

Bereavement support for children and young people

Breaking sad news – letter informing parents and carers of the death of a pupil or staff member

[Target audience: Headteachers / Chairs of Governors]



Informing parents of the death of a pupil or member of staff, is never easy but can be helpful. Below are some guidelines of how a letter might be constructed. Ideally, you should inform the bereaved parents of your intention in advance of sending out the letter though this is not always possible.

[Be specific as to what has happened]

Dear Parents

Your child's class teacher and I had the sad task today of informing the children of the death of XXXX, a pupil/member of staff in XXX class (Year X)

[Briefly state the facts known and which were told to the children]

- *state anything leading up to the death*
- *the cause of the death*
- *where the death occurred]*

E,g XXX had an existing heart condition. She/he became unwell over the last few days and died in hospital yesterday morning.

[Briefly give some history related to the child's place in the school and a thought for the family]

- *which class*
- *years at the school*
- *personality*

She/he had been a very popular member of the class and school and will be missed by everyone who knew her/him. Our thoughts, love and prayers especially go to her/his mum, dad, sister/s, brother/s, family.

[Provide some general information about the impact of a death]

When someone dies, it is normal for their friends and family to experience lots of different feelings like sadness, anger and confusion. The children have been told that their teachers are willing to try to answer any questions at school, but if there is anything more that you or your child needs to know, please do not hesitate to ring the school and we will be happy to help you.

[Provide information as to what might be planned in the future as a means of remembering the pupil]

We will be arranging (*a memorial service*) in the school in the next few months as a means of celebrating XXX's life.

Our thoughts and prayers are very much with (*name of child*) parents/family during this very sad time for them.

Yours sincerely