

COVID-19 – Action Summary Checklist for Head Teachers and Setting Leaders



In the event of the death (for any reason) of a child or young person attending your setting or a member of staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action	Checklist (✓)
Immediate Action	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain and record factual information about the sad event (pass this on to the services supporting the setting). Assess and minimise continuing risk to other members of your setting and community. Consider person-to-person contact and the possible need to reunite children and YP still in setting, with their parents. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact appropriate agencies (EPS, Medical Professionals, Social Care, Police etc) for advice and consider who else needs to know. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up and brief the setting's Critical Response Team to agree and action priorities and identify a member of staff to co-ordinate the setting's responses. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider relieving the lead of the Critical Response Team of some of their usual duties so that they can take on this role. 	
Short Term Action (Same day/first 24 hours)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief administration staff on how to deal with queries eg script or who to refer to. Arrange an 'open' telephone line or have a designated mobile phone available as necessary. Headteacher – senior member of staff to contact the family and offer condolences and support. Identify a member of staff for ongoing parental contacts. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with parents what information can be shared, how they would like to be involved and if there are any cultural or religious factors that need to be considered. Consider sending a card of condolences. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform staff as soon as possible. Consider how to do this sensitively. Consider which staff might most be emotionally affected – due to closeness to pupil or their own life events and vulnerability and put in extra support for them (remember part-time staff). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HT / SLT to agree a basic script for all staff (including non-teaching staff) regarding the death. Use honest simple language – dead and died. – It is OK for staff to be upset in front of pupils. Provide staff with simple guidance about supporting pupils and looking after themselves. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how best to inform pupils. This is best done in familiar groups by someone they know. Consider those pupils who will be most vulnerable – consider proximity to event; closeness to deceased, personal vulnerabilities, experience of recent traumatic events, bereavement, vulnerable home environments. For the most vulnerable, consider more personalised sharing of the sad news perhaps using video calls. Reassure staff that there is no right or wrong way to do this – consider if this may be too hard for some staff. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children and young people at home you may need to consider their access to technology and dependant on age you may wish to inform parents / carers, and give them advice on how to inform and support their children. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter / message (text or email) should go to parents / carers the same day if possible. Consider including guidelines for parents on supporting bereaved children and YP. Consider putting a message on the school website and possibly an answer phone message on a phone extension. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 'Support in Handling Media interest' handout and consult with LA press office prior to speaking to the press. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide and advise staff on the management of e-communication/social media. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a staff debriefing to provide support and discuss plan for the next few days include administration staff in the debriefing. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform head teachers and setting leaders where siblings attend or there are close family ties. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible keep to known routines. 	
The Next Few Days and Beyond	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all parents and the wider community as necessary. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan in some informal, mutual support for staff. Acknowledge the emotional impact this will have upon everyone. Consider a 'buddy system' for staff to support each other. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with the deceased's family, arrangements for representation at funerals if possible, safe and appropriate. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep in regular contact with the bereaved family and discuss with them future arrangements to mark the sad event. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a plan to mark the event in school once pupils return to settings e.g. special assembly, special place in school where children can express their feelings, memorials for the future. Ensure that family members, staff and pupils are aware of this. • Even if the child or young person would be due to transition to another setting, consider still having an event to mark the loss and inviting the class or year group. • Reassure family members, staff, pupils and parents that the death is really significant and will be marked and not be forgotten. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to families about supporting children and young people through their grief. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep in touch with families most affected. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make arrangements regarding personal effects of the person who has died and how to manage 'gaps' eg name on peg or register. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor those most likely to be affected and arrange more, longer term support if needed. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for a follow up debriefing with the setting's Critical Response Team, a week or two after the event. This may be with professional support, eg BCP EPS, social care. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for how children and young people will transition back into school and how those most vulnerable will be supported. • Work with other settings if those most affected are due to transition to other settings. 	