



Etone College
PROGRESS FOR ALL

Etone Mental Health

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Parent's Guide to Bereavement

Grief can be difficult and stressful and nearly everybody goes through it at some point in their lives. Despite this, it can be very difficult to predict how we may react to a loss as it is a very individual process.

Your child, as well as you and other family members, may be grieving because of:

- the death of someone in the family, like a parent, grandparent or sibling
- the death of a friend, or someone they knew at school
- the death of someone by suicide
- an illness, such as cancer or dementia, of someone they are close to
- the loss of a relationship, like someone moving away or no longer being a regular part of their life
- the loss or death of a pet

There are many different factors that affect grief, including the relationship had with the person who died, previous experience of grief, and what support the individual how is grieving has. Every child and young person will react to, feel and express loss differently, and this will change over time. There is no right or wrong way for a young person to grieve.

Children and young people who have gone through a significant loss can feel:

- anxious or worried, including about their own health or the health of people close to them
- frightened about losing other people they love
- sad, low or withdrawn
- isolated or lonely
- angry or irritable
- guilty
- numb
- physically unwell
- unable to concentrate
- unable to sleep
- that their moods change quickly
- that they cannot accept the situation
- that they are struggling to cope



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Grief has no set timescale, and it is normal to feel a whole range of emotions after a loss. Sometimes, however, a young person may feel they are struggling to cope over a much longer period of time.

Your child may need professional support if, over a prolonged period, they are:

- feeling depressed or anxious
- withdrawing from family, friends and activities
- struggling to sleep
- refusing to go to school
- turning to less healthy coping mechanisms such as self-harm
- talking regularly about wanting to join the person who has died
- experiencing suicidal thoughts
- acting like a much younger child
- not believing that the person has died

Look after yourself

It is also important that you look after yourself. Supporting a child with the grieving process can be an emotionally draining experience, especially if you are also grieving. Things may feel overwhelming at times, where possible, allow time and space for your own grief – and remember that it's okay to ask for help from family, friends and others when you need it. If you need more support with your own grief, or you feel you're struggling to cope, it's really important that you get the help you need so you can be there for your child.

Support available at Etone College

Students can access support through various channels at Etone College. They are able to speak with their Heads of House to ask for a referral to the Success Centre. There is also lots of signposting of support around the school with the contact details to various local and national support groups and charities.

bereavement support

The Success Centre offer 1:1 sessions or group sessions for students that are struggling with bereavement and complete various activities with a member of staff to help cope with feelings of grief.