



## Bereavement Policy

Acorns2Oaks (A2O) is committed to the emotional health and well-being of its staff and the children and families that access our nurseries and services. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of our organisation, and to provide an ethos and environment that provides support for those experiencing bereavement.

We recognise that:

- Bereavement, whether it is an expected death because of illness or a sudden and unexpected death or suicide, is something that can impact the A2O community at any time.
- Children and their families may experience grief and loss of close family members or friends or their family pets whilst with us in the nursery.
- There may also be rare occasions when staff are affected by a death of a child or a colleague.
- Staff may also be affected by a range of losses including separation and divorce.

### Aims and Objectives

This policy is for all staff, children & young people, parents and carers, trustees, visitors and partner agencies working within our Centres.

The aim of this policy is to provide guidelines and procedures as to how we can best respond to bereavement in our community.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Enhance effective communication at a difficult time.
- Clarify the pathway of support between nursery, family, community and services.
- Make best use of the support available

We will ensure that:

- Regular training and support is provided to staff enabling them to meet their roles and responsibilities.
- Safeguarding remains paramount.
- approaches to bereavement are respectful of religious and cultural values and beliefs.
- Confidentiality is upheld in line with general data protection regulation.

This policy will be reviewed annually or when national or local policy directs a change.

*A copy of this policy can be obtained from the Nursery Offices or downloaded via our website:*  
[www.acorns2oaksnurseries.net/home/policies](http://www.acorns2oaksnurseries.net/home/policies)

<b>Reviewed by:</b> Beverley Noble	<b>Signed:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> Sept 2020 Review: Sept 2021
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## **Supporting Children in the Early Years**

We understand that bereavement is not only a difficult time for families, but it may also be a confusing time for young children, especially if they have little or no understanding of why their parents are upset and why this person/pet is no longer around. We aim to support both the child and their family and will adapt the following procedure to suit their individual needs and family preferences:

- We ask that if there is a loss of a family member or close friend that the parents inform the nursery as soon as they feel able to. This will enable us to support both the child and the family wherever we can and helps us to understand any potential changes in behaviour of a child who may be grieving themselves.
- The key person and/or the manager will talk with the family to ascertain what support is needed or wanted from the nursery. This may be an informal discussion or a meeting away from the child to help calm a potentially upsetting situation.
- The child may need extra support or one-to-one care during this difficult time. We will adapt our staffing arrangements so the child is fully supported by the most appropriate member of staff on duty, where possible the child's key person.
- We will be as flexible as possible to adapt the sessions the child and family may need during this time.
- We will adapt the above procedure as appropriate when a family pet dies to help the child to understand their loss and support their emotions through this time.

## **Supporting Children & Young People**

As with Early Years, the same fundamental principles apply to the children and young people accessing our holiday clubs and youth club sessions in that we ask that, if there is a loss of a family member or close friend, the parents inform the holiday club/youth club as soon as they feel able to. This will enable us to support both the child/young person and the family wherever we can and helps us to understand any potential changes in behaviour of a child/young person who may be grieving themselves.

## **Supporting Bereaved Staff**

We are aware that staff also experience bereavement. When this happens, we will ensure they are provided with support and to know where they can go for additional help should they need it. We will work within our leave of absence policy to ensure staff are provided with appropriate leave and support.

We acknowledge that bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death of a relative. However, the grieving, the natural reaction and adjustment to loss and change may take a significant time and will be personal to each individual. An employee with any concerns about the grief impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with their line manager to ensure that:

- any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and put in place
- the employee is supported in their return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement
- or their duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with the prior agreement of line manager.

Nursery Staff who are dealing with their own bereavement are encouraged to speak with their line manager about any areas of the EYFS curriculum which they feel uncomfortable providing or want support with.

## Further Support Signposting.

Below are some agencies that may be able to offer further support and counselling.

<p><b>Winston's Wish</b> is a support information and guidance for bereaved children, young people and for those caring for bereaved families. <a href="http://www.winstonswish.org">www.winstonswish.org</a> ☎ 08088 020 021 <a href="mailto:ask@winstonswish.org">ask@winstonswish.org</a></p>
<p><b>Cruse Bereavement Care</b> offers support for anyone who has been bereaved. <a href="http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk">www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk</a> ☎ 0844 477 9400 <a href="mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk">helpline@cruse.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Let's Talk About Loss</b> is a peer-lead support service for 16 to 29 year-olds'. <a href="http://www.letstalkaboutloss.org">www.letstalkaboutloss.org</a></p>
<p><b>Childhood Bereavement Network</b> can help you find childhood bereavement support in your local area. <a href="http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk">http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:cbn@ncb.org.uk">cbn@ncb.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Child Bereavement UK</b> offers support and guidance for bereaved children and families. <a href="http://www.childbereavementuk.org">www.childbereavementuk.org</a> ☎ 01494 568 900</p>
<p><b>SANDS</b> provides stillbirth and neonatal bereavement support. <a href="http://www.sands.org.uk">www.sands.org.uk</a> ☎ 0808 164 3332 <a href="mailto:helpline@sands.org.uk">helpline@sands.org.uk</a></p>
<p>The Samaritans: <a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a> ☎ 116 123</p>
<p>Priory <a href="http://www.priorygroup.com">www.priorygroup.com</a> ☎ 0800 188 4187</p>
<p>British Association of Counselling: <a href="http://www.bcap.uk">www.bcap.uk</a></p>





### **Key Stage 3 – Ages 11 to 14 – Years 7, 8, and 9**

In this age range young people are much more aware of the finality of death and the impact the death has on them. They are able to understand death as both concrete and abstract. They begin to move away from dependence on the family and they start to form important relationships with other young people, however the death of someone important can easily destabilise them, leaving them feeling unsafe and more dependent on the family. Some older children and teenagers may feel internal conflict as a result of feeling a pull towards being with their peers at the same time as their own need or an expectation that they spend time with their family.

Their ability to manage their feelings may be disrupted and lead to mood swings or more definite up's and down's in their feelings. Big emotional releases (such as anger or distress) are not uncommon but can be scary for children at this stage. They will benefit from your willingness to listen and your assurances that the feelings are normal. It is important to find ways to build their self-esteem.

Young people at this age are beginning to think of the longer term consequences of the loss of the relationship. They are aware of the loss they feel in the present, but also of the losses they will experience in the coming months and years when they encounter certain important milestones, or occasions and realise that they won't be able to share these with the person who has died. Talking through these future events and exploring ways of including the person can be helpful.

### **Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form – Ages 14 to 18 – Years 10, 11, 12 and 13**

Friends and peers are increasingly important as young people develop their ideas of who they are and what is important to them. They want to be accepted by other important people in their lives. Their bodies are changing; they are aware of all sorts of possibilities for themselves and their future. Young people may struggle to make longer term plans as the death of someone important causes them to reflect on "the meaning of life" and ponder on the question "what's the point?" Or you may find that they are so busy with different activities they don't stop to reflect. This can be an effective way of keeping intense feelings under wraps if they are worried about losing control of their emotions.

It is quite common for risk-taking behaviour to increase during adolescence as young people test the boundaries. Although an adolescent's thought process is most like an adult's, they are still going through important emotional development at this age and are not ready to manage adult responsibilities even if at times they think they are adult. They need to be reassured of your care and support and to know that the limits you set are still enforced.

As always, if you have any concerns about a young person's safety it is vital you take a pro-active approach and apply your safeguarding policies and procedures.