

Invitation to participate in research into school approaches to bereavement

Claire Kime, Trainee Educational Psychologist, is looking for schools to take part in her third year educational psychology doctoral research project, looking into school approaches to childhood bereavement.

Why this project?

Research suggests that nearly 5% of children experience the death of a parent by the age of 16 and many more will experience the death of other family members, friends, pets or other significant individuals in their lives. Tragically, the UK has seen 59,537 more deaths than usual from the week ending 20 March until the start of June this year, resulting in many more children experiencing bereavement.

Although death and bereavement are inevitable parts of life, childhood bereavement can present as a risk factor in the development of academic, social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Claire intends to undertake exploratory, case study research in a small number of schools to investigate the types of systemic approaches to bereavement support that may already exist and what factors promote and inhibit such approaches, including cultural factors. This research was due to take place earlier this year, but had to be postponed due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Plans have now been made to enable research interviews to take place via remote methods.

Which schools can take part?

Primary, secondary and special schools in Warwickshire are welcome to get in touch about participating. Your school might be interested in taking part because you have experience of supporting bereaved pupils or have received bereavement training; however, don't worry if your school has little or no experience in proactive approaches to bereavement – you're not alone, as research suggests that this is the case in many schools. It is hoped that by taking part in the research, schools will be provided with the opportunity to both celebrate and further develop good practice in this area.

What will it involve?

Initially, Claire would like to discuss the research with key members of staff. Claire appreciates that this topic may be particularly sensitive for some school staff at the moment, so schools and individual staff members will not be put under any pressure to participate. However, there may also be schools who feel that this issue is of high relevance given the Covid 19 pandemic and would like to review their practice in this area. Schools that consent to take part will be asked to provide copies of any policies or curriculum resources related to bereavement and a small group of staff (between three and six) will be invited to take part in a 90 minute group interview via Microsoft Teams. This would include teachers and support staff who have an interest and/or experience in the topic and who are keen to explore the issues described above.

Participating schools will be provided with information and feedback based on the findings of the research that can be used to inform the development of their policies and practices in supporting pupils affected by bereavement.

Contact and further information

If you are interested in taking part and would like more information about the research, please **phone Claire Kime on 01926 742921 or email clairekime@warwickshire.gov.uk**.