



## **BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

### **ST AUGUSTINE'S SCHOOL**

This policy was adopted by the board on \_\_\_\_\_

To be reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of the BOM \_\_\_\_\_

Principal & Secretary of the BOM \_\_\_\_\_

Implementation Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date set for Review \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: *Saint Augustine's School*

School Roll Number: *19587Q*

School Address: *The Chapel, Sexton Street, Limerick*

Telephone No: *061-311137*

Denominational Character: *Catholic*

Name of Patron: *Bishop Brendan Leahy*

Gender Orientation of School: *Co-Educational*

# **St. Augustine's School Bereavement Policy (First Draft)**

## **Rationale**

This policy has been prepared for use by all school staff to provide:

- A framework of support for students and staff in the event of a bereavement.
- To address the many issues that may arise in a positive and practical way, and offer guidelines on how best we may support our students and ourselves during a very traumatic time.
- To allow the school to be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these challenging situations.
- To support pupils and or staff before during and after bereavement
- To provide a caring environment in which the pupils feel safe to demonstrate grief without fear of judgement.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.

## **Background**

When personal circumstances are changed as a result of a bereavement in the family, the school aims to be a place of support for those affected by the same. If the death is of a student or staff member, the whole school community will work together to support each other. It is also important to remember that other parents and past pupils may also need support.

Having a bereavement policy in place will allow the school to be proactive, rather than reactive, when responding to these challenging situations.

How children grieve: Given the complex and varied needs of our students, it is difficult to gauge how the loss will affect them as individuals.

The core intentions of this policy are:

- To support pupils and or staff before during and after bereavement
- To provide a caring environment in which the pupils feel safe to demonstrate grief without fear of judgement.
- To enhance effective communication and clarify the pathway of support between school, family and community.

As a staff it is important to be sensitive and supportive while trying to maintain the normality and Security of the school environment.

Be honest with yourself, and with the student at their level of understanding. Answer questions clearly and honestly. Don't be Afraid of Saying 'I don't know'.

Be aware and acknowledge emotions.

Respect the individual and their wishes.

### **Procedures:**

#### **In the event of a bereavement:**

- The family should be contacted by the (the Principal and/or the Deputy Principal or if both are unavailable, those next available as per seniority) and offered the schools condolences and support. The Chairperson of the board and Principal will inform staff via email.
- It is important that the school (the Principal and/or the Deputy Principal or if both are unavailable, seniority will determine whomever gains information from the family) ascertains what the student has already been told so that the staff do not say anything that could confuse or upset the student.
- The Principal and/or the Deputy Principal or if both are unavailable, those next available as per seniority will represent the staff at any funeral or memorial service arising from the bereavement?
- Students wishing to attend any open funeral or memorial service arising from the bereavement are permitted to do so, with parental consent?
- In the event of a student/staff member's death a letter will be sent to all parents informing them of the death.
- School Chaplain will arrange for a memorial service in the school if deemed appropriate and with parental involvement.

### **Subsequent Actions:**

Students affected by bereavement will be informally observed with parent/s of the student informed as to noticeable changes in behaviour, fall off in attendance etc.

- If necessary and subject to parental consent relevant agencies relevant agencies may be involved, NEPS and Bereavement Counselling. Students are informed and encouraged to avail of agency and school support.

### **When a Member of Staff or a Student Dies**

The death of a student or staff member can have a profound effect on the rest of the school. As a team we work very closely with our students and families. We as a staff believe that it is important that a routine is maintained where possible, this will provide security and stability during this very difficult time.

The priority of the school and management in considering the school's response to bereavement/ funerals will be its duty of care to its students and staff members always.