

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you about the sad and unexpected death of one of our Year 9 students. The young people in our school community may already be aware of this via friends or social media.

The student's family have given us permission to say that they died as a result of an unexpected event, the full details of which are not known at this stage. Your child may or may not want to talk about it, but it is likely that s/he will need your special care, attention and reassurance at this upsetting time. Further guidance on how you can support your child can be found below.

Our thoughts are with the student's family at this difficult time and the whole school community sends them our sympathy, prayers and support. We will be considering a memorial in consultation with the relatives in due course. In the meantime, we advise allowing your child to talk about this should they need to. The following website may also be useful to you and your child at this difficult time.

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagers-young-adults-and-students/bereavement-and-young-people/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/my-feelings/grief-and-loss>

If you would like to speak to us further or if your child requires any additional support, please do not hesitate to contact the school via generaloffice@bishopstopfords.enfield.sch.uk

Warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Day', written in a cursive style.

Head Teacher

Further Guidance for Parents

(taken from the West Lothian Critical Incidents Framework 2014)

It is normal for children to deal with bad news in different ways. It is very difficult to predict how any individual child will respond. Some children may be immediately sad or angry while for others, they will have no obvious response until something occurs that makes the loss 'real' or personally meaningful.

When children are stressed or worried, it is normal for them to show some of these signs.

They may:

- Be clingier, more anxious or emotional
- Have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares
- Find routine skills more challenging
- Want to talk about what happened or not want to talk about it all
- Be more irritable or short-tempered
- Experience physical symptoms (e.g. feeling sick/headaches)
- Be more accident prone, clumsy or forgetful
- Be more likely to make 'silly' mistakes, have difficulty concentrating or struggle to remember things
- Show a reduced sense of humour or be more 'moody' than usual

These are ways in which you can help your child:

- Provide them with reassuring contact
- Stick to the routines that they are used to as far as possible
- Be understanding and accept your child's reactions as simply a normal phase
- Be available by providing time and support for your child to acknowledge his/her feelings
- Sensitively maintain the usual boundaries and expectations of behaviour
- Try to be consistent, clear and patient
- Make allowances for your child
- Listen to what your child is saying. Try not to deny or contradict your child's perceptions though appropriately challenge rumours or speculation
- Acknowledge that the event was distressing and unexpected whilst reassuring your child that the world is usually a predictable place