

SOUTHEND YMCA BEREAVEMENT POLICY 2020- 2022

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AUTHOR	Syrie Cox with reference to NSPCC guidance
OWNER	Syrie Cox (DSL), Alisa Harvey (Deputy DSL)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Within our charity there may be recently bereaved children and young people, who are struggling with their loss. Whilst we would hope to not encounter such circumstances, we have this Bereavement Policy in place so we can be proactive, rather than reactive, in these very sensitive situations.

Usually, support and understanding for example from family and friends, may be all the bereavement support most children and young people require. However, we recognise that referral to more specialist support may be necessary where the impact of grief is more complex.

2. AIMS + ETHOS

We recognise that everyone experiences bereavement and grief differently and that there is no right or wrong way to do it. Therefore, it is our aim:

- To provide appropriate support to children and young people and/or staff before (where applicable), during, and after a bereavement
- To provide a safe and calm environment for children and young people and staff
- To ensure there is effective communication between the home and charity and to provide parents with information on how to access other support (if it is required)
- To work with other specialist partners as appropriate

3. ROLE of TRUSTEES

- To approve policy and ensure its implementation and regular reviews
- To ensure there is a whole charity approach to supporting emotional wellbeing

4. ROLE of the CEO with the SENIOR LEADERSHIP and MANAGENT TEAM

- To have oversight of support required and provided, liaising with external agencies as appropriate
- To be the first point of contact for the family/child concerned
- To respond to media enquiries if appropriate
- To keep Trustees fully informed
- To ensure staff are appropriately trained around bereavement and undertake actions set out in this policy (such as how to share sad news with children and young people)

5. ROLE of STAFF

- To provide a safe and calm environment for all
- To act as a 'trusted adult' to support children and young people and proactively enable them to have the time and space to talk
- To monitor the wellbeing of children and young people, identify concerns and escalate where additional support may be required
- To ensure any safeguarding concerns are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with our safeguarding policy

6. PROCEDURES FOLLOWING a BEREAVEMENT

1. Wherever possible (and if deemed appropriate), the CEO, or their nominated manager, will attempt contact with the bereaved family before taking **any** other action. This is to ensure any communications to the wider charity community (and the media) are factual, avoid rumour or confusion and are aligned with the family's wishes. Where it has not been possible to establish contact with the family, and news of the death is already in the public arena, the CEO will need to manage this and will do so, taking advice from relevant authorities (depending on the circumstances of the death).
2. The CEO, or their nominated manager, will inform staff of any death and agree how information will be shared with children and young people and the wider charity community
3. The CEO, or their nominated manager will agree with the staff team, how to share information with children and young people in a supportive and age-appropriate way
4. The CEO, or their nominated manager will prepare a communication to all parents / carers to inform them of the death and advice about how to support their child, should they be affected
5. The CEO will agree a statement for the media, where this is required, linking with the local authority as appropriate. Where the CEO is not available this will be the Chair
6. The CEO will adapt the charity day and timetable/ project activities if necessary to enable appropriate support to be provided. This support may be from charity staff and / or from the local authority Education Psychology Service or other appropriate agencies
7. The CEO will make arrangements in the charity for a book of condolence and / or an area where flowers may be placed (if appropriate)
8. In consultation with the bereaved family, arrangements for funeral attendance will be clarified, with the consideration of full or partial charity closure in some circumstances
9. The CEO and staff will monitor the wellbeing of all children and young people identifying any concerns and escalating where additional support may be required
10. The charity will record any concerns about a child's wellbeing on their file to ensure any future charity is aware that additional support may be required

7. HOW WE WILL WORK

We will work in a sensitive manner, applying our communication skills.

We may provide 1-2-1 and/or group work depending on the needs of the child or groups of children.

We will work in liaison with other professionals and seek advice from Southend YMCAs consultant Counselling Psychologist to ensure our approach is psychologically informed.