



Venerable Bede Church of England Academy

Dayspring Trust



Tunstall Bank, Sunderland, SR2 0SX

Telephone: 0191 523 9745 Fax: 0191 523 9775

Email: venerable.bede@venerablebede.co.uk Website: www.venerablebede.co.uk

Headteacher: Mr D Airey (BSc Hons)

Executive Headteacher: Mrs G A Booth (BA Hons/M.Ed.)

DAI

18/08/22

Dear Parent / Carer

Further to our recent letter sharing the tragic news of Oliver's death, we would like to share with you some ways which we would like to support our pupils.

As you will no doubt be aware, we do have major building work going on in school, including work on the roof and a replacement hall floor being laid. Despite these major disruptions, we feel that it is really important to give our pupils the opportunity to be able to come into school to a "space" where they can have access to key adults and school staff to talk to and offer pastoral support, or simply have a place to be still and reflect. We are going to **open school next Wednesday afternoon (August 24) from 12.30 - 15.30 to make this possible**. Pupils do not need to book a specific slot, they can simply turn up during the times indicated. Due to building works, access will be restricted. Pupils will need to sign in at the main office. They will be directed from there.

We appreciate that the process of coming to terms with any loss takes time. There also needs to be a multi-layered approach, as different pupils will react in different ways, and will need different support. Outlined below are some of the support mechanisms / activities we intend to provide over the course of the coming weeks and months as appropriate.

At the **start of term (first day)**, we intend to speak to each year group about what has happened to Oliver, outlining to them what support is available immediately and over the coming weeks / months. Some pupils may find returning to school more difficult, as they may connect school with memories of Oliver.

We intend to **create a space in school** for pupils who need extra support, or the opportunity to talk and be supported by a trusted adult. This will be available after school each day for a period of time. Pupils will be able to go there to talk or to simply sit to reflect and be still. Pupils may choose, for example, to simply light a candle to help them focus their thoughts.

Whilst the majority of pupils may find that being supported and talking to a trusted adult is what they need at this time, others may need **more formalised "Grief and loss counselling"**. School will be able to work together with families who feel that this is most appropriate for their child. There are a number of services available including online, as well as face-to-face counselling. Grief and loss counselling is a specialised field, and for those pupils who struggle to process the loss of someone close (particularly over the course of time), may require referral and access to these services. Families will play a critical role in identifying this need, as they know their children best and can inform school of concerns.



As you will be aware, we have a flexible **“Personal Development Programme”** which is taught weekly. We will work with our pupils during PD over the Autumn term, giving them the opportunity to understand and process what has happened, and recognise the impact which this may have had upon them as individuals.

When the time is right, we will hold a **“Memorial Service of Celebration”** for Oliver. There will be an opportunity for those pupils who were close to him to help plan and organise the service. We would also like to have a lasting **“Memorial to Oliver”** on school site. Again, we would like our pupils to help decide what this will be, and to work alongside staff to make it a reality.

We hope that we can take some comfort from the words of **Psalm 34:18**;


“The Lord is close to the broken hearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed”

Please join us in prayer

Father God, You are close to the broken hearted
You rescue those whose spirits are crushed
We are all struggling in our grief
I pray that You will open our eyes to Your presence and Your comforting arms
I ask that You shine Your eternal light onto our souls
Help us to feel the joy of Your love
Guide us with Your wisdom
Help us to lean on Your strength
Enable us to emerge from our loss with a renewed spirit of love and hope
Amen

We will continue to keep you updated, as appropriate, with any further information. These are very difficult times for everyone in our school community. We will need the support of each other to help us get through.

Regards



Mr. D. Airey
Headteacher

