

**Managing Critical Incidents:  
A Framework for Schools**

**Last updated April 2022**

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## **FOREWORD: MANAGING CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

We are all aware of the shattering effect that serious incidents can have on a school community. These can range from the death of a pupil, a teacher or other member of the school community to events of national significance.

The guidance contained in this document recognises that, in times of distress, children, and indeed colleagues will turn for support to the people they know, and the staff of the school will have a key role in providing support.

When the need arises for a level of co-ordinated support and intervention that the school is unable to provide, school staff need to know who they can turn to and what resources can be provided for them.

Finally, young people need to learn to cope with grief and distress as part of their education for life. The guidance contains some recommended reading materials to facilitate this learning process.

The information contained in this document is based on experience gained by West Lothian Educational Psychologists over a number of years, in a range of settings and in the context of different types of incidents.

The document is designed to be used by schools to structure their own systemic responses to Critical Incidents. It is intended therefore that schools will take the information provided, discuss with key management colleagues and customise it to meet their own individual requirements. The broad plan developed for each school should be reviewed regularly as part of a planned process and in particular in the light of changes of key staff.

## **Section One: Summary Documents**

### **Introduction**

The term "Critical Incident" can refer to a wide range of events from major disasters to localised single events. The council has procedures in place to deal with large scale emergency situations requiring coordinated multi-agency responses of the emergency services. These situations will utilise designated school buildings as rest centres for the local community especially where evacuations might be needed but they do not necessarily involve the school community in managing the incident.

The focus of this document is where a Critical Incident involves the school community directly and personally, typically an incident that involves the unexpected threat of serious injury or death to a member(s) of the school community. As such, a Critical Incident is accompanied by a sense of shock and disbelief. Senior managers find themselves having to make quick decisions in the context of a shocking and potentially disturbing event at a point when thinking clearly is especially challenging. In such unusual or extreme conditions, good decisions are harder to reach and managing the needs of the whole school community can feel overwhelming.

By their very nature, critical incidents are unpredictable. Examples of the type of critical incident which schools may have to respond to are :-

- The sudden death of a pupil or member of staff
- The suicide of a pupil
- Fatalities or serious injuries as the result of road traffic accidents: including school trips

Clearly, these incidents are not part of the normal demands faced by effective Senior Managers everyday of the school year. Each critical incident is a unique event in its own right and cannot be legislated for. What follows is therefore a flexible framework, based on the actual experiences of school staff which have been found to help them feel more confident in making considered decisions around the key issues raise.

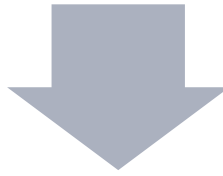
It is intended that this paper should be read and discussed by those senior members of staff who would be in the position of 'managing' should their school be involved in a critical incident. An early opportunity to discuss how the framework could be applied is a useful preparation but is not expected to translate fully into managing any specific incident. The paper should be seen as a working document and 'customised' to the particular organisational structures of the school. It is designed as a resource to be referred back to, if and when required and should therefore be kept in a suitable location(s).

The aims of the paper are:

- (i) to support school managers to deal effectively with the initial stages of a Critical Incident by providing a simple reference
- (ii) to help schools recognise the needs of the whole community for emotional support
- (iii) to suggest ways in which these needs can be addressed and signpost some resources

The following page contains a flow diagram for supporting planning during a Critical incident.

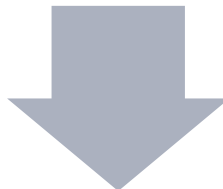
**CRITICAL INCIDENT**



**NOTIFY**

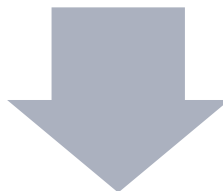
WLC: Head of Education  
Chairperson of Parent Council  
Corporate Communications

And where required:  
The Educational Psychology Service



**PREPARE**

Before school staff briefing  
Timetable for the day  
What to say to pupils  
Communication to parents (if necessary)  
Media statement (Corporate Communications will manage this process)



Support colleagues

Identify vulnerable children and young people  
Increase availability of staff to support children and young people

## SUGGESTED PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS

### Contact List

Each school should take time to consider who their key contacts would be in the event of a Critical Incident and to ensure contact information is up to date and readily accessible. It can be the case that an incident occurs after school hours. The following list provides some suggestions:

- Head Teacher and Senior teaching staff
- Other key members of staff eg secretarial or janitorial staff
- Relevant Head of Service (Education)
- Chairperson of Parent Council
- Whoever is likely to answer the phone and potentially first to manage the initial details of a call – admin/clerical

*Where required:*

- Educational Psychology Service (01506 283130)
- West Lothian Corporate Communications (Phone:01506 282005, 282006 or 282007)

Up to date emergency contact numbers for relevant members of the Education Senior Management Team can be found in the Emergency Telephone Directory.

If possible, designate a telephone in school for incoming calls only and provide the Authority with this number.

### Notify Staff

Notify key staff as soon as possible, even if the time seems inconvenient, it will provide more thinking time. Designate key tasks where appropriate. Consider the mode of communication and where it is felt that telephone contact is preferable, a calling tree system spreads the load e.g. SMT inform designated promoted staff who notify subject/class teachers. Provide all staff with the following information:

- A summary of the facts as they are currently known – information frequently changes or is confused in these situations
- The time and location of an initial briefing for staff (before school/the next session).
- Any preliminary plans e.g. it is generally helpful for children to be told 'bad news' in class sized groups by familiar adults (see 'telling children bad news'). If possible, bring children together for an extended registration to be informed in an age appropriate way of key pieces of established facts around the incident and any changes planned to their normal routine.
- Ensure that any supply staff are informed and aware of the pupil details before teaching on the day.

Notify support staff, in time to prepare them for their role in supporting pupils. Vulnerable children in particular may have important relationships with support workers. Allow an opportunity for staff to discuss any concerns.

Prepare a before-school staff briefing to include: -

- Updated facts
- Discussion of what staff will say to children and young people in broad terms
- Clarification of support for staff
- Permission for people to be upset
- Arrangements for increased support of vulnerable children and young people. Staff should consider those who are particularly vulnerable including those who are socially excluded, young people already struggling with their emotional well being and those who have suffered previous bereavements of any nature.
- Suggest the setting up of a specific area / base that will be staffed and where pupils can attend if they are particularly upset, with permission from staff.
- If the incident involves suicide, see notes on page 6 of this document

### **Communication with Parents**

Where possible, consider your process for communicating with parents regarding important incidents that happen in school as part of your general day to day operations. Follow this protocol during the critical incident. It is likely that this will involve the use of Groupcall in the immediate term.

Be mindful of Groupcall communications being sent to the family of the child or young person involved. In circumstances where a child has died, SEEMIS records can be amended to reflect this and to ensure that communications about the bereavement are not sent to the affected family. As soon as the SEEMIS record is updated, communications will no longer be sent to that family.

It is possible that schools may also wish to exclude immediately affected children from whole school communications. This is also possible through temporary removal of contact details within the system. Once communications have been issued, contact details can be re-inserted.

Support in this area can be provided by the central SEEMIS Team on:  
SEEMIS@westlothian.gov.uk

A sample communication for parents to let them know what has happened and how the school is dealing with it is included in this guidance (page 10). In some circumstances a helpline may be provided and the telephone number included with relevant information.

Careful consideration should be given to the use of any updated information provided on school web-sites and any information of this type should be agreed through Corporate Communications.

## **Suggested Timetable for the First Day**

A proposed timetable for the first day is outlined below. The aim should always be a sensitive return to normal routines as soon as possible. Recognition that reactions to an incident will vary – some children will not be affected, some will be affected directly and some will be indirectly affected, perhaps as a result of personal experiences unknown to school staff.

### **Suggested Timetable for Day (Primary)**

Normal routines should be adhered to wherever reasonable but a possible structure for the first day might be:

- before school staff briefing
- class group discussions / reflections / sharing
- sensitive return to “normal” routines / timetable
- Staff re-briefing at lunch time
- Class based, end of day discussion / information sharing / letter distribution
- whole staff meeting to reflect on the day’s events
- plan next steps

### **Suggested Timetable for Day (Secondary)**

Normal routines should be adhered to wherever reasonable but a possible structure for the first day might be:

- In some circumstances school management may judge that early assemblies for each year group, given by an appropriate member of SMT will be appropriate. The pupils will be given updated facts. However, bringing large numbers of upset pupils together may create additional anxiety and should therefore be carefully considered within the context of the incident and an understanding of the pupils.
- An alternative would be, a delayed bell at the beginning of the day. This could provide senior staff with an opportunity to meet with key class groups to inform pupils and to explain what will be happening.
- Interval - staff briefing where there will be updated facts and a discussion of what staff will say to young people in broad terms.
- Clarification of support for staff (school counsellor, Educational Psychology Service, West Lothian Council Occupational Health (via Head Teacher) staff support and Professional Association helplines.)
- Arrangements for increased support for young people.
- Vulnerable group discussions / reflections / sharing
- Where considered appropriate - a whole year assembly
- Communication to parents informing them of the death of a pupil / member of staff.
- Whole staff meeting
- Plan next steps

## **Media**

All media responses should be dealt with through West Lothian Corporate Communications Team. Staff should not discuss the details of a crisis with the media and should direct all enquiries to the Corporate Communications Team who will consult with the school via a Senior Officer from the Education Service.

The Senior Officer will also take responsibility for dealing with reporters who, in some circumstances may be around the school building, trying to speak to parents or pupils. Staff and pupils should be alerted that the media may be present but that the authority is dealing with this and they should not feel pressured into saying anything.

It may be helpful for a Senior Manager or pastoral staff to tour areas of the school/join colleagues who are finding it difficult to manage the feelings generated. A colleague popping in to a lesson can be supportive and communicates to children and young people that the school community is acting coherently and supporting each other.

## **Identification of vulnerable groups**

It is important to identify any particularly vulnerable groups. These may include:

- The affected class/year
- Friends in other year groups/schools
- Siblings in other year groups/schools
- Children who have experience of loss and / or trauma
- Children and young people who are in families under stress or who are Care Experienced and / or accommodated.
- Children and young people who are known to have experienced difficulties in managing their emotional wellbeing.

Staff may need to monitor how these groups of children and young people are coping and provide them with greater supervision or pastoral support. Children who are vulnerable are likely to need more security and this can be provided by a sensitive adherence to routines and appropriate boundaries. Keeping children in familiar groups provides continuity and coherence and a balance of reactions and coping strategies within their peer group.

## **Planning for Related Events**

Prepare for the possibility of other events related to the critical incident which could include any of the following:-

- Hospital Visits
- A Fatal Accident Inquiry
- Funeral Service(s)
- On-going Police Investigation
- A Trial which may be delayed or protracted
- Anniversaries

NB: A collection or memorial service may be considered but care should be exercised in the case of **suicide** - nothing should be done to glorify this event as in certain circumstances modelling behaviour can be triggered. It would not, for example, be advisable to set up a



permanent memorial (benches or trees). Instead, a collection to be donated to an identified charity in the person's name is an appropriate gesture with the family's consent.

The attendance of pupils and staff at funerals needs to be carefully considered. Decisions should take account of the wishes of the family of the deceased and the understanding of the pupils from the school. (For more information on this issue, please refer to "A Whole Community Approach to Supporting Loss and Bereavement." Available through the Moving Forward in Learning Health and Wellbeing work group)

If pupil representatives are to go from school, permission from their parents should be sought and attention given to the emotional support available immediately after the funeral. Consideration should be given to the preparation of staff both prior to the funeral and after the service for emotional support.

## **Sample Communication to Parents**

Dear Parent/Carer,

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you about the (sad/sudden/unexpected) death of Xxx, one of our pupils/teachers in Primary/Secondary X. The children/young people were told this morning by their class teacher/in assembly.

Xxx's family have given us permission to say that they died as a result of (an accident/illness/unexplained event) /the full details are not known at this stage. Your child may or may not want to talk about it, but it is likely that s/he may need reassurance at this upsetting time.

Our thoughts are with Xxx's family at this difficult time, and the whole school community sends them our sympathy and support. We will be considering a memorial in consultation with their relatives in due course but in the meantime, we are trying to keep school routines as normal as possible over the coming days whilst allowing the children/young people opportunities to talk about Xxx if they want.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you feel that your child needs extra support, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

The following information may be useful for sharing with parents in the initial stages of a critical incident.

### **Information for Parents**

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:**

- More clingy, anxious, emotional
- More difficult to put to bed, have difficulty going to sleep or staying asleep or have nightmares
- Needing to go to the toilet more often than usual
- Showing loss of recently acquired skills (eg wetting the bed, being more accident prone/clumsy or forgetful)
- Finding routine skills more challenging
- Wanting to talk about what happened, or not wanting to talk
- Re-enacting a feature of the event through repetitive play / ask the same questions
- More likely to make “silly” mistakes, have difficulty concentrating or struggle to remember things
- More irritable or short tempered
- Experiencing physical symptoms e.g.. feeling sick / headaches
- Showing a reduced sense of humour or be more ‘moody’ than normal

**These are some ways in which you may help your child:**

- Provide more reassurance than usual
- Stick to routines as far as possible
- Be understanding and accept your child’s reactions to the circumstances
- 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 in what you say
- Acknowledge that the event was distressing but balance with re-assurance that the world is usually reliable, predictable and dependable.
- Make allowances for your child (and yourself)
- Listen to what your child is saying rather than what you think they might be saying. Don’t deny or contradict your child’s perceptions but appropriately challenge rumours or speculation.
- Be prepared to answer the same questions over and over, this can be your child’s way of making sense of the situation.

**Most children cope well with “bad news” when they are given the kind of support suggested here. However, if you have continuing concerns about your child, please seek advice from the school.**

## **Section Two: Guidance on Key Issues**

### **Information about other agencies who can offer help**

Below is a list of local agencies and what they can offer schools in the event of a Critical Incident. This is not an exhaustive list and schools may be aware of other agencies who are able to offer support.

Sometimes, schools can feel overwhelmed by the incident and by the offers of support received. It is important therefore that someone is identified to co-ordinate the support and to ensure that it is appropriate to the immediate needs of the school.

“Emotional first aid” (children being spoken to and reassured by familiar adults or peers) is very important immediately after the incident. Schools can also support pupils and staff in the longer term through their own staff and pastoral care resources. However, for some staff and pupils, more formal support may be required. In these cases, referral to other agencies will be necessary.

Careful discussion about the issues to be addressed, the timing and appropriate referral / permissions required will ensure the appropriate referrals to partner agencies are made. Educational Psychologists can support this process.

### **Educational Psychology Service (EPS)**

The role of the Educational Psychology Service in a Critical Incident is firstly to provide a speedy response for consultation. Members of the EPS have considerable experience of supporting schools who are dealing with a Critical Incident.

Our primary aim is to support the school’s SMT to make good decisions in a situation that is unfamiliar, potentially shocking and constantly evolving. We also aim to help assess and prioritise the needs of all members of the school community. The prime focus of our work is to strengthen, not replace, the support systems already available in the school and to facilitate the sensitive return to normal routine appropriately.

To this end we can offer a range of interventions with both school staff and children. These might include whole staff support meetings, consultation with individual members of staff, group meetings with children and general advice and consultation to the SMT. Finally our role is to help the school consider if onward referrals are necessary and if so, to whom and when. The EPS can be contacted on 01506 283130.

### **Chaplaincy Team**

The Chaplaincy Team are available to support schools in a range of areas including Critical Incidents. In relation to Critical Incidents, the team can offer support to staff in schools following cases of bereavement. They may also offer support to individual or small groups of pupils as appropriate.

Schools can contact the service through their own Chaplain.

### **Inclusion and Support Service**

The Inclusion and Support Service (ISS) brings together existing teams from Education and Social Policy to support children, young people and families with additional support needs. The service includes the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service, who provide educational support

from their Early Intervention and Secondary Teams for children and young people aged 0-18. The ISS also includes social policy teams from the Children and Young People's Team, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Parenting Groupwork and Attendance Improvement Management Service.

Referrals to the service are made using an online digital form which can be accessed using the same link as the one outlined below for the Wellbeing Recovery Group.

### **Wellbeing Recovery Group (longer term support)**

In the longer term, referrals can be made for pupils who are not coping with the aftermath of the incident. Individual referrals for the above services should all be forwarded to the Wellbeing Recovery Group. Referrals to the group can be made here: <https://publicprotectionwestlothian.org.uk/article/68888/Wellbeing-Recovery-Group-Referral-Form>

### **Mental Health Link Workers**

In incidents where staff have concerns about the effects of trauma on children, further advice and consultation can be sought from the Mental Health Link Worker. In cases where it is felt that more direct input may be required, the Child and Family Psychiatry team can be contacted for telephone consultation using this number: 01506 434 274

### **Health Services**

The Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) can provide schools and parents with a series of leaflets designed to support those affected by bereavement. These can be accessed through the CHCP at St John's Hospital.

### **School Nursing Team**

The School Nurse service in West Lothian aim to support all children, young people and their families with a variety of issues including physical, sexual, emotional and psychological health. In order to achieve this, there is a named School Nurse for every school who can be contacted for advice and/or consultation following an incident in school.

The School Nurse service can be contacted on 01506 651 824 or by e-mail at [SchoolNursingWLothian@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:SchoolNursingWLothian@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)

### **Heads of Service (Education)**

In the event of a Critical Incident, schools are required to contact the Head of Service to inform them of the event. In response to this, the relevant Head of Service will provide advice and consultation initially by telephone and will arrange to visit the school. They will also advise Head Teachers that the Educational Psychology Service can be contacted for further practical advice and support.

The Head of Service will facilitate the Head Teacher in making decisions relating to the running of the school day and will take responsibility for liaison with the press via the Council Media Office in order to alleviate this pressure on schools.

The Head of Service will maintain contact with the school and the media office following the event at regular intervals until it is agreed that this is no longer necessary.

In the case of the absence of the Head of Service, another Head of Service or nominated senior officer, will be identified to support the school.

## **Telling Children “Bad News”**

Teachers need time to consider/prepare their role in managing this task. They will need support from colleagues and possibly other professionals. Below is a suggested structure for a session in which children are to be told distressing news.

### **Overview**

#### **I Preparation:-**

- ❑ Explain that you have some very bad/difficult news to tell the class.
- ❑ Highlight that people react differently in these situations because everyone is an individual. Some people may be very upset, some people will feel less upset but there is no ‘right or wrong’ way to be. If anyone feels like crying (including you!) they can.

#### **II Facts:-**

- ❑ Explain you will tell the children the facts as you understand them but that our understanding may change as new information becomes available.
- ❑ Stick to the facts, acknowledge uncertainty and don’t speculate or make promises e.g. this won’t happen to you/will never happen again.
- ❑ Emphasise the following, where appropriate e.g.
  - Accidents → No one was to blame.
  - Illness/Suicide → The uniqueness of the person’s situation.
  - Murder → The rarity of the event and how unlikely it is to happen to anyone.
- ❑ Be aware of the implications of language used so, saying someone “fell asleep”; was “lost” or “went to heaven” are likely to raise further questions (where is heaven? will they come back?) or anxieties about going to sleep or getting lost.
- ❑ Using the word ‘died’ is perfectly acceptable. For many children their understanding of death is worth exploring e.g. what has their previous experience been, particularly what happened after the person died. Very young children, for example, do not understand the abstract concept of death as a permanent state.

#### **III Class Discussion:-**

- ❑ Invite children to express their thoughts, to comment, ask questions and raise concerns. Validate these as appropriate but do not try to answer them all. Write down questions so they do not get lost and can be referred back to. Be aware of different cultural, social and religious beliefs e.g. some people think ..... but others believe..... What do you think?

Don’t be afraid of saying I don’t know - it is honest and open. Don’t be pressured into making decisions regarding belongings, seating arrangements, memorials, or tributes. Allow yourself thinking space to consider children’s suggestions or ideas, they will need to be discussed with other people (school or family personnel) and can be revisited later. In primary schools, teachers should feel OK to discuss with the class how they want to manage the issue of the child’s personal spaces and storage within the class and come up with a joint plan with the children. In Secondary schools, consideration should be given to the same issues relating to personal items such as lockers and / or spaces for storing completed work.

#### **IV Conclusion:-**

End the session by saying how pleased/proud you are of how the children have responded. Explain that you all have lots to think about and talk about over the next little while. Outline the plan for the rest of the day as you understand it - highlight any changes.

## **Rumours**

At some point it is likely that rumours may circulate and this is most helpfully seen, in part, as a need to resolve uncertainties - they are generally 'explanations' of things which are unknown or inexplicable and an attempt to 'make sense' of things which are incomprehensible. If rumours become problematic or malicious they may need to be dealt with by explaining the difference between fact and opinion and encouraging children to check the source of information. Reassuring children that staff will tell them the truth as facts/information develops can help the rumours to be minimised and encourages pupils to trust the adults. For some children, the need to try to take control of a situation by asserting opinions as fact is very powerful.

The plethora of social media platforms and devices has given rise to a range of ways for young people and the public to communicate with each other. Schools will already have on-going discussions with pupils about the appropriate use of this media and reminders on keeping safe on-line would be timely.

## **Suicide**

There should be extra attention given to the use of social media in the event of a suicide. Evidence strongly suggests that the setting up and use of R.I.P sites should be discouraged as they can often be seen to glamorise death and to reflect a more heroic sense to a completed suicide. For young people who are already faced with multiple life challenges, exposure to such sites is unhelpful. Although schools cannot control use of such sites, they should make their position clear.

Increased awareness in schools around suicide can support young people developing empathy towards others experiencing thoughts of suicide, increased awareness in schools does not increase young peoples risk of suicide. Further training in this area can be sourced through the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) programme which is delivered nationally.

<http://www.chooselife.net/Training/asist.aspx>

## **Models of coping**

Do not be afraid that as a key adult working in school, becoming tearful or upset is either unprofessional or damaging for children. In reality the opposite is probably closer to the truth: teachers come into the profession because they care about children and if something distressing happens it is entirely congruent that teachers will be upset. Equally for children to see adults being able to tolerate and accept their own feelings in an open but contained way reassures them that these feelings are manageable/bearable. In other words children need to learn how to grieve; they do this by watching others.

Young People who experience grief have reported that the following types of supports can help:

- Extra time to finish work
- All teachers need to know – it is easy to miss the email
- Don't ask me why I am in the corridor – I won't be able to answer honestly
- Extra help from those who already know me
- 1:1 catch up time for work I have missed or when I've been struggling to concentrate
- I want the choice to know practical things – police investigation, what is crematorium, what happens at a funeral?

- If people offer opportunities to talk/for support, young people can choose to take them if they are not offer it is unlikely a young person will be able to find the words to ask at this time
- Act out in very uninviting ways – even someone shouting can be a way of asking for help

### **Support for staff**

Through time, some staff may request additional emotional support in relation to specific incidents. This can be accessed through the following routes:

Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and other relevant trade union organisations (members only)

West Lothian Council support

Occupational Health Counselling service. This can be accessed through discussion with relevant line managers.

The West Lothian Educational Psychology Service Sharepoint site also has some information about supporting Staff Wellbeing and can be accessed here:

<https://glowscotland.sharepoint.com/sites/WestLothianCouncil/wleps/SitePages/Staff-Wellbeing.aspx>

### **Additional Information – “Whole Community Approach to Supporting Loss and Bereavement” (West Lothian multi-agency Guidance)**

For more detailed information about the impact of grief and loss on children and young people, please refer to:

Whole Community approach to supporting Loss and Bereavement:

[https://westlothian.gov.uk/media/29659/A-Whole-Community-Approach-to-Supporting-Children-and-Young-People-with-Loss-and-Bereavement/pdf/Loss and Bereavement guide.pdf?m=636785710249100000](https://westlothian.gov.uk/media/29659/A-Whole-Community-Approach-to-Supporting-Children-and-Young-People-with-Loss-and-Bereavement/pdf/Loss%20and%20Bereavement%20guide.pdf?m=636785710249100000)

There is also a significant range of additional resources outlined in this document for future reference.

The West Lothian Educational Psychology Service Sharepoint site provides further information to support schools in supporting young people with loss and bereavement and can be accessed here:

<https://glowscotland.sharepoint.com/sites/WestLothianCouncil/wleps/SitePages/Health-&Wellbeing---Loss-&Bereavement.aspx>



## **Useful websites / Web Resources**

### **Training**

#### **Grief Matters**

Grief Matters offers free bereavement awareness training aimed at staff who work directly with children and young people. It is a half day training covering the impact of bereavement on children and young people, and provides tools and ideas on how to work confidently with these children. Three training days are run throughout the year. Grief Matters is a service run through West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service.

To register your interest in future dates please contact [enquiries@wldas.org](mailto:enquiries@wldas.org)

#### **Give us a Break!**

Give us a Break! (GUAB) is an 8 week group programme for children and young people who are coping with change or loss in their lives, including family break-up and bereavement. GUAB uses a Solution Focused approach to help young people make sense of their experiences in a supportive environment with others who have gone through similar changes, while paying particular attention to their strengths and possibilities.

If you are interested in attending training to become a GUAB facilitator please contact the Educational Psychology Service on 01506 283130.

#### **[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)**

Child bereavement Charity (01494 446648) This charity offer specialised support, information and training to all those affected when a child dies, and when a child is bereaved of someone important in their lives.

#### **[www.chooselife.net](http://www.chooselife.net)**

Choose Life is Scotland's National Strategy and action plan to prevent suicide. The web site offers practical advice and support for people who are concerned about and affected by suicide. Training is available for people who are interested in preventing suicide through the ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and Safetalk programmes. Details can be found on the web-site.

#### **[www.handsonscotland.co.uk](http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk)**

NHS web-site with advice and support for children on a number of mental health and wellbeing issues including bereavement.

#### **<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Suicide/Documents/Help%20is%20at%20Hand.pdf>**

Help is at Hand: A resource for people bereaved by suicide.

#### **[www.stopcyberbullying.org/take\\_action/take\\_a\\_stand\\_against\\_cyberbullying.html](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/take_action/take_a_stand_against_cyberbullying.html)**

For more information on stopping cyber bullying including the role of pupils, parents and schools see above.

#### **[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)**

Papyrus is a voluntary UK organisation committed to the prevention of young suicide. Helpline 0870 170 4000

#### **[www.winstonswish.org/](http://www.winstonswish.org/)**

Winstons wish works with children and young people who have suffered a bereavement. Helpline 0845 20 30 40 5

[www.samaritans.org/?nation=scotland](http://www.samaritans.org/?nation=scotland)

Phone line available 24 hours a day if you are struggling to cope. Helpline 116 123

[www.sobs.admin.care4free.net](http://www.sobs.admin.care4free.net)

Support for anyone bereaved by suicide. Helpline 0870 241 3337

[www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

The Compassionate Friends: Organisation of bereaved parents offering support to relatives, friend and professionals, after the death of a child.

[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)

A confidential phonenumber for anyone in Scotland feeling low, anxious or depressed

<https://l1t1f.com/>

Free online courses covering low mood, stress and resilience

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/)

Support and research for good mental health