



MORELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL – NO 2837

GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

1 Rationale

Grief and bereavement are natural life experiences that we all endure. Both staff and students experience periods of grief and bereavement, and both need our support and understanding.

2 Aims

To provide effective support to individuals experiencing grief or bereavement.

3 Implementation

Grief is a personal experience; however, we can provide significant support and comfort to people during this time. Everyone grieves in their own way, and so long as there is no risk or harm to them or anyone else, there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to grieve. It is important to remember that grief is a process, not an event. Profound grief is not something that we just 'get over', but rather is something that we gradually learn to live around as we continue to lead our lives.

Grief can occur as a result of a wide variety of negative experiences, though it is typically attributed to the death of a loved one. Grief does not follow a linear pattern. Rather it is more a roller coaster of highs and lows until the person is able to integrate the experience into their life. The loss remains but the intensity diminishes and is no longer disabling. The journey through grief is a highly individual experience, and various styles of grieving are to be respected and supported. The welfare officer and/or selected staff will undertake professional development associated with grief management.

3.1 Students

Following the death of someone close, parents are often concerned about how to best support and meet the needs of their children. Like adults, children experience, express and process grief in a variety of ways depending on their age, stage of development, personality, family culture, understanding of death, past experiences of loss and the context of their bereavement. When considering how best to provide support, the child's unique grieving needs should also be considered.

Children of primary school age are beginning to understand the concept that death is permanent, though younger school-aged children may engage in 'magical' thinking, trying to outwit death. Due to a limited understanding of death, primary-school aged children may also have an increased fear in regards to their own death or feel responsible for the deceased's death.

Although it is natural to want to protect children from hurt or upset, it is important that you take the time to talk and listen to them following the death of someone close. Answer their questions about death in an honest and consistent way without glossing over the truth or minimising the impact of what has happened by saying that 'everything is fine'.

3.2 Strategies to help both staff and students

Combinations of the following strategies may be employed when supporting staff members or students experiencing grief:

1. Grieving people are welcome at our school.
2. We will provide a supportive, safe and accepting environment.



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3. Grieving staff or students will be provided with flexible timetables and appropriate withdrawal spaces.
4. We will ensure that an appropriate support group of staff or friends is available to support and reassure the grieving person as required.
5. External support agencies including Student Support Services Officers (SSSO) support or counsellors may be engaged at the consent of the grieving person.
6. The school may offer practical support to the grieving person e.g.: child minding or cooking meals etc.
7. Any announcements to be made by the school will be made by the principal.
8. The school will be appropriately represented at funerals or similar events
9. Material associated with grief and loss will be available at the school.
10. Staff and students will be informed as to arrangements, changes and progress as appropriate.
11. Support through the Student Wellbeing section of Northern West Region will be sought where appropriate.
12. Department Emergency Management section will be contacted – ph.: 9589 626

4 References/Appendices

- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement
([Children and Grief \(Primary School aged, 6-12\) Download](#))
- Helping Students Deal with Emergencies
(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/emergenciesschools.aspx>)

5 Evaluation

Amendments to the policy will be made on a needs basis.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.