supports Bereaved Children

School Response to a Significant Incident

Following a significant incident affecting the school community, senior leaders may:

- Liaise with affected families.
- Seek advice from the Local Authority where appropriate.
- Communicate sensitively with parents and carers.
- Ensure staff receive relevant guidance and support.
- Monitor the wellbeing of affected pupils.
- Provide opportunities for remembrance where appropriate.
- Provide emotional support through trusted adults.
- Offer opportunities for children to talk about their feelings when they are ready.

- Liaise closely with parents and carers.
- Make reasonable adjustments to learning expectations where appropriate.
- Support children during significant dates or anniversaries.
- Signpost families to specialist support services.
- Work in partnership with external professionals when required.

Support will always be tailored to the individual needs of the child and family. Whilst grief and trauma are normal responses to difficult experiences, staff

remain alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm or require additional support.

Any safeguarding concerns arising from discussions with children or families will be managed in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Understanding Trauma

Following a traumatic event, children may experience:

- Anxiety or heightened worry.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Changes in behaviour.
- Physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches.
- Increased emotional sensitivity.

Children recover best when they feel:

- Safe
- Supported
- Listened to
- Understood
- Connected to trusted adults

The school will endeavour to provide a calm, predictable and nurturing environment that promotes recovery and resilience.

Online Safety Following Bereavement

Parents are encouraged to:

- Monitor online activity where appropriate.
- Discuss information children may encounter online.
- Encourage children to speak to trusted adults about anything upsetting they see.
- Ensure social media use is age appropriate and supervised.

Children can sometimes come across misleading or distressing information online and may require support in understanding what they have seen.

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Experiencing grief does not mean a child has a mental health difficulty.

However, if concerns persist or intensify, additional support may be required.

The school may recommend support through:

- School Nursing Services
- Mental Health Support Teams (where available)
- GP referral pathways
- Bereavement charities
- Local authority services

Early help and support can make a significant difference to a child's recovery and wellbeing.

How Parents and Carers Can Help

Be Honest

Talk to your child honestly and calmly about what has happened using language that they can understand.

Avoid phrases such as:

- "Gone to sleep"
- "Gone away"
- "Gone on a journey"

These can cause confusion or anxiety and may lead children to fear everyday activities such as sleeping or travelling.

Encourage Conversations

Talking about the person who has died can be comforting and helps keep memories alive.

Open conversations:

- Reassure children that it is acceptable to talk about the person.
- Encourage questions.
- Allow opportunities to share memories together.

Listen Carefully

Take time to listen to your child's concerns and questions.

- Answer questions honestly.
- If you do not know the answer, it is acceptable to say so.
- Acknowledge feelings of sadness, confusion or worry.

Spend Time Together

Children often talk more openly when engaged in simple activities.

Consider:

- Going for walks.
- Cooking together.
- Gardening.
- Completing household jobs.
- Looking through photographs.

These shared experiences create opportunities for natural conversation.

Share Emotions

Children learn how to manage emotions by observing trusted adults.

It is okay for children to see adults expressing sadness appropriately.

Showing emotion demonstrates that:

- Grief is normal.
- Crying is acceptable.
- Feelings can be expressed safely.

Recognise a Range of Feelings

Children may experience:

- Sadness
- Anger
- Fear
- Confusion
- Guilt

These emotions are a natural part of grief.

Children often need reassurance that the death or traumatic event was not their fault.

Maintain Routines

Returning to familiar routines helps children feel safe and secure.

Where possible, maintain:

- Regular bedtimes.
- Mealtimes.
- Attendance at school.
- Clubs and activities.
- Family routines.

Consistency provides stability during uncertain times.

Provide Reassurance

Following a bereavement or traumatic incident, children may worry about the safety of loved ones.

You can help by:

- Letting them know where you are.
- Returning when you say you will.
- Explaining any changes to routines in advance.
- Offering reassurance about their care and safety.

Understand Children's Grief

Children often grieve differently from adults.

They may:

- Be upset one moment and playing happily the next.
- Ask the same questions repeatedly.
- Appear unaffected at times.

This is a normal part of how children process difficult experiences.

Include Children in Funerals and Memorial Activities

Children often benefit from being included in funerals and remembrance activities where appropriate.

Participation helps children:

- Understand what has happened.
- Say goodbye.
- Feel included in family grieving processes.

Prepare children carefully and explain what they can expect.

Create Memories

Memory-making activities can help children maintain a connection with the person who has died.

Ideas include:

- Memory boxes.
- Photographs.
- Special keepsakes.
- Letters or drawings.
- Memory books.

These resources can provide comfort both now and in the future.

Looking After Yourself

Supporting a grieving child can be emotionally challenging.

Parents and carers should:

- Seek support from trusted family and friends.
- Talk about their own feelings.
- Access professional support if required.

Children are often reassured when they see the adults around them receiving appropriate support and coping with difficult emotions.

When to Seek Additional Support

Seek further support if your child:

- Appears persistently distressed.
- Experiences ongoing sleep difficulties.
- Shows significant changes in behaviour.
- Withdraws from family or friends.
- Refuses to attend school for an extended period.
- Appears unable to cope with daily activities.

If concerns remain, please speak to:

- Your child's Class Teacher
- The Headteacher
- The School's Family Support Team
- Your GP

Sources of Support

Walsall Bereavement Support Service (Adults)

Telephone: 01922 724841

Opening Times: Monday to Friday, 10:30am - 5:30pm

Child and Family Helpline

Telephone: 01922 645035

Children's Bereavement Service

Telephone: 01922 645035

Mobile: 07910 721045 / 07806 760981

Cruse Bereavement Support

National Helpline: 0844 477 9400

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

School Nursing Service

Telephone: 01922 686375

St Giles CE Primary School Commitment

As a Rights Respecting School, St Giles CE Primary School is committed to ensuring that every child is supported with compassion, dignity and understanding following bereavement or traumatic experiences.

Through our Christian vision and values, we seek to provide a safe, nurturing environment where children are listened to, cared for and encouraged to flourish, even through times of loss and change.

"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
Psalm 34:18