

Policy on response to the death of a student.

In order to respond actively and in a caring and helpful manner - as our ethos would suggest - a policy on the school's response on the death of a student has been drawn up.

1. Staff and Board of Management will be informed at the earliest opportunity. The student's class should then be informed followed by the Year Group. Later the entire school will be informed by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head. Both staff and students will require time to discuss the bereavement. Students and teachers may need access to counselling services.
2. We will obtain as much factual information as possible. In the process we will be particularly sensitive to the feelings of the bereaved family. We will avoid using the term 'suicide' unless it has been established categorically that the student's death was a result of suicide.
3. A decision on whether the school will remain open or closed will be taken after consultation between staff and principal. The wishes of the bereaved family will be respected. It would usually be appropriate for the student's classmates/year group to attend church services and burial. However it may well be inappropriate for large numbers to attend the services.
4. Principal, guidance counsellors, Year Head and relevant teachers will meet to co-ordinate the approach and to review the situation as it develops.
5. In relation to dealing with the media a simple statement will be prepared extending the school's sorrow at the death of a member of the school community and extending sympathy to the bereaved family. This statement will be adhered to and not elaborated on and should be familiar to all school staff. Students should be advised that even innocent remarks may be misconstrued. This could lead to distress for the bereaved family in particular.
6. The principal and some members of the school staff should visit the home of the deceased. The principal will need to occasionally contact the family in the month's ahead.
7. A religious service will be held to commemorate the deceased
8. The process and policy will be reviewed after the event.

A generally similar procedure will be followed on the death of a staff member.