

Sticky Fingers aspires to provide a safe, fun and welcoming environment for everyone. We offer children experiences to support their development. Empowering them to reach their full potential



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04 Health

04.08 Bereavement

Sticky Fingers Pre-school is fully committed to the emotional health and well-being of our children and young people and that of our staff. We understand that bereavement is an experience which will be faced by all members of our setting at some point. This policy will provide guidelines to be followed after a bereavement. The aim is to be supportive to both children and adults including parents, and for staff to have greater confidence and be better equipped to cope when bereavement happens. Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs is different and this policy has been constructed to guide us on how to deal professionally, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in upsetting circumstances.

Even very young children need information

- When someone dies, adults often, with the best of intentions, do not tell children the truth, assuming that under 5's are too young to be aware, or understand.
- Do not be afraid to use the word "dead." It may feel harsh but euphemisms such as "lost" or "gone away" only create confusion and misunderstanding in young children who take what they hear very much at face value. The explanation may need to be repeated many times for this age group
- Children mature at different rates and their understanding and responses to bereavement are likely to be based as much on their experience of life as on their chronological age.
- A child of 3 or 4 may use the word dead in context and will begin to differentiate between things which are dead and alive, but they will not understand abstract concepts like 'forever' and cannot grasp that death is permanent and irreversible
- Children, like adults, will grieve in different ways and their responses to a bereavement will depend on their age, understanding and relationship with the person who died.

Acknowledge what has happened

- The most helpful thing that you can do for grieving children, even when very young, is to acknowledge what has happened. Keep it very simple, "I was very sorry to hear that *** has died, that is a very sad thing to have happened."
- Do not assume that they understand what has been said. Try to check out their understanding of what being dead means. Using some of the suggested storybooks or exploring the life cycle with examples from the natural world, may help a young child to start to grasp the reality of what being dead means.

Try to answer questions honestly

- Keep the language simple and age appropriate. It is important to find out what has been said to the child at home as it will be confusing if explanations differ. Adults act as a role model so it is helpful if everyone can take the same approach.

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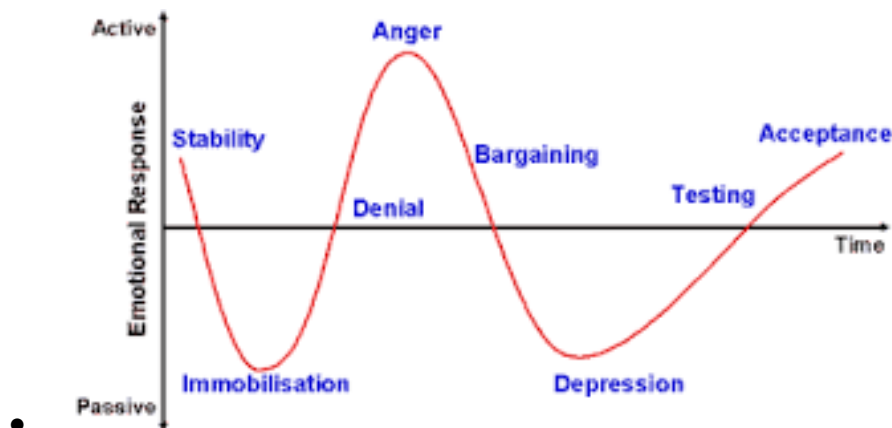
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- Children need an accepting and supportive environment where they feel safe to ask questions and share feelings. When they ask difficult questions which you are unable to answer, ask the child what they think or ask them what they have been told.

Adults as role models

- If the adults around them can express their emotions, a young child will know it is OK to do the same. Encourage and help them to express feelings by giving opportunities through play and other activities. They may play at being dead and although adults might find this disturbing, it is how very young children make sense of the world around them. Messy painting or drawing can help a child who is too young to have acquired the vocabulary of loss and grief.
- It is important to understand that grief is a process and doesn't start with the death and end with the funeral (see diagram below on the Kubler-Ross grief cycle).



- It is important to realise that every child will move through this cycle in a different way. Some may move towards acceptance very quickly with no apparent change to their behaviour and then may suddenly show anger, testing etc. several months after the death has occurred. Others may progress through various stages of the cycle over a more sustained period of time.
- Children are at a developmental stage where they are learning to trust and form basic attachments to others. When experiencing death, they are dependent upon the adults around them. They may experience heightened anxiety or become confused about what has happened. Some children may become very withdrawn while others may find it useful to role play the event. Others may become very attached to parents/carers and not want them to leave. Others may display anger, wetting, soiling, tantrums, and disturbed patterns of sleep. All of these are normal signs of how a pre-school child moves through the grief cycle.

Give reassurance

- When someone close to them dies, the world can become a very scary place for a young child, and they may start to wonder who else is going to leave them. If you make a promise, stick to it and continue to reassure an anxious child.

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Employee information

Losing a loved one can be a very difficult time. Sticky Fingers Pre-school acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways

Bereavement leave is paid leave that allows an employee time off to deal with their personal distress and related practical arrangements, primarily, but not limited to, when a member of their family dies. Sticky Fingers Pre-school acknowledges that bereavement impacts all individuals differently and the guidelines below are intended to show the leave an employee is entitled to in different circumstances.

Bereavement Leave for an under 18-year-old child or still born in or after the 24th week of pregnancy:

Parents who suffer the devastating loss of a child will be entitled to up to two weeks' parental bereavement leave if they meet the following conditions:

- the child was under the age of 18 or still born in or after the 24th week of pregnancy; and
 - either they had the responsibility for the upbringing of the child; or they are the biological parent of the child or are married to or are the partner of the child's mother or father.
 - This may be taken as either two consecutive weeks or two separate blocks of one week and must be taken within 56 weeks of the child's death.
- Throughout the parental bereavement leave, all terms and conditions of employment are maintained with the sole exception of pay. In order to take parental bereavement, leave, the employee should give their employer notice of:
 - the date of death
 - the date the parental bereavement leave will start; and
 - how long the leave will be.
 - Where the employee wishes to take the leave within eight weeks of the child's death, this notice should be given before the leave starts or where this is not reasonably practicable, as soon as is reasonably practicable.
 - If the employee wishes to subsequently cancel a week's parental bereavement leave, they should give notice to their employer before the start of that working week.
 - "Family friendly" rights: If an employee wishes to take the leave after eight weeks of the child's death but before the 56th week, this notice should be given at least one week before the start of the leave. Such leave can also be cancelled by giving at least one week's notice before the start of that week. There is no qualifying service, or a minimum number of hours worked to be entitled to parental bereavement leave.
 - In order to qualify for Statutory Parental Bereavement, Pay (SPBP) from their employer, an employee needs to have the following:
 - at least 26 weeks continuous service at the end of the week before the child's death

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- average earnings above the National Insurance lower earnings limit during the eight weeks before the week of the child's death.
- Where these conditions are met, there will be an entitlement to a maximum of two weeks SPBP, paid at the statutory rate or 90% of average weekly earnings where this is lower
- Parents will not need to provide the employer with a death certificate as evidence.
- Offering time and flexibility to bereaved families at a time that best suits them is also crucial in supporting them through their journey.

Bereavement Leave for an Immediate Family Member

- When a death occurs in an employee's immediate family, all regular full-time employees may take up to three (3) days off with pay to attend the funeral or make funeral arrangements.
- The pay for time off will be prorated for a part-time employee if the funeral occurs on a scheduled workday.
- Immediate family members are defined as an employee's spouse, parents, stepparents, sisters, brothers, children aged over 18, stepchildren over 18, grandparents, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or grandchild.

Non-Family Member Funeral Leave

- All regular, full-time employees may take up to one (1) day off with pay to attend the funeral of a close, non-family member. This time off will be considered and granted by the employee's manager on a case-by-case basis due to the settings ratio's on that day, but will try their best to get the day covered by another staff member with an equal qualification.
- The pay for time off will be prorated for a part-time employee if the funeral occurs on a scheduled workday.

Additional Bereavement Time Off

- We understand the deep impact that death can have on an individual or a family, therefore additional non-paid time off may be granted. The employee may make arrangements with his or her manager for an additional four unpaid days off in the instance of the death of an immediate family member.
- Additional unpaid time off may also be granted depending on circumstances such as distance, the individual's responsibility for the funeral arrangements, and the employee's responsibility for taking care of the estate of the deceased.
- Individual employee circumstances may be discussed with the employee's manager to determine whether additional considerations are needed. It is the company's intention to support employees during their times of grief and bereavement.

Employee support

- Sticky Fingers Pre-school acknowledges that bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death of a relative. However, the process of grief, the natural reaction and adjustment to loss and change may take a significant time and will be personal to each individual.

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- An employee with any concerns about the grieving process impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with either their line manager to ensure that any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and put in place and that the employee is supported in their return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement or their duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with the prior agreement of line manager.

Culture and diversity

- Sticky Fingers Pre-school recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways.
- Line managers will check whether the employee's religion or culture requires them to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements which would necessitate them being off work at a particular time. Employees should not assume that their line manager is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to their line manager's attention as soon as possible.
- Line managers who are unsure of how to respond to a bereaved employee from a different culture should ask the bereaved employee or someone else from their cultural group about what is appropriate.

Health and safety

- Bereavement can have an impact on concentration, sleep, and decision-making. The health and safety assessment of the workplace will include consideration of the impact of bereavement on employees, their duties and responsibilities, and the context in which they are working.
- Any employee who is concerned about their ability to conduct their duties safely in the weeks following a bereavement must discuss this with their line manager.
- Sticky Fingers Pre-school reserves the right to request an employee to meet their own doctor before resuming full duties.

Return to work

- In certain circumstances a full return to work may not be possible for an employee following the death of an immediate relative – for example, when the employee's grief is likely to impact on their ability to perform their role, or where new child care arrangements have to be sourced or responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to the employee.
- In such instances Sticky Fingers Pre-school will allow a phased return to work on a part-time or reduced hours basis where practicable. Alternative duties may also be considered. Any such arrangement would need to be agreed in advance by the line manager, would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days and would be managed in line with Sticky Fingers Pre-school flexible working/part-time working policy.