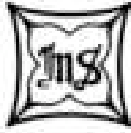


Teacher Guidelines re Pupil's Return to School after Family Bereavement

- Pupils can differ in relation to the time scale for grieving. Staff should be aware and conscious of the various manifestations of grief which may be exhibited by pupils.
- Students should be given opportunities to discuss the incident and express their thoughts or feelings in a secure environment.
- Normal routines returned to as soon as possible.
- Use opportunities which arise within ordinary class work where coping and support can be reinforced.
- Be sensitive to significant days: Birthdays, Christmas, Mothers/Fathers Day etc.
- Don't be afraid to mention the incident or the deceased person's name. It is important to acknowledge what has happened for the student.
- It is alright to ask the student what he/she needs, what helps or what doesn't help.
- Let students know that it is normal to laugh and cry. Reassure them that it's okay to lighten the mood by remembering old times and stories etc.
- Believe what the students say. Try not to make comments such as 'you don't really mean that' or 'it will be okay soon'.
- Take your cue from the student. When they feel like talking, try to find time to listen.
- Explain that their reactions are normal responses. Let the student know that for most people the reactions or symptoms will go away.
- Remembering is an important part of the grieving process
- Teachers should be as honest as possible but at all times be sensitive when dealing with family bereavement

Further Information:

***Responding to Critical Incidents - info pack
When Tragedy Strikes – INTO Guidelines
(available from P. Ó Ceallacháin)***



Death of a parent:

- Flowers/ money (hospice)
- Signed Card
- Representation of teachers at removal
- Representation of teachers at funeral mass / service
- Recommendation to parents of classmates that children might be taken to one of the services, in their company. (standard letter)
- In the absence of a request for privacy - offer of school choir for the mass/service. *School choir to be organised by nominated teacher with assistance of a member of the critical incidents team. Children to be selected at the start of the academic year. A standard letter to be prepared requesting the participation of said children in Communion, Confirmation and funeral services, if required.*
- Guidelines on the nature of grief in children to be circulated to relevant classes.

Death of a child attending the school:

- All of the above
- Standard letter issued to parents of classmates
- Standard letter issued to parents of all other children in the school
- Organisation of a classroom session to discuss with classmates their response, concerns etc. (NEPS psychologist to be contacted and asked to act as co-facilitator if required by the class teacher). *Teacher opt out is acceptable – critical incidents team to arrange an alternative.*
- Attendance of classmates, in the company of their parents, at funeral service.
- Offer of a guard of honour by 6th Class, in the company of their parents, at an appropriate part of the ceremony, to the family of the deceased.