



## **Bereavement Policy**

### ***Rationale:***

*St. Mary's Secondary School is a Catholic Secondary School in the trusteeship of CEIST. We are committed to the pastoral care of the whole school community. Providing support and care, particularly at a time of a bereavement or critical incident, is an integral part of the characteristic spirit of the school. It should be noted, that while the policy provides general guidelines for responding to a critical incident, some flexibility should be allowed to deal with each case as unique, possibly requiring a unique response. This should be at the discretion of the school's critical incident management team.*

***This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Critical Incident Policy***

### **In the event of the death of a member of a student's immediate family:**

Principal/Deputy contacts the parents, sends a wreath/donation and a mass card, puts up a notice in the staff room (or contacts via text message) with details of funeral arrangements, organises bus for students travelling to the funeral mass.

The class Religion teacher will organise a short prayer service with the class to remember the deceased.

### **Attending the funeral:**

Principal/Deputy

Year Head

Class Tutor

Religion teacher/counsellor/chaplain

A member of staff who feels they have a strong, direct connection with the family can make special arrangements which will not be counted as a personal day.

Two of the above representatives will accompany the students travelling to the funeral on the bus. Students will attend the funeral mass only, not the burial in the



graveyard. Only the class group of the student involved will have automatic permission to go to the funeral and travel on the bus. Any other student wishing to attend needs to present a note at school, make and be responsible for their own travel arrangements with parental consent. Students attending the funeral Mass should do so in Full Uniform and form a Guard of Honour at the Church.

When the students return from the funeral mass they can go to the canteen for their lunch for that class period only. The canteen, on that day, should be left free for that group who will be supervised by the 2 teachers who accompanied them on the bus. Any of these students who are very distressed should be able to talk with the school counsellor/chaplain/religion teacher/class tutor etc.

*If the funeral is at the weekend, there should be a visible school presence in attendance at the funeral mass.*

**In the event of the death of a student of St. Mary's Secondary School:**  
(following illness)

Principal or Deputy notifies staff.

The Religion department organise a short memorial service to take place at approx. 12 noon or as soon as it can be organised. The religion team may involve students and teachers in the service.

During that day each teacher should try to identify the needs of students in their classes and respond accordingly.

The class group or year group to which the student belonged should not be left alone. They should be given a chance to talk amongst themselves. Remind students that counselling is available through the guidance counsellor, chaplain, religion team etc. The teacher in charge of this class group can make tea or coffee available to the students, at the teacher's discretion.

The Principal or Deputy will visit the home of the student and ascertain the level of involvement that the family desire at the funeral mass, and organise a wreath/donation and a Mass/Sympathy card.



On the day of the funeral no formal classes will take place as a mark of respect, but students are encouraged and expected to attend school. Students should attend funeral in full school uniform.

Following the death any students not coping or in distress should be referred to the school counsellor, chaplain, religion team etc. An outside agency may be brought in to counsel the students particularly involved.

### **In the event of the death of a serving member of staff:**

The Principal/Deputy/Year Heads will notify members of staff.

The Religion department organise a short memorial service to take place at approx. 12 noon or as soon as it can be organised. The religion team may involve students and teachers in the service.

The Principal/Deputy will send a wreath/donation and a Mass card on behalf of the staff.

The Principal or Deputy will contact the family. Staff and students may be involved in the funeral Mass if the family request it. Buses may be organised for students wishing to attend the funeral depending on the circumstances. No formal classes will be held on the day of the funeral and students attending funeral should do so in full school uniform.

A Guard of Honour may be formed comprising of students and/or staff members.

Staff and students may require counselling from an outside agency depending on circumstances, need and availability of such personnel.

### **In the event of the death a retired staff member:**

The Principal/Deputy will notify members of staff.



The Principal or Deputy will contact the family. Staff and students may be involved in the funeral Mass if the family request it. A wreath/donation and Mass card should be sent from staff.

If funeral arrangements allow, staff will form a Guard of Honour on the evening and/or day of the funeral.

The Principal and 2 staff members should attend the funeral Mass to represent the staff as a mark of respect.

A member of staff who feels they have a strong, direct connection with the retired staff member/family can make arrangements for colleagues to cover their classes and attend the funeral Mass.

### **In the event of the death of an immediate family member of a staff member:**

A wreath and Mass / Sympathy card should be sent from staff.

Principal/Deputy Principal and 2 staff members should attend the funeral Mass as a mark of respect.

A member of staff who feels they have a strong, direct connection with the staff member/family can make arrangements for colleagues to cover their classes and attend the funeral Mass.

### **Extended family:**

Where members of the Pastoral Care committee are aware of the death of a member of a student's/staff member's extended family, a sympathy card will be sent to them on behalf of the school.

Signed: Michael Beeth (on behalf of the Board of Management)

Date Ratified: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017