



## **Bereavement and Loss Policy**

### **Rationale**

We believe that bereavement and loss are an inevitable part of living and growing. Early years practitioners will provide opportunities within their settings for children to develop their own appropriate range of emotional, spiritual and intellectual responses to manage these experiences.

We believe that the ethos of the setting, based on openness and mutual support, provides a framework in which these experiences can't be realised in an enriching manner.

### **Process**

Brenchley Pre-School will act in a planned and agreed manner, so that all staff know what is expected and can contribute their part in a way that is consistent with the values that have been valued.

- Brenchley Pre-School have identified, through the process of a one day bereavement conference a named setting bereavement contact - Sian Scovell. This person is aware of the needs of bereaved children and will have collated resources in order to support them.
- Sian Scovell (The Bereavement Contact), in partnership with the other practitioners will co-ordinate the settings response and be fundamental in liaising with the bereaved family.
- As far as possible, all staff should be told together by the named person. By creating a list of people to be told, the setting can be sure that no one close to the situation will find out by chance.
- All the parents/carers will be told in writing at the same time and as promptly as circumstances will allow.
- Following this the children in the setting will be told at a time previously notified to the parents/carers
- Staff will be consistent in their use of terminology to ensure clear understanding of the concept of death
- Absentees from the setting will also need to be informed at the earliest opportunity. Brenchley Pre-School will have procedures to track who is informed, when and by whom, to ensure that no one is missed.
- Brenchley Pre-School have a range of strategies that we may adopt in the days and weeks that follow any significant loss. Decisions about which to undertake will be determined following discussions with the family concerned and will take into account the cultural/religious beliefs of the family.
- The child's keyperson or other named member of staff will be identified to keep in touch with the family so contact from the family's perspective is manageable. This person will co-ordinate the sending of a card.
- Attendance at the funeral and other forms of remembering will be agreed by the staff team. If we decide to close the setting in term time, this may need to be with the prior agreement of KCC due to funding regulations.
- Staff will have ongoing opportunities for peer support in order to maintain their wellbeing.

- The Setting Bereavement Contact (Sian Scovell) will take responsibility for recording details of a bereavement on the child's Record of Transfer and ensuring this information is passed to the next setting with parent/carers permission.
- Brenchley Pre-School will provide ongoing support and will ensure that the anniversary of the death is remembered.

## **Supporting the Children**

In the event of bereavement or significant loss, Brenchley Pre-School have identified activities that will support the child/children to explore their feelings and memories. Some opportunities may include:

### **Telling the Story**

- Use puppets
- Use toys
- Use stories
- Use playdough

### **Expressing Feelings**

- Feelings biscuits
- Volcano Box
- Bag of Feathers

### **Remembering**

- Memory box
- Memory Jar
- Photo Albums
- Memory Bracelets
- Bookmarks

### **Coping Strategies**

- Sad box
- Worry dolls
- Handprints
- Special dates

## **Parents/Carers**

In acknowledging the role of Brenchley Pre-School in supporting children with bereavement and loss, the setting will work alongside the parents/carers in this process.

The parents/carers remain the most significant support to young children in understanding death.

Brenchley Pre-School can support parents/carers in this by:

- Sharing with parents/carers the intentions of Brenchley Pre-School to act in a particular way in the event of a death
- Offering guidance to parents/carers to how they might support their child
- Sharing information with families about other sources of support eg Winston's Wish, Family Line, participation in a Slide Away setting workshop.
- Keeping parents/carers fully informed about the actions of the setting throughout the immediate period of grieving.

- Parents/carers will be invited to be involved in any setting response that occurs after the death eg a remembering time. The format of this will take into account the beliefs and wishes of the bereaved family.

## **Outcomes**

By adopting a planned and considered approach the setting can with some degree of confidence support the emotional wellbeing of the children. As a result:-

### **Staff will**

- Feel equally valued
- Have an opportunity to prepare themselves for the supportive role they adopt
- Be given time and space to work through their own feelings
- Become aware of the needs of bereaved children and be offered training to develop strategies to support them

### **Children will**

- Be offered support by sensitive, trained staff working together
- Have the opportunity to tell their story, express their feelings, share their memories and develop coping strategies

### **Brenchley Pre-School will**

- Have clear expectations about the way that it will respond to the death, not simply react
- Provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment where there are no expectation in response to the children's grief

### **The Family will**

- Feel supported
- Be given an opportunity to express their feelings of loss
- Have opportunities to understand and communicate with their child about their loss as a result of the activities provided by the setting

### **The Parents/Carers will**

- Be given guidance on how to support their child/children
- Be aware of the support offered and understand the processes that will follow bereavement.

### **People Who May be of Help**

Beck Ferrari - Child Bereavement Services -7824 347889

[Beck.ferrari@gmail.com](mailto:Beck.ferrari@gmail.com)

## Websites

Slideaway

<http://www.slideaway.org>

A volunteer organisation to help children and adults with bereavement run by Kent County Council

Cruse Bereavement Care

[www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

This site is designed to help deal with bereavement and focuses on individual reactions and factors affecting responses to bereavement

Winston's Wish bereavement support service for children

[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

This site has sources of support for children, families and professionals and information on resources to purchase.

The Child Bereavement Trust

[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)

Has sections on understanding bereavement for bereaved families and for young people

The Childhood Bereavement network

[www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

the Childhood Bereavement network is a national, multi-professional federation of organisations and individuals. The site includes information about the directory of services and has current news and topics of interests

## Other resources

Winston's Wish Family Line no 0845 20 30 40 5

A fully staffed helpline offering support and guidance to families and professionals supporting bereaved children.

Penhaligon Friends - 01209 210624 - great resources

*This Policy was reviewed at a Management Meeting held on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023*



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Mrs Victoria Relle - Chairman of Brenchley Pre-School Limited