

# **Bereavement Policy (Supporting and Communicating with Students)**



## **1.0 Introduction**

In this policy, EDA will be used to cover the Emil Dale Academy studios, all full-time courses, any student enrolled on a full-time course, freelancers, and staff members of Emil Dale Academy.

### **1.1 Purpose**

EDA is committed to supporting its students during times of bereavement and loss. This policy is specifically written for students who suffer loss.

This policy aims to:

- a. Provide mechanisms for emotional health support and wellbeing in school; for example, prepare young people for a possible bereavement through incorporating it into the curriculum, as well as explaining how and when communication with families, staff, and freelancers may happen should a student suffer from a bereavement throughout their time training at EDA.
- b. Support our students and their families (where applicable) when dealing with bereavement; for example, discuss with the individual what short and long-term support EDA can offer or help the student receive.
- c. Work with the media following a high-profile death; for example, a car crash or murder; having a designated person to communicate with the media helps to give one consistent message.
- d. Safeguard our students – EDA recognise that a bereavement could agitate existing mental health or that grief and a change of circumstances may mean that an individual struggles to cope.
- e. Celebrate the lives of those lost if they had direct association with EDA.
- f. Offer advice to families and/or students when necessary.

This policy considers what is appropriate when a student, a member of staff or regularly teaching freelancer, or a member of the EDA community's close family member dies.

### **1.2 Location of Policy**

This policy is available to access on EDA's website.

### **1.3 To whom and where this policy applies**

This policy applies to any student on enrolled on an EDA full-time course as well as EDA staff or freelancers who may be involved in supporting students who suffer a bereavement.

## 2.0 Policy

EDA acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting students in practical and reasonable ways.

From time to time, every college experiences the death of a student, member of staff or regularly teaching freelancer, or an extended family member. As students spend the vast majority of their time at EDA, our Welfare Manager and Safeguarding Team will be the primary source of care and support. Individuals and families react to bereavement in their own very unique ways. The trauma of bereavement can have a profound effect on the EDA community. It is important for EDA to reflect upon an appropriate response to bereavement and to develop flexible contingency plans that reflect how we could or should respond in a tragic situation.

### 2.1 If a student death occurs

The principal will be the primary point of contact with a family when a student death has occurred. They will gather factual information regarding the death and will consult with the family regarding their wishes in sharing the information with the EDA community.

It is essential that relevant staff and freelancers are informed at an appropriate time by the principal or their relevant Head of Department, ideally before students. Students, if/when relevant, should also be officially told by either the principal or by their course leader.

Regular teaching freelancers and administrative staff will be provided with guidance on words to use and appropriate approaches to take if students converse with them regarding the circumstance. Staff and freelancers are also encouraged to seek to identify students who may be particularly vulnerable.

These are the following principles that EDA expect any member of staff or freelancer delivering or discussing the news of a student death to have:

- a. Be honest
- b. Use clear language
- c. Expect questions
- d. Recognise every death and reaction to it is unique
- e. Don't assume
- f. Allow time
- g. Acknowledge that some days will be better than others

In the case of the death of a student, appropriate support will be provided. EDA encourages for any students to reach out and arrange a meeting with the Welfare Manager or, if the Welfare Manager is unavailable, one of the Safeguarding Officers.

If the press is involved in reporting on the death, the Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager will consult with the academic partners regarding an official statement on behalf of the College.

In general, it is best to have a minimum of disruption to the college timetable. The structure of the college day is important to maintain, but some flexibility may be required.

## 2.2 Death of a family member or friend of a student

In the case of the death of a family member of a student, if the death happens while the student is at EDA, a representative for the family, preferably a parent/legal guardian should come to the college to inform the student. If this is not possible, EDA encourage for the parent/legal guardian to inform the student as sensitively as possible.

Following the death of a family member, it can be expected that the bereaved student may have a reduced capacity for college work. The bereaved student may need extra help at a later time, when working capacity becomes normal again. If the bereaved student feels that they need to operate on a reduced timetable, they are to contact their course leader to arrange this.

If student experiences a bereavement of someone outside of the EDA community, they are asked to email [absences@emildale.co.uk](mailto:absences@emildale.co.uk) once they are aware of a funeral date for a family/friend. Course leaders will then be able to authorise this absence.

## 2.3 Death of a member of staff or regularly teaching freelancer

In the case of the death of a member of staff or regularly teaching freelancer, appropriate support should be provided for the whole college community.

The principal will be the primary point of contact with a family when such a death has occurred. They will gather factual information regarding the death and will consult with the family regarding their wishes in sharing the information with the EDA community.

It is essential that relevant staff and freelancers are informed at an appropriate time by the principal or their relevant Head of Department, ideally before students. Students, if/when relevant, should also be officially told by either the principal or by their course leader.

Regularly teaching freelancers and administrative staff will be provided with guidance on words to use and appropriate approaches to take if students converse with them regarding the circumstance. Staff and freelancers are also encouraged to seek to identify students who may be particularly vulnerable.

These are the following principles that EDA expect any member of staff or freelancer delivering or discussing the news of a staff or regularly teaching freelancer death to have:

- h. Be honest
- i. Use clear language
- j. Expect questions
- k. Recognise every death and reaction to it is unique
- l. Don't assume
- m. Allow time
- n. Acknowledge that some days will be better than others

In the case of such a death, appropriate support will be provided. EDA encourages for any students to reach out and arrange a meeting with the Welfare Manager or, if the Welfare Manager is unavailable, one of the Safeguarding Officers.

If the press are involved in reporting on the death, the Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager will consult with the academic partners and/or other members of the Senior Leadership team regarding an official statement on behalf of the College.

In general, it is best to have a minimum of disruption to the college timetable. The structure of the college day is important to maintain, but some flexibility may be required.

Great sensitivity and care will need to be taken in determining how lessons will be covered immediately following the death.

## **2.4 Communicating about the loss of a student, staff member or regularly teaching freelancer on Social Media**

We ask all students to be considerate about information shared about someone's death on social media. We always want to respect the wishes of the family of the person who has died and be highly sensitive that any content shared should always take that into consideration.

## **2.5 Funeral arrangements and procedure for an EDA student, staff member or regularly teaching staff member**

When a funeral has been planned for the deceased, it is essential that the college is sensitive to the family's culture and abides by the family's wishes. The family may welcome involvement of members of the college community but equally, may wish to keep the funeral private. Should a member of the EDA community (staff, regularly teaching freelancer, or student) pass away, the principal will identify which staff, freelancers, and students may want to attend their funeral and the practicalities of issues; such as staff and freelancer cover. The principal will also consult with staff, freelancers and students in determining what is appropriate in terms of arranging flowers, a collection and/or any further forms of remembrance.

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date of Issue</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Changes made/detail</b>
01	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2021	July 2021	Sarah Moore	First issue
02	2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2022	July 2023	Eden Tinsey	Annual policy review
03	4 <sup>th</sup> August 2023	July 2024	Eden Tinsey	Annual policy review