

Critical Incidents, Loss, Bereavement and Building Resilience: How to Respond

Guidance for schools and services
for Children and Young People
(CYP)

Harrow Educational Psychology Service

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Introduction

Death impacts all of us, and Children & Young People¹ (henceforth referred to as CYP) are by no means immune.

Over 24, 000 CYP are bereaved of a parent each year in Britain	Approximately two CYP under 16 are bereaved of a parent every hour of every day in the UK	Approximately 1 in 25 CYP have experienced bereavement of a parent or sibling
6% of 5 to 16 year olds have experienced the death of a close friend of the family	The incidence of childhood bereavement in youth offenders can be up to 10 times higher (41%) than the national average	Sourced from Winston's Wish (www.winstonswish.org.uk/about-us/facts-and-figures)

- Many CYP will have had some experience of separation and loss in their lives outside school, such as through relationship breakdowns or refugee displacement.
- Within schools CYP may be impacted by the death of a pupil or a member of staff.
- On a larger scale, schools² may also have to respond to bereavements as a result of a critical incident; such as a coach accident or a fire on school premises.
- There is no one set procedure to respond to loss and bereavement; every situation is different.
- Those involved will be affected differently and as a result, **a sensitive flexible approach** is needed. It is also acknowledged that it is not possible to take away the fear that a CYP may have about death, as that fear is part of a typical response to loss.
- It is also not possible to take away the pain that a CYP may have experienced as a result of the death or loss of someone close to them.
- Schools and other settings can, however, put systems in place to support and comfort the CYP and/or staff who have been affected.

¹ Young person refers to a person over compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16).

² Although schools are specified within this document, the policies and procedures could also be applied to Children's Centres and other provisions for CYP.

The aim of having procedures in place is that we can be **proactive** in our approach to supporting CYP through loss and bereavement. Such procedures provide a structure to be drawn on as a framework in times of crisis, whilst still retaining the ability to react to each bereavement or loss individually.

These guidelines aim to offer advice to schools and other settings when responding to everyday occurrences of loss or bereavement as well as critical incidents.

SECTION 1:

Loss and Bereavement

Contents

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A: General information

Where CYP have to deal with loss and death, the support that they receive is crucial to their ability to cope and recover from their personal trauma. Grief is unique for each individual – its manifestation is very varied, and it is important to remember that there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

CYP need to be helped to see death as a part of life. It is often forgotten that death is a natural phenomenon and is part of the normal process of life.

B: Needs of different groups of CYP

B1: The age of the bereaved CYP

"Children and young people mature at different rates and their understanding and responses to bereavement are likely to be based as much on their experience of life as their chronological age. The age categories given are guidelines only and it is important to realise that responses do vary and occur at other ages".

(Monroe, 1993: Monroe & Kraus 1996) **Child Bereavement UK**

The age categories given are guidelines only and CYP may not fit neatly into them : -

Below the Age of Five Years:

Younger children may be aware that death occurs, but they do not understand that it is final, and therefore irreversible. For example some children may expect the dead person to reappear. They may therefore use the word 'death' without understanding its full meaning and because of a literal understanding they may also become confused by euphemisms such as 'gone to sleep'. However, even though the concept of death is not fully developed, young children can react strongly to the loss. Younger children are generally egocentric at this stage and can think in very concrete terms. They may believe that they are the 'centre of the universe' and that their thoughts, wishes and actions caused what happened. As a result, children in this stage of thinking may believe that, somehow, they are responsible for the death. Children may need repeated explanations of what has happened to clarify and help them to understand they have not been the cause and are not to blame. This is because children at this age can fantasise and may imagine something more fearful than what has actually occurred.

Age Five to Eight Years:

Between the ages of five to eight children develop a gradual understanding of death as something where life has ended and is irreversible. They begin to recognise that people who have died no longer move, breathe, eat or drink. They also come to understand they will no longer see that person or hear their voice.

Most seven-year olds will have an understanding that death is inevitable and can happen to anybody. This could mean that the child may develop separation anxiety, for example, becoming distressed when leaving their parents as they fear that something may happen to them. This is because they now understand that death could happen to anybody at any time. They may also demonstrate an interest in the different rituals associated with death.

Children in this age range understand that death has a cause. They may make direct causal interpretations, such as feeling that their 'bad' behaviour made their parent get sick and die. Guilt is very prominent at this stage and children commonly express how they feel responsible for the death.

It is important to provide opportunities to answer any questions that the child may have. However it is important to be aware that children may not always show their true thoughts and feelings, and may give the impression that they are unaffected.

Age Eight to Twelve Years:

Between the ages of eight to twelve years children gradually develop an understanding of death that approaches an adult's understanding of death. Death is understood as irreversible, as something that will happen to everyone, and something that will result in permanent separation.

A key aspect of this stage is the developing realisation of the possibility of the child's own death. Children may become fearful, and avoid experiences as a consequence of this. This frightening reminder can also lead to thoughts and feelings of confusion and stress. It is important for trusted adults to be able to provide sufficiently detailed responses to questions that the child may have.

Age 12+ Years

From 12+ years, understanding of death is broadly in line with that of adults; however they may not be emotionally prepared for it. A young person's experience of death may impact thoughts and feelings about the future; for example a young person may begin to question their beliefs and their purpose in life. For the young person, one way of 'defying' their own mortality could be to engage with risk-taking behaviour. Additionally, young people at this stage often have a need to assert their independence, which may lead to challenging beliefs and expectation of those around them. It is important for a young person to have the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and feelings with someone they trust. They might find it harder to do this with close family and friends, and so opportunities could be offered in school.

B2: Gender differences

It is important to be mindful that boys are perceived to communicate their emotions less than girls do, which may result in them finding it harder to grieve. Culture and society have a part to play in this, as there can be pressure on boys to 'act like a man' and not show their feelings as 'big boys don't cry'. Very often, however, boys' unresolved grief can manifest itself in poor behaviour at a later date.

Girls, on the other hand, are considered to be the 'expressive' sex, and are thus more able to talk about and show the way that they feel, which can make the grieving process slightly easier.

However, it is important to consider that there are very many different types of loss and a wide variation of the ways in which individuals respond to loss. The degree of trauma and grief experienced is unique to each individual experience.

B3: Religious beliefs

Schools need to be sensitive to different religious beliefs and customs when teaching about death and bereavement. Appendix 1 provides some general guidance regarding religions and beliefs about death.

B4: Refugee CYP

Refugee and displaced CYP have experienced enormous losses, which they may or may not have been able to mourn. These CYP may not even know whether a close relative is dead or alive. Additionally, they may have lost their home and status. There is the additional possibility that they may have witnessed destruction and violence. Sometimes it may be easier for these CYP to forget than face the pain of loss. As a result, it is particularly important that schools feel adequately prepared to support CYP who have been through such trauma.

B5: CYP with Special Educational Needs

CYP with special educational needs may be more literal in their understanding of loss and when given a euphemism. Thus if they are told that 'mummy has gone to sleep', they may believe this is the case. It is particularly important that we are careful with the language that we use to explain death to CYP with special educational needs. This also applies to any CYP who has limited language, including CYP who have English as an Additional Language (EAL).

CYP with special educational needs may not have the language to be able to express their grief. Thus it is important that alternative means are found in order to allow them to grieve properly, such as art and play-based approaches.

B6: CYP with life-limiting conditions

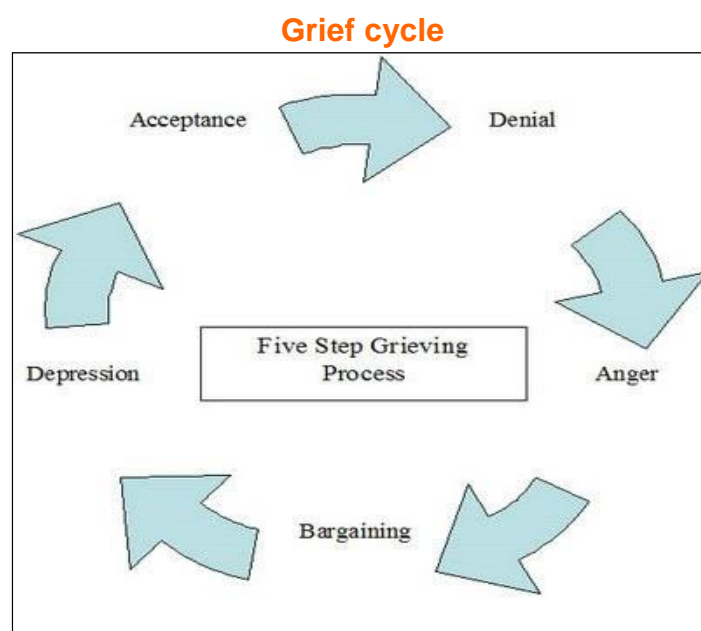
The death of a pupil is thankfully rare, but does occasionally occur; in particular in special schools, where a high proportion of the CYP may be suffering from a life-limiting illness. When any pupil dies, the rest of the community is affected. Allowance has to be made for the impact of the death on staff and pupils alike. Attention must be paid to practical and environmental considerations, such as what to do about the pupil's seat in class and name on the register. Special schools may also face the added issue of the '*Who is next*' question, as staff and pupils consider the health status of other pupils in the school.

C: Grief reactions in CYP

C1: Stages of grief

Grief is a normal, essential response to the death or loss of a loved one. It can be short-lived or last a long time depending on a range of factors including but not limited to:- the person involved, the closeness of the relationship, the circumstances of the loss, and previous losses suffered.

In many cases, this grief can take the form of several clearly defined stages and these were identified by Kübler-Ross (1969). In general, the five stages of grief are described as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. People may move between them and experience different emotions, sometimes repeatedly. Stages may be brief or protracted, however, it is often helpful for people dealing with loss to have the stages acknowledged and know that they are 'normal' states of grieving.



(Adapted from Kübler-Ross model)

Shock and Denial

This happens when our model of the world is upset. In this stage the bereaved person may struggle to accept their loss. It is very common for people to try and initially deny the event in order to subconsciously avoid sadness. Denial has no set time frame, or may never be felt at all. Possible feelings or responses may also include the individual going into 'automatic pilot' or want to withdraw. They may also try to keep themselves busy.

Anger

People that are grieving often become upset with the person or situation that put them in their grief state. Anger may be directed towards any or all of the following:- the medical services, the person who caused the death, God for letting it happen, the deceased for leaving them. At other times the individual may become angry at themselves if they feel they could have done something more to stop the loss from happening.

Bargaining

Individuals may try to make a deal, or promise to do anything, if the pain will be taken away. For example a grieving person may turn to religion to try to bargain their way out of the loss.

Depression

Shock and other emotions often present themselves before depression can occur. The signs of depression due to grief usually appear when a sense of finality is realised. The bereaved person begins to feel the despair, the emptiness and the pain of the loss.

Acceptance

During the acceptance stage, the bereaved person begins to come to terms with their loss and learn to accept and deal with the reality of the situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness but is the start of finding a way forward.

There can be other emotions that are evident such as:

Guilt – This emotion is felt for the real or imagined negligence or harm inflicted on the person who has just died.

Anxiety – In extreme cases anxiety can even become panic as the full realisation of the loss begins to come through.

Some of the observable behaviour changes that may occur in school could be:

- Increased anxiety.
- Increased aggression.

- Lack of attention, short concentration span, which may impact on engagement and attainment.
- Isolation, withdrawal.
- Hypersensitivity - may seem stressed by little events.
- May not want to go to school ... "What might happen at home while I'm away?"
- May be worried about leaving a bereaved family member at home alone.

C2: Reactions of younger children

In younger children, the stages of grief may manifest themselves in the following reactions, but it is important to remember that the grief reactions vary from individual to individual:

- Young children, like adults, may enter a period of shock. Behaviour can range from calm to panic.
- The death or loss of a close relative heightens our sense of vulnerability and for younger children death and separation can be synonymous. They may:
 - become very anxious about being separated from parents;
 - be reluctant to go to school; be depressed;
 - be prone to infection, i.e. colds, ear infections and tummy upsets;
 - bite nails or cuticles, pick themselves, twiddle with their hair;
 - develop a fear of the dark (which may last for years);
 - have difficulty in going to sleep or have nightmares;
 - develop a phobia about hospitals, nurses and doctors.
- Regression to an earlier stage of development is possible.
- Loss of concentration and other behaviour difficulties may present themselves in the school context.
- Food can become important. Some children will eat and eat to fill up the emptiness they feel inside. They may hoard food and secrete it away. Others though may lose interest in eating.

- Sadness and anger need to be expressed but children are often afraid and confused about venting their feelings as they do not know what is allowed.
- Some may be frightened to ask questions and will only talk to 'outsiders'. Other CYP only want to talk about the tragedy to the immediate family.

C3: Reaction of Adolescents

The adolescent's experience of grief, especially as they get older, is similar to that of adults:

- A sense of desertion, feelings of anger, loneliness, yearning for the dead person and physical symptoms are all common.
- Their grief can be influenced by the many changes of adolescence such as becoming independent from their family and establishing their own identity, as well as going through puberty.
- They may have had a stormy relationship with the person who has died and following the death may experience regret and guilt.
- Some adolescents cope with death by suppressing their emotions and may appear withdrawn.
- In addition they may exhibit psychosomatic stress or depressive symptoms or may become more concerned over body image and changes; they may show fear through inappropriate behaviour, sarcasm or joking.
- It is common for adolescents to seek support outside the family.

C4: Difficulties in grieving

Not all people pass through the 'stages of grief' smoothly. Once problems have been worked through the person is usually able to move forward. Listed below are some of the problems that are common to many bereaved people:

- opposition to letting go – refusal to accept death
- not allowing themselves to grieve
- doubt about the reality of the loss especially in a critical incident where no body' has been recovered
- mixed feelings towards the deceased
- the social, cultural or religious customs that demand self-control may result in delayed grief
- not being allowed, or able, to attend the funeral
- when things have been left unsaid, a visit not made, or any other unfinished business
- a succession of losses with no time to be able to grieve
- external circumstances such as a major crisis.

There are a range of identified behaviours commonly used for coping with bereavement, which are not helpful over a long period of time. These may include:-

- **Substitution.** The CYP may want to find a substitute for the person that they have lost.
- **Anti-Social Behaviours.** The CYP may become involved in fighting or avoid coming to school. A variety of discipline problems may occur both inside and outside of school, e.g. drug abuse and general anti-social behaviour.
- **Helplessness.** This can lead to a lack of curiosity and can impair learning.

C5: Building Resilience to difficult events

Resilience comes from the Latin word 'resilio' meaning to 'jump back'. Resilience can be defined as *"the ability of an individual to successfully recover from, or adapt to, adversity and to develop social/emotional and academic competence despite exposure to life's problems"* (Making the Difference, 2000). It has been recognised that, as well as individuals, groups and school communities can display resilience in the face of adversity (Grotberg, 1997). Teachers are invaluable in developing resilience in CYP because of their knowledge, understanding and skills both as educators and role models (Gloucestershire EPS, 2007). Building resilience in CYP is something that schools should be proactive in developing, as part of the school culture.

D: Working proactively with Bereavement and Loss

D1. The school's role

School staff have a very important role to play in supporting and educating CYP about loss, bereavement and grief. However, staff may not feel at ease exploring ideas and feelings among pupils. They may require the support of colleagues.

How to help someone who is suffering from loss:

Adapted from 'Good Grief' (B. Ward et al. 1995 see Appendix 3 for reference):

- DO make sure all adults working with the CYP know the situation
- DO let your genuine concern and caring show
- DO be available to listen or to help
- DO express sympathy about what happened and about the pain they are feeling
- DO allow them to express as much unhappiness as they are feeling at the moment and are willing to share. Let the CYP know it is natural, normal and acceptable to be upset and cry. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions
- DO encourage them to be patient with themselves, not to expect too much of themselves and not to impose any 'shoulds' on themselves
- DO talk about the special, endearing qualities of what they've lost
- DO offer practical help – this can be the most important thing in the early stages.
- TRY NOT TO let your sense of helplessness keep you from reaching out
- TRY NOT TO avoid them because you are uncomfortable (being avoided by friends adds pain to an already painful experience)
- TRY NOT TO say you know how they feel (unless you've experienced their loss yourself you probably don't know how they feel)

- TRY NOT TO say 'you ought to be feeling better by now' or anything else which implies a judgement about their feelings
- TRY NOT TO tell them what they should feel or do
- TRY NOT TO change the subject when they mention loss
- TRY NOT TO avoid mentioning their loss out of fear of reminding them of their pain (they haven't forgotten it)
- TRY NOT TO try to find something positive (e.g. a moral lesson, closer family ties etc) about the loss
- TRY NOT TO point out at least they have other
- TRY NOT TO say that they can always have another
- TRY NOT TO suggest that they should be grateful for their
- TRY NOT TO make any comments which in any way suggest that their loss was their fault (there will be enough feelings of doubt and guilt)

D2. Curriculum issues

Education about death may reduce the occurrence of fantasies in CYP. Loss and death education had no major part in the school curriculum until recently, but is now an integral part of the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) at each Key Stage. The subject may also be included in Religious Education.

Ideally, a small group of staff should work together in developing the curriculum content for grief, loss and resilience. The curriculum could incorporate some of the following:-

- *Understanding loss* – growing up, going to school, moving home, losing an object, birth of a sibling, death of a relative, family separation.

- *Understanding feelings* – for example, encouraging CYP to talk about happiness, excitement, anger, fright, sadness.
- *Understanding death* – ageing, the life cycle, seasons, funeral customs
- *Understanding and building resilience* – having and developing the ability to cope with and adapt to life's adversities and problems.

Projects can be undertaken which include creative writing, stories and poems, drama work etc. It is also recommended that the school have resources available about loss, death and grief (see appendix 3).

CYP who are not told about death might make things up for themselves. Their fantasies may be worse than the truth. It is good to be open and honest with CYP in such experiences to help them see a picture of death as a part of life. Teachers also need to have their own knowledge about the development of a CYP's understanding of the concept of death. They also need to be aware that CYP's attitudes and opinions related to death will be affected by what their life experiences have exposed them to and what they have been told at home.

D3. School procedures/policy

The following points are intended possible guideline for schools when a bereavement or critical incident has occurred:-

- When bereavement occurs, ensure that ALL staff members know.
- If possible, ask the bereaved family and CYP what they would like said to the class, school community and other parents. Where possible tell the class what has happened before the pupil returns.
- If a critical incident occurs it may be appropriate to communicate relevant details to parents; having taken due advice from legal and media services within the Local Authority.

- Tell the bereaved family what has been said and done so that the CYP is aware on his/her return to school.
- Prepare (as a staff group) for the CYP's return to school. Is there anyone in the staff group who finds this particularly upsetting? Bereavement brings up strong emotions for everyone, and there may be staff who are themselves facing a personal loss.
- Help the tutor group or class prepare for the CYP's return.
 - Explain to the CYP how their friend may behave differently. For example they might be very quiet or just start crying unexpectedly.
 - Re-assure them that they can help just by listening and being with their bereaved friend.
 - Do not worry if their friend wants to be alone at times. However this should be monitored by adults in school.
 - Help a few close friends of the CYP explore how they can be supportive.
- When the bereaved CYP has returned, offer them an opportunity to talk if they want to.
- Is there a quiet room or corner the CYP can go to if they are upset or angry?
- Try not to isolate the CYP by giving them too many special privileges or allowing persistent breaking of rules. It is important for the CYP to understand that the limits of behaviour still apply, and that they still occupy the same place in the school community as before the bereavement.
- Bereaved CYP can experience a loss of concentration at school, which may have an impact on their work. Give them encouragement and reassurance.
- Give the parent or carer feedback and encouragement whenever possible about their CYP's progress in school.

SECTION 2:

Responding to Critical Incidents

Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Suggested Action Plan in response to a Critical Incident:**
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 - **Section E: Managing trauma**



Introduction

Critical Incidents are not a typical part of school life, but they do sometimes occur.

A critical incident can be described as an event or events outside the range of normal human experience, of significant personal distress to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses, procedures and coping strategies and which is likely to have emotional and organisational consequences.

Critical incidents may include:

- the sudden or traumatic death of a pupil or member of staff.
- a serious accident involving CYP and/or school personnel on or off the premises (including on a school trip)
- a violent act on school premises either in person or by means such as arson, bomb, vandalism, etc.
- a school building becoming unsafe as a result of fire, flood or other incident
- a more widespread emergency affecting the school and/or local community, for example the release of hazardous substances, severe weather, etc.
- public health threats (e.g. meningitis, pandemic).

Other events may also be deemed to be emergencies in school because of the impact they have on pupils and staff, sometimes over a long period of time. Such events could be:

- an incident in the community which is seen or experienced by pupils or staff;
- an incident affecting relatives of pupils which is known about in the school;
- an incident affecting a nearby or comparable school;
- civil disturbances or terrorist acts.

Headteachers in Harrow who have experienced critical incidents reflected on some key issues to be mindful of:-

- the suddenness of the occurrence;
- the shock effect;
- the apparent uniqueness of the occurrence;
- the need for any support to be available very rapidly;
- the publicity and attention which sometimes follow;
- the need to communicate with a number of people quickly;

- the need for support for those directly affected, and for the large number who might be indirectly affected (pupils, teachers and parents).

This section draws upon the experience of schools in order to address the issues relating to Critical Incidents that headteachers and their colleagues might experience. It offers guidance on:

- **immediate action by the school;**
- **action within hours of the incident;**
- **longer term action.**

When schools face a critical incident, research suggests that they cope best when they have clear procedures and know how to use support networks. Staff need to be as fully prepared as possible before any such incident occurs. Many schools and organisations have found it useful to have a Critical Incident Team (CIT), which may be part of their emergency planning procedures and policies, such as evacuation procedures. This section aims to assist schools in making such preparations. (See appendix 5 for process map).

The following guidelines are not meant to be prescriptive, or an attempt to cover all possible events, but to act as a model that is flexible and can be adapted to deal with a number of different situations. Each school or setting will need to develop and adopt its own critical incident policy and plans in line with government and council guidelines.

This document should be read in conjunction with the most up to date version of Harrow Council's requirements for educational visits. It should also be read in conjunction with the Department of Education advice on health and safety covering activities that take place on or off school premises, including school trips

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools> and

<http://www.harrowlscb.co.uk/guidance-procedures/child-death-rapid-response/>

In the event of an emergency the priorities are to assess the situation, safeguard uninjured, attend to the casualty(ies) and inform the emergency services and school.

The Council Emergency Planning team, which facilitates the co-ordination of Council resources in formally declared major incidents, may also be involved (see Appendix 4).

A: Immediate action

Immediately after a critical incident notify the appropriate emergency services (as required) and take the following action:-

A1: Gather information

It is important to collect as much information as possible about the incident. This information should be documented and kept as a written log. You should include:

- what happened
- where and when the incident took place
- whether there is still a continuing danger
- if the incident happened off-site, what help is required from your school
- the numbers and names of those injured and the extent of their injuries
- the current location of those injured, and the name and contact number of an adult present
- the location of CYP who were involved but not injured, plus the name and contact number of an adult present
- the name and contact number of an adult at the incident site (if off-site).

A2: Assess continuing risk

Is it likely that further injuries or damage may occur?

- If there is a continuing risk, your first priority must be to safeguard the welfare of the CYP, staff and visitors.
- Ensure that any immediate action to protect people or property does not give rise to further risk.

A3: Brief the Senior Management or Critical Incident team

This would be a predetermined group, although there needs to be flexibility. Additional staff members may be needed. In the absence of key personnel the school should build in their own contingency plans to their policy.

The headteacher has responsibility for what happens in the school, and is therefore responsible for the actions of the support team. However, he or she may choose to delegate leading this team to a pre-determined member of staff. The team may not comprise solely of the senior management team in the school, but might also involve representatives of the wider school community.

The purpose of the briefing is to share information about the incident and allocate responsibility for immediate and short-term tasks.

The headteacher should call a meeting of this team at least annually to update names, contact numbers, checklists and procedures.

A4: Contact appropriate agencies

In the event of a critical incident contact the directors in Children and Families as soon as possible in order to initiate council support and to obtain advice on whom else to contact (See Appendix 8 for contact numbers). The Corporate Director and Directors in the Children and Families' Directorate will notify the Chief Executive.

You should also inform your chair of governors. The Educational Psychology Service can also offer assistance (See Section 3). You might also wish to contact the Council's Emergency Planning Team. This service maintains corporate emergency plans for major incidents and other emergencies affecting the borough. In an emergency this service is contacted via Children and Families.

B: Action within the first hour

B1: Contact the families of those involved

Your school/setting should maintain an up-to-date list of emergency contacts for CYP and staff, and ensure it has an effective procedure for knowing who is on site.

In the event of serious injury or death, the police will be involved and are likely to take responsibility for informing relatives in person. However, it may be helpful for them to be accompanied by a member of staff.

In other circumstances, contacting the families of those involved should be done quickly and sensitively by the school. If the contact person cannot be reached by

telephone, leave a brief message asking them to telephone a particular number. Try to avoid leaving complex messages as these can become distorted when conveyed.

B2: Communication to and from school

When the news of an incident reaches the community, a large number of people will want to contact the school for details, making it difficult for outside calls to be made and for others to get through. If possible, dedicate a particular line to outgoing calls. You can also refer parents to the school website, where information can be provided.

Callers phoning the usual school line should be given a factual statement and reassurance that action is being taken to manage the situation. If further details are requested, ask the caller to leave a name and number on which they can be contacted. Be courteous but concise to keep the line free for other callers.

Parents will need to know whether to come to the scene of the incident, or whether their CYP will be returned to school or home. Pupils' use of mobile phones and social media to contact home, particularly on school journeys would need to be monitored / discussed.

B3: Inform school staff

Provide staff with the factual details of the incident so that they can feel more confident when handling questions and issues. Tell them when this information will be updated. Encourage staff to refer enquiries to the support team when in doubt. Ask them not to talk to the media. This minimises the risk of mixed messages and misinformation.

B4: Inform pupils

Tell pupils what has happened and allow them to ask questions. Decide whether it is better to talk to large groups, small groups or individuals. This process is often best managed in small groups, by a member of staff who is well known to the pupils and confident in handling their reactions.

B5: Releasing information and handling the media

When releasing information to a wider audience, e.g. parents, prepare the information with care. **Information should only be provided by designated staff,**

not through other professionals, parents, CYP or via social media platforms.

Give the appropriate facts and express sympathy or concern; blame and liability should not be attributed.

Communications with the media should be handled through the directors and the press office 020 8420 9361/ out of hours 07927 548140). The headteacher should concentrate on the welfare of the school community and let officers deal with press interest, which can be intrusive. There are instances when the headteacher is the most appropriate spokesperson but this can be agreed on an individual basis with the communications office.

It may be necessary to control access points to the school site, allowing parents in but not the press. Remember, you are entitled to say who can enter the school and who cannot. Members of the press should not enter without permission. If necessary, schools should ensure that all official calls have been made before allowing pupils to ring home.

C: Action within the next few hours

C1: Arrange briefing for staff and pupils involved in the incident

The nature of briefing sessions will depend on the incident. You might find it helpful to consider a different process for:

- those directly involved
- witnesses
- the wider community

Also bear in mind:

- whether separate briefings might prevent the incident from escalating
- the differing needs of CYP of various ages and at different stages of development
- whether all parties need to know all the facts, thereby exposing everyone to the same levels of stress
- the closeness of individuals to the incident
- whether there is good reason to respect the confidentiality of someone involved.

Appendix 7 provides a useful checklist when dealing with a critical incident.

C2: Inform the wider community

It may be helpful to contact neighbouring schools or educational settings. This is important on a shared site and between phases, especially where siblings are at other schools.

C3: Develop a plan for handling the feelings and reactions of others

Be alert to possible staff reactions, even among those who are not directly involved but for whom the incident triggers difficult emotions. Be aware of pupils' response to the death, particular where death is a suicide. Outside agencies can offer support and advice to staff. (See Section 3 and Appendix 3 for contact numbers).

C4: Identify any potentially sensitive content of the school curriculum

Do not avoid such references altogether, but anticipate likely reactions and ensure that teachers feel able to manage them.

D: Longer-term action

Schools facing a critical incident will invariably galvanise the resources of their community - teachers, governors, parents, other agencies - to support each other through the difficulties.

In some circumstances schools will need extra help to provide emotional support, for example from the Educational Psychology Service and other sections of the council or from external agencies (e.g. health trusts, counselling services, religious or voluntary organisations). It is essential that your school seeks, commissions and manages any such external support offered.

In the aftermath of a critical incident, especially one attracting media attention, schools can be inundated with offers of help from voluntary groups and individuals. You will need to select and manage such offers carefully to meet the best interests of pupils and staff.

The council can make three specific types of support available to schools in the first days and weeks after a critical incident (in addition to technical and practical services).

D1: Telephone contact for advice and support

Advice can be obtained through *Children and Families*, including the Educational Psychology Service, and other external agencies. Such contacts can be useful, particularly for headteachers, in providing specific information, support, and advice.

When a child or young person dies there are procedures which take place depending on whether the death was expected or unexpected; for example unexpected deaths could be subject to rapid response procedures. Further information can be found at www.harrowscb.co.uk/london-gp/child-death-rapid-response/.

D2: Information sharing and planning with staff

School staff, especially class teachers or form tutors, may feel responsible for supporting the pupil or class during a period of crisis. However, they also have to deal with their own emotions. A new loss may evoke memories of a previous one.

In addition, a professional person having responsibility for the support of CYP may experience feelings of helplessness and inadequacy in the face of others' grief and pain. This is not uncommon. Shock, embarrassment and guilt are all natural reactions at such times.

It is important that staff members have support networks readily available and feel able to ask for help. Senior staff and governors need to be aware that these reactions may occur and should seek appropriate guidance from outside agencies. (See section 3 and Appendix 3).

It may be helpful for teachers to discuss the difficulties they may face collectively. Schools should endeavour to maintain a normal routine where possible, therefore providing a stable environment that will help CYP to cope with any stress arising from their personal circumstances.

It is also important to remember that school staff, including teachers and welfare assistants, are not trained counsellors. They are not expected to offer bereavement counselling. Listening and being available for comfort are the main skills required. However, if a member of staff feels unable to offer support because of their own

reactions, this should be acknowledged and accepted, and another colleague should be considered for the role.

Specialist support (for example from the Educational Psychology Service) can be provided to help a group of staff come to terms with a critical incident and to plan their responses to pupils, colleagues and parents. This might, in a small school, be a structured half day to talk over individual reactions and concerns.

Where, over a few weeks, it is clear that individual staff need more substantial support or counselling, the council can help with referral to appropriate agencies. (See Section 3, also Appendix 8 for contact numbers.)

D3: Information sharing sessions for pupils

When pupils are directly involved as witnesses to a traumatic incident they may benefit from information sharing sessions. This can also benefit pupils on the periphery of an incident. This enables them to express what they saw or heard, how it affected them and how they feel about it in retrospect.

Schools can often handle this process themselves. For more demanding and emotive situations, however, specialist support could be considered. The Educational Psychology Service can provide this support. Specialist help needs careful planning and is likely to be given between one and four weeks after the incident. The nature of this involvement may vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the individual incident. It is essential to get parental consent for involvement.

E: Managing trauma

E1: Introduction

The management of a critical incident can result in a great deal of stress for those involved. It is therefore important to:

- acknowledge the emotional state of staff and CYP and allow time and space when needed;
- acknowledge that some staff may not wish to or be able to be directly involved in supporting CYP;

- be aware that the burden of support may fall disproportionately on a small number of staff and make reasonable adjustments as necessary;
- acknowledge that the incident may act as a trigger to CYP who are emotionally vulnerable, even if they are not directly involved. This may result in difficulties in behaviour and relationships;
- be sensitive to the effects on staff or CYP's concentration and performance; be sensitive to the effect on home and social life for families and peers.

Additional points to consider:

- Adults familiar with the CYP will be particularly alert to the signals that show that the CYP are still working through what has happened.
- If needed, short-term counselling should be offered by appropriately trained and supported staff, possibly outside the normal timetable. Parental permission should be sought in this instance.
- Be aware of the possible delayed reactions of those actively involved in responding to a critical incident.
- Staff who are co-ordinating the school's response should be supported and allocated appropriate relief periods as necessary.
- Whether new staff and pupils would need to be made aware of the incident. There may be a greater need for this if the incident was relatively recent.

E2: Continuing or quickly re-establishing normal routines

Every attempt should be made to provide as much continuity as possible for CYP; maintain the normal school day so that CYP are as settled as possible.

E3: Formal and informal recognition and rituals

Arrangements may be made to express sympathy to the families directly affected by the incident, for example:

- injured CYP can be visited in hospital;
- CYP can be encouraged to send cards and letters;
- plan to attend a funeral, if welcomed by the family involved;
- discuss the appropriateness of holding special assemblies and memorial services;
- anniversaries are key times and your school should ensure these are planned for and handled with sensitivity.

E4: Return to school by pupils or staff

Pupils and staff who were injured or distressed as a direct result of the incident may need significant support to reintegrate back into school life.

Remember to provide help to others returning to school after an absence, for example:

- staff and pupils on sick leave at the time of the incident;
- anyone who missed the information sharing sessions;
- those who were not at school on the day of the incident and learned of events afterwards.

This information is summarised as a table in Appendix 6.

SECTION 3:

Organisations offering support to schools

Contents

3.1 Educational Psychology Service

3.2 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

3.3 Other services



3.1 Educational Psychology Service

The Educational Psychology Service place critical incidents as a priority and will respond to those involved helping them to understand and cope with its aftermath. The starting point is to help identify and acknowledge existing expertise/experience and to assist those concerned to build upon this at a stressful time. The service therefore sets out to be available to help monitor and assist in meeting the psychological needs of pupils and staff in a manner which complements, rather than replaces, the skills of others.

A range of psychological skills are brought to this process as we listen, examine, plan and provide support. It is important to remember that no two incidents will be the same and that all CYP, and adults, will deal with these incidents in individual and unique ways. Our response, therefore, needs to be flexible.

The role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) can be seen at different levels - they can be involved in helping schools in preparation for any form of loss or bereavement, and they can be there to provide support on occasions where a reactive approach is required.

The Educational Psychology Service can provide support to school staff after a critical incident in a number of ways by:

- working with staff groups to plan how to respond to individual and group needs (possibly via the curriculum, including grief reactions and support systems across different cultures);
- helping the school implement the guidelines in this document;
- providing information about typical reactions to traumatic events;
- providing advice on ways to support individual pupils;
- possible provision of short-term support where appropriate.

All types of support are negotiated between staff and the educational psychologist concerned.

The Educational Psychology Service can be reached on 020 8051 8380.

3.2 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

CAMHS consists of staff qualified in the field of child and adolescent mental health, including child psychiatry, clinical psychology, psychiatric nursing, family therapy and child psychotherapy. They provide a service to children and young people with moderate to severe emotional and developmental difficulties. Involvement may arise from long term concerns which could include sleep and eating problems, school refusal, unresolved grief, chronic illness or when there are relationship difficulties in the family. All of these issues may arise following bereavement. However, CAMHS do not offer stand-alone bereavement counselling.

CAMHS Contact Number: 020 8869 4500.

3.3 Other agencies and services

Other agencies can also be contacted for advice and support. These might include:

- Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team – 020 8420 9319. This service maintains corporate emergency plans for major incidents and other emergencies affecting the borough. In an emergency this service is contacted via People Services.
- Education Service – 020 8736 6514
- School Improvement and Effectiveness – 020 8416 8874
- Harrow Council Local Safeguarding Children's Board – 020 8424 1147
Resource directory from www.harrowlscb.co.uk, contains a list of resources and services available.
- Occupational Health – 0845 504 1000 www.healthmanagement.co.uk/
- Health and Safety – 020 8424 1512
- Health Management – 0845 504 1000
- Children and Families – “Golden number” 020 8901 2690 Mon – Fri 9am to 5 pm
- Emergency Duty Social Work Team- 020 8424 0999 which operates out of hours, including weekends and bank holidays
- Harrow Council Local Safeguarding Children's Board – 020 8424 1147
- Teacher Support Network (Education Support) – 08000 562 561

- Voluntary Organisations (see appendix 3)
- Religious Organisations
- Information regarding whether a school is open or closed – 020 8408 7508. This is an automated service; when prompted, key in the school's 7-digit number. Schools can direct parents and carers to: <https://opencheck.atomwide.com/Default.aspx>, which will let them know if the school is open following an emergency or critical incident.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Religious beliefs associated with death
Appendix 2	Recent examples of involvement from the Educational Psychology Service
Appendix 3	Suggested reading and other resources
Appendix 4	The Emergency Planning Team
Appendix 5	Critical Incidents process map
Appendix 6	Suggested action plan in response to a critical incident
Appendix 7	Checklist for dealing with a critical incident
Appendix 8	Contact numbers
Appendix 9	Emergency log proforma

Appendix 1: Religions and beliefs about death

Different faith groups have different beliefs, customs and rituals. “Most religions also contain a broad range of practice and a variety of different denominations or schools of thought.”³ It is important to ensure that you are aware of, and respect the family’s wishes. Ask the family about the funeral arrangements and ascertain their feelings about representatives of staff and pupils attending. Some families will want quiet private services, whilst others will be happy for everyone to attend. Similarly, some families may request flowers or others may prefer a donation.

Peers may wish to attend the funeral service. This should be a personal decision for the child/young person to make with their own parents/carers. Should they decide to go along to the service it would be advisable for their parents/carers to go with them to support them.

Attending the funeral can be a helpful experience in the grieving process, providing an opportunity to:

- Face the reality of the loss.
- Deal with unresolved issues.
- Experience celebrations of the person’s life.
- Say a formal goodbye. This may help the grieving process.

Preparing for the Funeral

The child/young person should be given prior information about what will happen during the funeral. It is important to listen to their questions/fears/anxieties and discuss the reality of the funeral. This could include sharing information about:

- Where the body will be ... e.g. will it be on view?
- What will happen to it ... cremated or burial?
- How to respond to expressions of sympathy/what to say to grieving friends or relatives.

It is important there is an adult available who can ‘look out’ for the children during the funeral to ensure they are supported if they become distressed.

It might also be helpful to research (e.g. via religious organisations or online sources) specific religious values and beliefs in relation to grief and loss; as appropriate to the context of the situation.

³ Weymont, D., & Rey, T., (2006), *Supporting Young People Coping with Grief, Loss and Death*, Paul Chapman Publishing

Appendix 2: Examples of involvement from the Educational Psychology Service

Support to schools and parents in the light of world events is also part of the work of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS).

Following an international situation, when school children were held hostage and many were killed, a Harrow school contacted the EPS, because a number of parents were concerned about what to tell their children about this event. Harrow EPS responded by holding an evening workshop for parents to help explain their children's possible reactions to the news and to suggest strategies that parents might use to help their children. The response from parents to the workshop was very positive.

After the tsunami in January 2005 all schools in Harrow were sent a document developed by the Harrow EPS from the evening workshop, to help school staff and parents support children who may have been affected or distressed by information and pictures in the media.

An e-mail from an anxious parent, concerned by her child's reaction to a family bereavement, resulted in communication with the parent over a number of weeks, offering support, strategies and sources of further advice. On another, similar occasion the EP was able to undertake a home visit to give initial support to the family. Both these situations were followed up by contact with the relevant schools.

The EPS was contacted by a school dealing with a sudden death, as a result of a suicide. An initial, priority visit allowed the EP to assess the needs of the school community. A member of the EPS team worked with individuals as well as groups of staff and pupils, supporting them to express and work through their emotions and move forward. This work took place over time, with on-going monitoring of the situation.

On other occasions the initial visit has been sufficient to enable the school to put in place their own appropriate support strategies. Resources and materials for further work in school have also been provided.

The EPS was contacted by a school concerned about how best to respond to a member of the school community diagnosed with a terminal illness. The EP was able to work with school staff to help them with their own reactions to the situation and how they could best support the child emotionally as well as educationally.

Where appropriate the EP would also work with the student and/or parents, providing such support and information about other support organisations as might be needed. The EP may also work with the child's peer group, in order to support them through the stages of grieving.

The Educational Psychology Service was contacted by a school who was dealing with a difficult situation. The degree to which support was required emerged steadily. The school's senior management team discussed this with the Educational Psychology Service and it was decided that the situation should be considered as a critical incident.

As a result support was made available from the Educational Psychology Service and used in a sensitive, flexible and low-key way. It was also provided at short notice when necessary. This enabled staff to have a 'listening ear' and emotional support at periods of heightened anxiety.

Training is offered by the Educational Psychology Service to all schools in the borough, aiming to raise the awareness of school staff about the process of grieving and the possible reactions of bereaved children in school, so as to be more confident in their approach should bereavement occur. Practical activities are part of the training as well as discussion of ways to integrate the subject of loss and bereavement into the curriculum.

Appendix 3: Suggested reading and other resources

Some of the information found in this publication has been drawn from sources listed below.

Organisations offering support for parents and children

Barnardo's – is a charity that aims to support the lives of the UK's most vulnerable children. Web: <http://www.barnardos.org.uk/>

Brake Care – When someone you love dies in a road crash, or you, or a loved one, is seriously injured, it is devastating. Brake Care, a division of Brake, is dedicated to providing help and support for bereaved and injured victims. Brake also works to end road casualties and make communities safer with its campaigns. There is also a 'Rose Garden' section for memories of victims. Web: www.brake.org.uk Tel: 01484 559909. Brake Care helpline for road crash victims: 0808 8000 401.

Brent Bereavement Services – Provides counselling to bereaved people living in Brent. 020 8459 6818. Web: <http://www.bbsonline.org.uk/>

Child Bereavement UK – Supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. The website offers a range of training opportunities and includes information about an awareness programme for schools. Email: support@childbereavementuk.org. Professionally trained support workers are available to take calls from 9am-5pm Monday-Friday. Helpline Tel: 0800 02 888 40. Web: www.childbereavement.org.uk

Childhood Bereavement Network – This website promotes the development of best practice in supporting bereaved children, develops resources for bereaved children and those working with them, signposts professionals and families to local and national support and works with Government and Parliament to develop policy. It includes a section for school staff about how to develop the curriculum and pastoral support. Tel: 0207 843 6309 Web: www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Child Line – Call free on 0800 1111 (24 hr). Tel: 0800 884444 (for children in care 6.00pm to 10.00pm). Web: www.childline.org.uk.

Cruse Bereavement Care – A national organisation for the widowed and their children. Address: Central Office, P.O. Box 800, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 1RG. Tel: Helpline 0808 808 1677. Admin: 020 8939 9530. Web: www.cruse.org.uk or www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk. Cruse offers one-to-one bereavement support to adults and children.

Elephants Tea Party – Created by the Child's Bereavement Charity, this is a separate resource website designed for school staff in order to develop a curriculum of support about bereavement: the 'elephant in the room'. Tel: 01494 568 900. Web: www.childbereavementuk.org/pages/category/elephants-tea-party. Email: Support@childbereavement.uk.org.

Freedom from Torture – Provides support to survivors of torture. Tel: 020 7697 7777. Web: www.freedomfromtorture.org.

Grief Encounter Project – A charity set up to help bereaved children and their families. Based in Barnet, it will work with young people and their families in Harrow.

The Lodge, Stephens House, 17 East End Road, London, N3 3QE. Tel: 020 8371 8455. Monday – Friday between 9am – 5pm. Helpline: 0808 802 0111 Web: <http://www.griefencounter.org.uk>. Email: contact@griefencounter.org.uk.

Bereavement Care – A local registered charity which offers support to bereaved families in their home, training to schools and support to children in schools. The Lodge, 64 Pinner Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 4HZ. Tel: 020 8427 5720. Web: www.bereavementcareandsupport.co.uk. Email: admin@bereavementcareandsupport.co.uk

H.O.P.E (Harrow Offering Parents Encouragement) – Provide workshops on bereavement. Contact HOPE at The Lodge, 64 Pinner Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 4HZ. Tel: 020 8863 7319. Web: www.hopeharrow.org.uk Email: info@hopeharrow.org.uk.

Hope Again is part of Cruse Bereavement Care. Their youth website aims to support people after the death of someone close. Web: www.hopeagain.org.uk. Freephone helpline: 0808 808 1677.

Kooth – online mental wellbeing community offering support. www.kooth.com

The Lullaby Trust – Provide expert advice on safer sleep for babies. Supports bereaved families and raises awareness on sudden infant death. Tel: 0808 802 6868. Web: www.lullabytrust.org.uk.

Macmillan Cancer Support – Provide practical, medical, emotional and possible financial support for those affected by cancer. Web: www.macmillan.org.uk. Tel: 0808 808 000. A Macmillan Cancer Information Centre is located at Northwick Park Hospital (Main Entrance) Mon-Fri 9.30am to 3.30pm. Tel: 020 8869 5099.

Mind – A charity that provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problems. Web: <https://www.mind.org.uk> Telephone: Infoline (for support) : 0300 123 3393 Email: info@mind.org.uk Text: 86463 General telephone: 020 8519 2122.

Papyrus (prevention of young suicide) – Papyrus offers UK resources and support for those dealing with suicide, depression or emotional distress – particularly teenagers and young adults. HOPE Line UK – the Papyrus helpline, is open from 9.00am to 10.00pm, Monday to Friday and 2.00pm to 10.00pm at weekends. It is staffed by professionally qualified advisers who can give support, practical advice and information to anyone who is concerned that a young person they know may be suicidal. Web: www.papyrus-uk.org. Tel: 0800 068 4141.

Rainbows Bereavement Support Great Britain – A national charity aimed to support children, young people and adults who are grieving a significant loss in their lives. Offers help for children suffering bereavement or other forms of loss. Also supports communities in reviewing or developing their own bereavement policy and procedures. Offers training and programmes for schools in bereavement and loss. Tel: 0161 624 2269. Web: <https://www.rainbowsgb.org>. Email: rainbowsgb.dc@btconnect.com.

RIPRAP – A website that can help you cope when a parent has cancer, or if your parent has died from cancer. The site includes stories from other young people

going through the same situations as you are information, local contacts and a forum where you can share your feelings. Web: www.riprap.org.uk/

RoadPeace – A national charity for road crash victims. Website provides support for bereaved and injured road crash victims. Web: <https://www.roadpeace.org/> Tel: 0845 4500 355. Email: info@roadpeace.org

Samaritans – Confidential support to anyone passing through a crisis, in despair, or thinking of taking their life. Harrow branch 44 Station Rd, Harrow. Web: www.samaritans.org . Tel: 116 123 or 0330 094 5717. Email: jo@samaritans.org.

SAMM (Support After Murder or Manslaughter) – Understanding and support to families and friends bereaved as a result of murder and manslaughter, through the mutual support of others who have suffered a similar tragedy. Web: www.samm.org.uk. Helpline: 0121 472 2912. Email: info@samm.org.uk

SANDS (The Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society) – support for bereaved parents and their families when a baby is stillborn or dies soon after birth. Web: www.uk-sands.org. Tel: 020 7436 5881. Email: helpline@sands.org.uk.

Seasons for Growth (England and Wales) – Offers information about a loss and grief peer-group education programme to support young people aged 6-18 years and adults affected by change, loss and grief. Web: www.seasonsforgrowth.co.uk. Email: info@seasonsforgrowth.co.uk.

SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide) – Support for adults bereaved by the suicide of a close relative or friend. SOBS offer emotional and practical support in a number of ways: telephone contacts, bereavement packs, group meetings (in a number of locations), one-day conferences and residential events. SOBS can also provide information relating to practical issues and problems. SOBS' aim is to provide a safe, confidential environment, in which bereaved people can share their experiences and feelings, giving and gaining support from each other. Includes advice on how adults can support children affected by suicide. Web: www.uksobs.org Tel: 0300 111 5065 (9.00am to 9.00pm Mon - Fri). Email: email.support@uksobs.org

Sudden Trauma Information Service Helpline – Outline self-help strategies and practical methods of managing as well as signposting to professionals and therapeutic interventions. Tel: 0845 367 0998. Web: www.stish.org.

The Bereavement Trust – A national multilingual free phone helpline. A listening ear, information and support in time of sorrow, from trained volunteers. Also helps to develop children's gardens in cemeteries. Web: www.bereavement-trust.org.uk General helpline: 0800 435 455 (6pm- 10pm). Asian helpline (Hindu, Punjabi, Gujarati and Urdu) Tel: 0800 9177 416. Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) helpline Tel: 0800 0304 236. Email: info@bereavement-trust.org.uk

The Child Death Helpline – Run from Great Ormond Street Hospital, but open to all, the helpline is a listening service that offers emotional support to those affected by the death of a child, whether family, friends or professionals. It is staffed by bereaved parents supervised by trained counsellors. Web: www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk . Tel: 0800 282 986; 0808 800 6019 365 days a year, 7.00pm to 10.00pm, Monday - Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm and Tuesday/ Wednesday 1:00 – 4.00pm.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) – Support for bereaved parents, including local groups and befriending. They also offer specialised support groups for grandparents, siblings and parents who have lost their only child. Their website contains many useful leaflets regarding bereavement. They also offer support where a child has taken his or her own life. Web: www.tcf.org.uk. Tel: 0345 123 2304 (365 days a year, 10am- 4pm and 6.30pm-10.30pm. Calls are answered by a bereaved parent). Email: helpline@tcf.org.uk.

Together for Short Lives – Support for children and young people with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions and their carers and families. Web: <http://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/>. Tel: 0808 8088 100. Email: info@togetherforshortlives.org.uk.

Winston's Wish – A registered charity providing a grief support programme for children and parents, with a wide range of excellent resource materials available. There is a comprehensive book list available on the website: www.winstonswish.org.uk. Tel: 08088 020 021. Email: ask@winstonswish.org

Young Minds – A charity that provides mental health support for children and young people's mental health to help build resilience to overcome life's challenges. <https://youngminds.org.uk/> Telephone: Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544.

Publications and Resources

Abrams R *When Parents Die: Learning to live with the loss of a parent*. (Charles Letts, 1992). A book for young adults. The Author has written the book from personal experience.

Barnard P et al (Jessica Kingsley ,1999) *Children Bereavement and Trauma: Nurturing Resilience*. Derived from the authors' experience of working with bereaved children after the Hillsborough disaster. It promotes the idea of healthy coping, and explores ways to enable children and their families do this.

I can... You can (postcards) An innovative set of four postcards for children and young people bereaved of someone special to share with other important people in their lives. The cards can be used by bereaved children and young people to alert their parent or carer, friend or teacher how they can help through this difficult time, and to remind themselves of coping strategies. Each card lists various ways to help, suggested by other young people who have been through similar experiences. The child can indicate which ideas they prefer or are particularly relevant. Cards come in packs of 100 (25 sets of four designs: to my parents/carers, to my teacher, to my friend and to myself). Price: £8 (£6 for CBN/NCB members) for pack of 100 cards.

Information Pack: Supporting Bereaved Children in School, CBN Schools
For details on ordering visit www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Child Bereavement Network Information on resources available are listed on the website www.childhoodbereavement.org.uk/publications.htm

Department of Health (2008) *Help is at Hand: a resource for people bereaved by suicide and other sudden, traumatic death*. It aims to meet the needs of the bereaved and also those health and other professionals who are in contact with them. It contains a comprehensive list of resources for further advice and support.

Dyregrov A, *Grief in Children: A Handbook for Adults* (Jessica Kingsley 2nd edition 2008) A guide to reactions to death in school age children.

Grief in the Family Video/DVD 2002, Leeds Animation Workshop. Narrated by Michael Rosen. This 14-minute animated video/DVD looks at the ways children and young people respond to the process of grieving, its physical and emotional effects, and the special needs of children and young people. Stressing the importance of listening to children and answering their questions honestly, it encourages the development of communication and a supportive family environment. The pack is designed as a resource for those working with families and bereaved children. It raises awareness and facilitates discussion in parenting education classes, training courses or schools. It is also suitable for viewing at home by parents, carers and children. Grief in the Family is also available with subtitles for deaf people. A booklet containing background information is supplied free with the video/DVD 2002, Leeds Animation Workshop. Run time 14 minutes. Price £40 including VAT and p&p available from www.leedsanimation.org.uk

Dyregrov, A, *Grief in young children: A Handbook for Adults* (Jessica Kingsley 2nd Edition 2008). A guide to reactions to death in preschool children.

Grollman EA, ***Talking about Death: A Dialogue between Parent and Children*** (Beacon 1990). A guide for adults on how to talk to children about death, with a read-together section for the adult and the child (under 9s).

Heegaard, M ***When Someone has a very Serious Illness***, (Woodland Press). A workbook for 6-12 year olds. Also ***When Someone Very Special Dies and When Something Terrible Happens***.

Hindmarch C, ***On the Death of a child*** (Radcliff Medical Press 1993)
Guidelines for the support of both adults and children affected by a child's death.

Holland J ***Loss, Bereavement and Awareness Training***. (Jessica Kingsley 2005).

Jewett C, ***Helping children cope with separation and loss*** (Batsford 1982)

Kibble D, ***Safety and disaster management in schools and colleges*** (David Fulton 1998)

NICE guidelines Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). ***The management of PTSD in adults and children in primary and secondary care Clinical Guideline 26***.

Copies of this quick reference guide can be obtained from the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk/CG026quickrefguide or from the NHS Response Line by telephoning 0870 1555 455 and quoting reference number N0848. Information from the public on the guideline ('Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): the treatment of PTSD in adults and children') is also available from NICE website at www.nice.org.uk/CG026publicinfo or from the NHS Response Line (quote reference number N0849).

Pennells M and Smith S (Eds), ***Interventions with bereaved children*** (Jessica Kingsley 1995). Covers different approaches and includes a chapter on managing tragedy in a secondary school.

Rae T, Howarth I, and Davies, L, ***Activities and Ideas for Building Resilience and Well-being in Young Children***. (Hinton House Publishers 2020)

Rae, T. and Walsh, J. ***Understanding & Preventing Self-Harm in Schools***. A toolkit that can be used on a whole school, small group or individual basis to develop preventative and supportive approaches and raise awareness of risk factors and improve mental health. (Hinton House Publishers, 2017)

Rae T, ***Bouncing Back and Coping with Change Building Emotional and Social Resilience in Young People Aged 9 – 14***. Practical evidence-based strategies to teach young people to bounce back and keep going in the face of adversity delivered in 20 sessions. (Hinton House Publishers, 2016)

Rae T, Such A, and Wood J, ***The Wellbeing Toolkit for Mental Health Leads in Schools: A Comprehensive Training Resource to Support Emotional Wellbeing in Education & Social Care***. Twenty practical modules to help enable staff to maintain and enhance the well-being of the children and young people and to develop staff confidence and whole-school approaches to support the wellbeing of the whole school community. (Hinton House Publications).

Rowling L, ***Grief in School Communities: Effective Support Strategies*** (Open University Press 2003)

School Mental Health: Resource pack for schools.

www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/School-Mental-Health-Pack-1-1.pdf

Seasons for Growth (England and Wales) www.seasonsforgrowth.co.uk Seasons for Growth is a Grief Education Programme supporting children across seven countries and 90,000 children have participated in this support programme. Commonwealth Government Evaluation (1999) (2004) showed the programme helped children and young people by reducing isolation, increasing productive behaviour, reducing non-productive behaviour and raising self-esteem. First implemented as a 'pilot project' in Hillingdon in 2002 following a Queens Nursing Institute Aware, Seasons for Growth is now in 30 schools in Hillingdon. An adult programme is now available to support parents. National office: info@seasonsforgrowth.co.uk

Smith S, **The Forgotten Mourners: Guidelines for Working with Bereaved Children: 2nd Edition.** (Jessica Kingsley 1999) Concise guidelines for supporting bereaved children, including a section on what teachers can do and a useful resource section.

Stroebe M and Schut H. **The dual process model of coping with bereavement: rationale and description.** (1999) Death Studies 23, pp. 197-224

Ward B et al, **Good grief 1: exploring feelings, loss and death for under 11s: Second Edition (1995)** and **Good grief 2: exploring feelings, loss and death for over 11s (Second Edition (1996))** (Jessica Kingsley Publishers). A wide range of excellent resource materials and ideas for the curriculum.

Wells R, **Helping children cope with grief** (D Fulton 1998). Includes suggestions for primary school teachers.

J. William Worden **Grief counselling and grief therapy. A handbook for the mental health practitioner.** (2004, 3rd Edition Hove: Brunner-Routledge).

Yule W and Gold A **Wise before the event** (Calouste Guibenkian Foundation 1993). A more detailed review and planning guide for schools working to anticipate critical incidents. All schools had been previously sent a copy.

Suggested Reading for Various Ages and Stages

A selection of these materials is held by the Educational Psychology Service.

Under 5s

Always and Forever A, Durant (2013) Picture Corgi

A book for young children on the theme of bereavement told through animals.

Goodbye Mousie Robie Harris (2003) Simon and Schuster Children's Books

A little boy's pet mouse dies and his parents help him to understand what death means by answering his questions.

Granpa John Burningham (2003) Red Fox

This picture book (made into a film) shows happy memories of a girl and her grandfather. The last picture shows his chair empty – children may need some explanation of what might have happened.

The Memory Tree Britta Teckentrup (2014) Orchard Books

A beautifully illustrated story of loss for younger children told through woodland animals sharing their happy memories of a friend who has died.

Missing Mummy Rebecca Cobb (2012) Macmillan Children's Books

This picture book deals with the loss of a parent from a young child's point of view. It focuses on the range of emotions that the child may feel, and the positive memories that they have.

Key Stage 1 and 2

Badger's Parting Gifts Susan Varley (1994) Picture

Lions A story of animals learning to remember their friend.

Charlotte's Web E. B. White (2014) Puffin

A classic story of Wilbur the pig and other animal friends of Fern who live on a farm. Charlotte the spider saves Wilbur's life, but dies herself after her babies are born.

Gentle Willow: A story for children about dying (2003) Joyce C. Mills, Magination Press

Gentle willow is written for children who may not survive an illness and the children who know them, as well as other children who have experienced loss. This book helps to address feelings of anger, sadness and disbelief, as well as the healing power of love.

The Heart and the bottle (2010) Oliver Jeffers, Harper Collins

This story of love and loss is about a girl who tries to protect herself from feeling grief by hiding her heart. She eventually learns how to get it back. For 5 – 8 year olds.

I Miss You (A first look at death) Pat Thomas (2009) Wayland

Written by a psychotherapist, this book helps young children to start to talk about their feelings following the loss of a loved one.

The Invisible String Patrice Karst (2018) Little, Brown Young

This picture book is aimed at 4 – 7 year olds experiencing loss or difficulty with separating from a loved one. It centres on the idea of people being connected by an invisible string that will always be there.

Milly's Bug-nut Jill Janney (2002) Winston's Wish.

A short story of Milly, whose father has died, and the way her family finds through bereavement. She knows that when people die they can't come back, but she keeps a wish to see her Dad one more time.

Someone Has Died Suddenly Department of Social Work (1999) St Christopher's Hospice.

Describes emotions likely to occur after bereavement and what happens to a body after death.

Someone Special Has Died. St Christopher's Hospice, Social Work Department. A booklet for children up to 10 years old explaining death.

Waterbugs and Dragonflies: explaining death to young children Doris Stickney (2002) Continuum International.

This book uses the analogy of a waterbug transforming into a dragonfly to illustrate the idea of life after death. Written from a Christian viewpoint, children may need an adult to help understand the relevance of the story.

What on earth do you do when someone dies? Trevor Romain, Elizabeth Verdick (1999) Free Spirit Publishing.

Describes the overwhelming emotions when a loved one dies, and discusses how to cope.

Key Stages 3 and 4 (11-16)

The Charlie Barber Treatment. Carole Lloyd (1997). Walker Books Ltd.

When Simon's mother dies suddenly from a brain haemorrhage, he clams up. His new friend Charlie helps him to talk again to his family and friends, and to find ways of enjoying life.

Facing Grief: Bereavement and the young adult. Susan Wallbank (1991). Lutterworth Press.

Deals with the particular experience of losing a parent, sibling, partner or friend between the ages of around 18 and 25.

The Lost Boys' Appreciation Society. Alan Gibbons (2004). Orion Children's Books. When Gary and John's mother dies suddenly, the boys and their fathers are thrown into turmoil. John feels responsible for Gary who starts hanging out with the wrong crowd.

Someone close to you has died. Candle Project (2001). St Christopher's Hospice Describes feelings experienced by bereaved teenagers and issues including not being understood, wondering if normality can be possible again, changes and unfinished business.

Straight talk about death for teenagers. Earl Grollman (1993). Beacon Press Reassuring the reader that grief is normal, this book covers a range of feelings and reactions in response to different deaths.

Vicky Angel Jacqueline Wilson (2001). Corgi Children's Books.

After Vicky was run over and died, her best friend Jade is confused to find that Vicky is an even more distracting presence than when she was alive. Covers the power of friendship and the overwhelming feelings around a sudden death.

Michael Rosen's Sad Book. Michael Rosen.

A father's account of his grief for his son

A Fault in our Stars. John Green (2013). This book is about a young teenage girl, Hazel, who has been diagnosed with lung cancer. She attends a cancer support group, where she meets Augustus Waters. The book explores Hazel's story and adventures with Augustus.

A Monster Calls. Patrick Ness (2015). A book about a 13 year old boy who is learning to cope with his mother's diagnosis of cancer.

Workbooks

Finding a way through when someone close has died: what it feels like and what you can do to help yourself Pat Mood and Lesley Whittaker (2001) Jessica Kingsley Publisher

Written and illustrated by children and young people who discuss their own feelings after bereavement and make practical suggestions of what helped them to cope. Readers are encouraged to write and draw about their own experience and to think about how they can seek further support.

Good Grief 1: exploring feelings, loss and death with under 11s (1995)
Good Grief 2: exploring feelings, loss and death with over 11s and adults (1996) Barbara Ward (1995, 1996) Jessica Kingsley Publishers

With 20 educators contributing ideas piloted with children of different abilities and backgrounds in their care, this text has been designed to explore and demystify the experience of loss – in different contexts-within the framework of the National Curriculum.

Grief Encounter Workbook. Shelley Gilbert (2003) Grief Encounter Project
A workbook to encourage conversations about death and bereavement between bereaved children and adults.

Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine. Winston's Wish and Kate Shepherd (2000) Winston's Wish.

A range of fun, thoughtful and creative activities and exercises for bereaved children. Fully illustrated and introducing friendly characters of Bee and Bear.

Remembering. Tina Rae and Lorna Nelson (2004) Lucky Duck Publishing
Practical ideas and resources for supporting children aged 7 to 13 who have experienced loss and bereavement.

Supporting Young People Coping with Grief, Loss and Death
Tina Rae and Deborah Weymont (2006) Paul Chapman Publishing
For young people to gain an understanding of grief and loss and the ways in which they can gain appropriate support.

Talking with children and young people about death and dying
Mary Turner (1998) Jessica Kingsley Publishers
Covers concepts of death and dying and aspects of bereavement, including anger, fear, dreams and ways of remembering. Can be used as a basis for opening discussions between a bereaved child and adult.

When someone very special dies
Marge Heegard (1991) Fairview Press
For children and adults to use together to talk about general concepts of death and loss, as well as around a particular bereavement.

Parents and Carers

A Child's Grief: Supporting a child when someone in their family has died. Di Stubbs, Julie Stokes and Katrine Alilovic (2009) Winston's Wish

This helpful short book for adults supporting children through bereavement covers a variety of issues which may affect a child and offers practical suggestions and activities.

Beyond the Rough Rock: Supporting a child who has been bereaved through suicide. Di Stubbs, Julie Stokes and Heidi Baker (2008) Winston's Wish

An information booklet offering practical advice for families where someone has died by suicide, aiming to give parents and professionals the confidence to involve children in discussions about the nature of death by suicide. Includes activities for the child to do with the family to start making sense of what has happened.

Grief in Children: a handbook for adults Kari and Atle Dyregov (2008) Jessica Kingsley Publishers

This book covers a range of bereavement experiences, covering different types of death, bereavement at different ages and differences in the way boys and girls may grieve. Makes suggestions for looking after children's needs. Also includes a chapter on bereavement groups for children.

Helping children cope with separation and loss Claudia Jewett Jarrett (1994) Batsford Ltd

Discussing the need to help children regain self-esteem and self-control after bereavement, this book covers breaking bad news to children, separation reactions and seeking meaning.

A Parent's guide to Raising Grieving Children: Rebuilding your family after the death of a loved one Phyllis R. Silverman and Madelyn Kelly (2009) Oxford University Press USA

This book covers support for children and young people of all ages and encourages an open approach to help children understand. It cites real conversations with parents and children to show what others have learnt.

Someone very important has just died Mary Turner (2004) Jessica Kingsley

This book provides immediate help for people caring for children of all ages at the time of a close bereavement.

Talking about Death: a dialogue between parent and child Earl Grollman (2011) Beacon Press

This guide to helping children cope with death includes an illustrated, read-along story and discusses coping with a child's anger, denial, or guilt, and how to discuss funerals, cemeteries and grief. It includes advice from parents and acknowledges that they may be grieving too.

Schools and Other Settings

Childhood Bereavement: developing the curriculum and pastoral support Gill Frances and Nina Job (2004) National Children's Bureau

Covering areas in the curriculum where death and bereavement can be introduced, this book also discusses ways of supporting bereaved pupils. It draws on good practice from a variety of schools, including a special school, and gives a selection of lesson plans.

The Forgotten Mourners. Guidelines for working with bereaved children Susan C Smith (1999) Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Aimed at teachers and social workers, this book outlines children's grieving at different ages, discusses secondary losses, and outlines some of the useful techniques which the adults around them can use in support.

Grief in School Communities: effective support strategies Louise Rowling (2003) Open University Press

This book aims to help individuals and school communities to create environments in which grief, while a difficult experience, is seen as a normal life event. It demonstrates the components in a school that can be used to support grieving individuals in times of personal crisis, and to support whole school communities when traumatic incidents occur.

Talking about death and bereavement in school Ann Chadwick (2011). Jessica Kingsley Publishers

This book aims to provide support and guidance to schools about how to support pupils aged 4-11 years who are grieving.

About Childhood Bereavement

Brief Interventions with Bereaved Children

Barbara Monroe and Frances Kraus (eds) (2004) Oxford University Press

This book addresses and explains the theoretical concepts and practical implications behind the idea of brief work with bereaved children and families. Flexible and accessible short-term services delivered at the right time underpin the strengths of bereaved children, supporting their recovery rather than pathologising the grief process. The book covers a range of interventions aiming to support children and families' resilience.

Children and Grief: when a parent dies

William Worden (2001) Guildford Press

The volume presents major findings from the Harvard Child Bereavement Study and places them in the context of previous research, covering the wide range of normal variation in children's experience of grief and the factors that put bereaved children at risk. The book compares parentally bereaved children with those bereaved of a sibling or who have experienced divorce, exploring similarities and differences between these losses. A concluding section explores the clinical implications of the findings and includes a review of intervention models and activities, as well as a screening instrument designed to help identify high-risk bereaved children.

Healing Children's Grief: Surviving a parent's death from cancer

Grace Christ (2000) Oxford University Press Inc, USA

Using qualitative analytic methods, this book identifies five developmentally derived

age groups that clarify important differences in children's grief and mourning process, in their understanding of events, their interactions with families, and their varying needs for help and support. The author gives numerous examples of the ways parents and extended family interacted with the children, and also the ways those professionals, friends and many others help families deal with this experience.

Then, Now and Always: supporting bereaved children as they journey through grief

Julie Stokes (2004) Winston's Wish

This guide for practitioners covers the practical and theoretical aspects of running a community-based, child bereavement support service, and giving specific details about the work of Winston's Wish, based in Gloucestershire.

Appendix 4: The Role of the Emergency Planning Team

As part of Harrow Council's emergency preparedness, the council has a number of trained staff who are able to assist during an emergency. They are known as Emergency Response Officers (EROs) and are middle managers within the council - there are over 20 of them.

They work in partnership with the following organisations:

- o West London Local Resilience Forum
- o Metropolitan Police
- o London Fire Brigade
- o London Ambulance Service
- o Volunteer agencies such as the British Red Cross

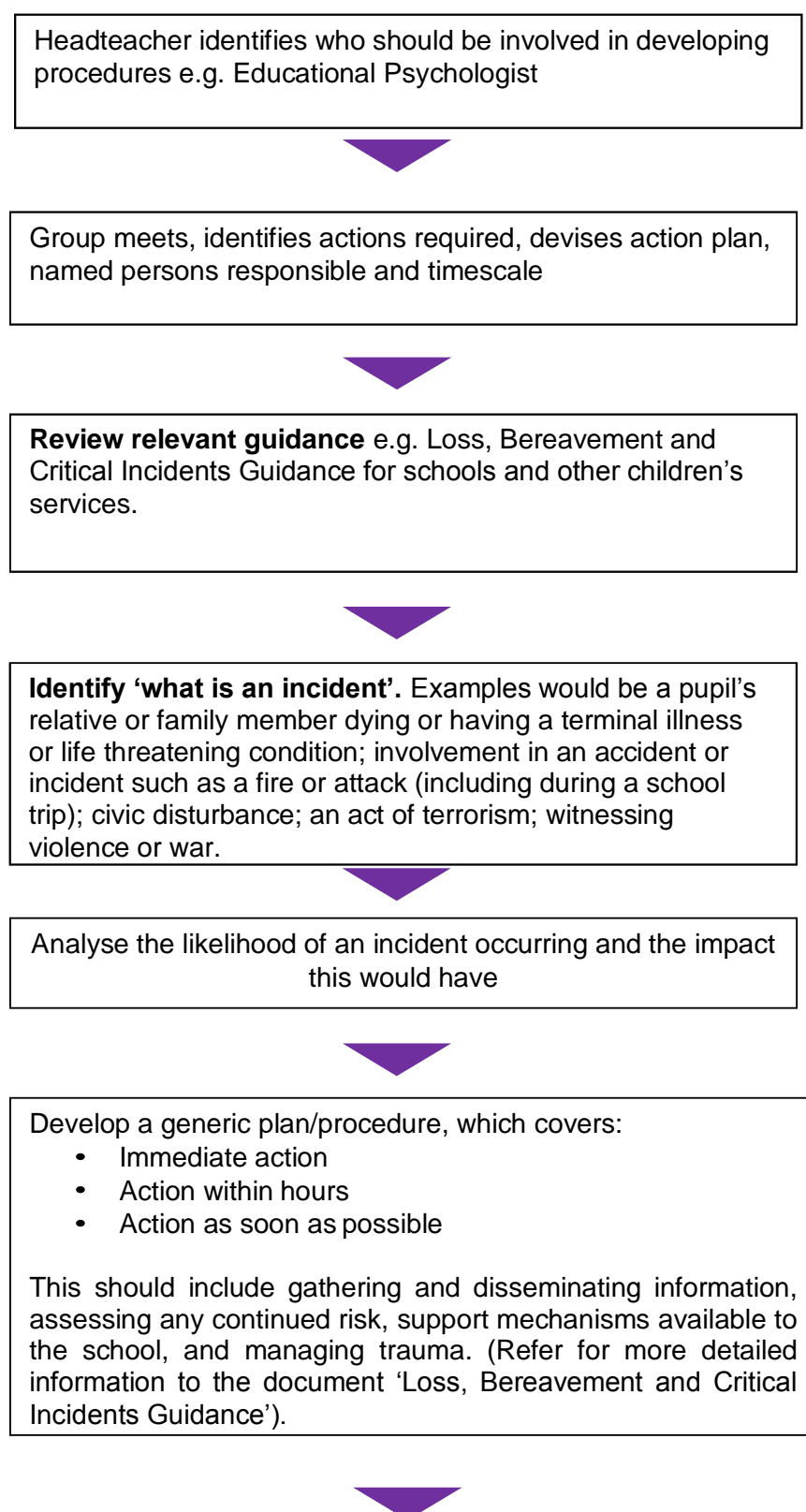
A weekly duty rota, managed by the Emergency Planning Team, has an ERO on primary duty with a secondary ERO as back-up. The ERO is also supported by a Duty Director.

Upon notification of a major emergency, the Duty ERO is initially responsible for the overall tactical co-ordination of the council's response. They act as Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO) and will be present on-scene and represent the local authority at multi agency 'Silver' meetings.

To find out more information please contact Head of Emergency Planning & Business Continuity:- 0208 420 9319

Appendix 5: Critical Incidents process map

(This process map is designed to assist schools and other educational settings in developing their own procedural documents with regards to identifying what is a critical incident and what action should be taken following such an incident. It could also be used by Children's Centres and other educational provisions or Children's services to support their policies and procedures)



Implement procedure within school ensuring staff receive relevant training on this.



Headteacher responsible for ensuring review of procedures following an incident.



Headteacher responsible for ensuring procedure is amended as appropriate.

Appendix 6: Suggested Action Plan in response to a Critical Incident

	Task	By Whom
Immediate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gather information ➤ Assess continuing risk ➤ Brief the Senior Management Team or School Critical Incident Team (CIT) as appropriate ➤ Contact appropriate agencies and services 	Person receiving first notification of incident/ Headteacher/ nominated other
Action within the first hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contact Corporate Director and Director of Schools and Children's Development (Emergency Planning Team, if applicable) ➤ Contact the families of those involved ➤ Telephone communication to and from school ➤ Inform school staff ➤ Inform pupils 	Headteacher/ nominated other
Action within the next few hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Arrange debriefing for staff and pupils involved in the incident ➤ Inform the wider community ➤ Develop a plan for handling the feelings and reactions of others ➤ Handle the media via the Communications Unit 	CIT/ Corporate Director – Children and Families/ School Staff / Outside Agencies (e.g. EPS, Social Care)
<i>Longer-Term Action:</i>		
Support available to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Telephone contact for advice and support ➤ Briefing and planning with staff ➤ Briefing sessions for pupils and opportunities for listening 	School Staff/ Outside Agencies (e.g. EPS, Social Care Harrow Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB))
Managing trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide opportunities to talk through or otherwise express personal reactions ➤ Continue or quickly re-establish normal routines with sensitivity to how pupils could respond to curriculum ➤ Carry out formal and informal recognition and rituals e.g. funeral ➤ Plan for return to school by pupils or staff 	As above Voluntary Organisations/ Community Groups/

These actions would form part of a general emergency plan within a school.

Appendix 7: Checklist for dealing with a critical incident in school

Have I ...

- Informed the Director of Children and Families?
- Assessed continuing risk? Is it likely that further injuries/damage may occur?
- Contacted emergency services, if needed?
- Established an intervention team and identified a 'key worker' who will coordinate action?

Do I need to...

- Arrange for senior staff to meet key personnel?
- Decide on the need to involve outside agencies and contact as necessary?
- Contact families as appropriate?
- Call a staff meeting to give information?
- Inform governors?
- Inform pupils in small groups as appropriate?
- Contact the communications office? Discuss this with the directors.
- Call a debriefing meeting of staff involved in the crisis?
- Debrief pupils involved in the crisis allowing for health and safety?
- Set up strategies for dealing with enquiries?
- Inform parents (with care and sensitivity)?
- Identify high risk pupils and staff and consider need for counselling support?
- Promote discussion in classes?
- Identify need for individual or group counselling or other help across the school?
- Organise any counselling / support in collaboration with appropriate services?

Where possible it is helpful to stick to normal routines.

Appendix 8: Contacts

Add details of contacts relevant to your school in the spaces provided below.

Contact	Name	Number
Chair of governors		
Attached Advisor		
Link Educational Psychologist		
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team		
Police		
Police - Child Protection Referrals Desk		020 8733 3562
	scd5mailbox-.harrowcjit@met.pnn.police.uk	
Fire Brigade		
Hospital		
Harrow Children and Families.....		020 8901 2690
Emergency Duty Team (EDT) after 5pm		020 8424 0999
Religious leaders		
.....		
.....		

The Corporate Director of Children and Families Service must be contacted:

	Office	Mobile
Corporate Director People Services	020 8424 1356	07949 636570

Contact Harrow Local Safeguarding Children's Board on 020 8424 1147 or lscb@harrow.gov.uk if there are safeguarding issues

Child Death notification - contact the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) on 020 8869 3068 and fill in a notification form from <http://www.harrowlscb.co.uk/guidance-procedures/child-death-rapid-response/>

Additional Contact(s) within Children and Families:

Divisional Director, Education Services....020 8736 6514

Appendix 9: Emergency Response Log

SCHOOL/COLLEGE

Date:.....

Name:.....

Sheet No:.....

Time		Event	Action (by whom)
From	To		

**Educational Psychology Service
Harrow Civic Centre
Civic 5 and 6
Station Road
Harrow
Ha1 2XY**

Tel: 020 8051 8380

These guidelines were drawn up by Harrow Council's Educational Psychology Service in consultation with the Emergency Planning Team and Harrow Safeguarding Children's Board

Special thanks to pupils and staff at Norbury Primary School for the drawings.