

HOW PARENTS & CARERS CAN HELP

Here are some ideas that might be of help to you as a parent or carer:

- Try to answer questions as honestly and accurately as you can in words your children will understand;
- Maintain familiar routines and structures. These provide a sense of security;
- Be patient and calm, if possible. Your child, or children you have contact with, may behave in a 'younger' way and may become difficult to manage. This is natural;
- Allow children opportunities to talk about their feelings and let them know it is OK to cry;
- Do not hide your own feelings from your children. It is OK for children to see you are upset. Explain, in simple terms, that everyone gets upset by such events;
- Try to treat your children in your usual way. You may wish to be especially protective. This is a natural reaction but, in the longer term, being too protective can make a child feel insecure;
- Be ready to LISTEN but don't be upset if your children choose not to talk.

Make time for yourself and make sure that you have other adults with whom you can talk over your feelings and concerns. Your children will benefit from this.

HELPLINES AND ONLINE SUPPORT

Everyone's reaction to what has happened will vary a great deal and some children and their parents & carers may benefit from talking to someone outside the family. In case you or your child would like further help at this time, the following support services are available:

Childline 0800 1111 online or phone (up to 19 yrs)
www.childline.org.uk

Samaritans 116 123 (Free phone for all ages) (National) www.samaritans.org

Papyrus 0800 068 4141 or text 07786209697
www.papyrus.org.uk (0-35 years & anyone worried about someone else)

Kooth.com Online support (11-25 years) **Child bereavement UK**, Pre/Post bereavement counselling (0-25 years)

Parents Helpline 0808 802 5544
Mon-Fri 9:30 to 4:00pm

Wade Deacon High School



A Time of Loss

A guide for students,
parents & carers

COPING WITH OUR FEELINGS

We all feel a deep sense of shock & sadness when we lose someone who is close to us. This can be more profoundly felt when the loss is of a child.

All of us will be affected by loss and feelings will be expressed in many different ways.

Young people are particularly vulnerable at this time and it is important that they are allowed time, both in school and at home, to express their emotions. Feelings of grief can last a long time.

This leaflet is intended to help you to know how others have reacted in similar situations and help you to understand the impact that this experience can have on your own thoughts and feelings.

The loss of any young person is traumatic and the feelings and emotions that you may be experiencing are a normal reaction to this.

- In the early stages, it is natural to feel a sense of shock, confusion and helplessness. Feelings of fear and sadness are also perfectly normal;
- It is also normal to feel a sense of anger with the situation. You may feel a sense of guilt and shame;
- Physical reactions to loss in this way such as tiredness, sleeplessness, bad dreams, headaches and short temper are perfectly normal;
- Try not to bottle up your feelings. It is important to talk to others. Crying is natural and often helps;
- As well as talking, be ready to listen to others;
- Stressful events such as this can lead to accidents so please be careful and take your time.

HOW OUR YOUNGSTERS MIGHT REACT

In tragic situations, children and young people experience similar feelings to adults. They have a need for support in coming to terms with traumatic events but they may not be able to express feelings when they cannot find the words. Children, especially young children, often show their feelings through changes in behaviour.

These behaviours might include:

- Increased misbehaviour or aggression;
- becoming withdrawn;
- Sleep disturbance, including bad dreams, fear of being alone, fear of the dark;
- Difficulty concentrating, especially in school;
- Becoming forgetful;
- Fears for their own safety or the safety of family and friends;
- Reluctance to talk. Children, particularly older children, may choose not to talk for fear of upsetting family or friends;
- Being easily upset by everyday events;
- Reluctance to go to school.

We are all here to help. Our students can always discuss their feelings with their Progress Leaders at any time