

Coronavirus checklist for Early Years settings (nurseries, pre-schools and childminders)

Supporting settings in the event of the death in the setting's community

Please read the corresponding document 'Coronavirus Related Critical Incident for Early Years Settings' accompanying this checklist. This checklist sets out a number of actions which settings are advised to consider in the event of a death within the setting's community. How you use this checklist and the order they are carried out will vary depending on the individual circumstances of the death.

Communication

| | Actions | Initial, date and notes |
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| 1. | Decide who will make first contact the bereaved family (Manager, Head of Room). | |
| 2. | Agree with the bereaved family one (or two) contacts from the setting to continue liaison with them and the child e.g. Manager, Head of Room and Key Person. | |
| 3. | Confirm with the bereaved family how this news is shared more widely with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff in the setting.• Families of children who attend. | |
| 4. | Consider how will this information be communicated to staff? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who will lead on this?• Identify who needs to be informed.• How will this be done? Phone calls to key members of staff? Consider how many people will need to be phoned and if someone else can help to make the calls?• What other messaging systems are in place to share with the rest of the staff and is this method appropriate?• Draw up bullet points of the information that is going to be shared:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communicating known factual information e.g. how long the person was in hospital for.○ Avoid speculation i.e. what has been seen on social media (there may not yet be confirmation of the cause of death).○ What will happen next e.g. e-mail communication. | |

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| 5. | Confirm whether the child / member of staff has close family members at other settings e.g. school and liaise with those settings to ensure that sharing information with the wider community is co-ordinated. | |
| 6. | <p>Discuss with the family how the setting should communicate this bereavement to other parents / carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will you contact the parents / carers? • Will it be all the setting or those parents / carers with children in certain rooms / groups? • Take into account the views of the family about how to share this. • Consider how you normally communicate to parents / carers (e.g. letters, social media). Will this be appropriate? • Plan to use a simple form of words that parents can share with their children (expressing regret while reducing anxiety). See below for an example. | |
| 7. | Manager (or Head of Room, Key Person) may wish to give the child a card to acknowledge what has happened and express support (considering the child's age). Or a card may be given to the family. | |

Identifying vulnerable children and staff

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| 8. | <p>Identify vulnerable children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you identify those who may be made more vulnerable e.g. close bond with the member of staff, recent bereavement, good friend of the child. • Who will do this? • Consider a key person approach to follow up regularly with those families during these restrictions. • Consider direct contact to be made by their key person for a child who this has significantly impacted on i.e. who has recently been bereaved or whose relative is seriously ill. • Do other agencies need to be informed? | |
| 9. | <p>Identify vulnerable staff</p> <p>Any death can trigger other remembered griefs and at this time of crisis, a sense of helplessness in not being able to respond to support others as they would like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify staff who may be particularly vulnerable (staff who have had a recent bereavement, close friends with the member of staff who has died). | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support systems are in place, especially as staff will be seeing each other on a less regular basis? • Consider how additional 'check in' calls can be made to these staff. • Consider who would be best placed to do this. | |
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Post event

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| 10. | <p>Consider how to remember someone in your setting's community at this current time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can memories be collated in a virtual way and be used at a memorial / remembering event when the setting returns? | |
| 11. | <p>It is important for all members of the setting community to look after themselves and their emotional wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will include Managers as well as other staff. • If further support is required, contact the CISS to look at systems, receive guidance and to 'check in'. | |
| 12. | <p>Post event – managing feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child still seems to be overwhelmed by their feelings of grief after a number of weeks, consider seeking further support. • Initially consider which services may already be involved with the child / family and whether they can offer support. • Signposting families to information / services that are available may be required. | |

Reintegration of a bereaved child into the setting (if attending during the pandemic or returning when settings reopen)

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| 13. | <p>Consider the family's views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss with the family and child (if age appropriate) what they would like to happen when the child returns to the setting.• Discuss with parents / carers that some children will want to talk about it to staff and other children will not wish to (again this will also depend on the age of the child). Staff to be flexible and to follow the child's lead.• Staff to acknowledge the child's loss, say the person's name and identify how the child feels.• Recognise how difficult it may be for the bereaved child to return to the setting. | |
| 14. | <p>Consideration of the provision on offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to a quiet space in the setting where the child can go for time out.• Staff to recognise that initially the child may not be able to settle to the usual routines of the setting i.e. sit and engage in carpet time. Allow for flexibility and consider the child's interests to help to engage them in an activity. | |

An example of words to use to provide the setting's community with the news

"We have some sad news to share. We heard today that the [relationship e.g. father] of [name] in Room [X] has died. S/he died suddenly/had been ill for a long amount of time. We are in touch with the family and have expressed our sadness and our support. The family would appreciate any condolences which can be sent to [contact details] / At the moment, the family would prefer some time to absorb what has happened but will appreciate your condolences in a while. If you have concerns about your child, contact the Manager or Room Leader.

(Adapted from Winston's Wish)