

**Southwark Diocesan Board of Education**

*Developing Church of England Education*



# **HOPE THROUGH SADNESS**

A pack of support  
in planning for  
and dealing with  
traumatic situations  
within the school community



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## Introduction.

Welcome to **Hope Through Sadness**, our guidance for supporting schools when dealing with traumatic situations in the school community.

'Life in all its fullness' brings joys and challenges, good times and bad times, happy times and sad times. Our schools made up of living communities of people share experiences and can celebrate together but also, at times, live through difficult times of trauma. There are many different traumatic situations that the school community may face, they could be inside the school, outside the school, within the local community or events affecting people nationally or internationally.

These upsetting times can really 'test' schools. Yet the Church of England school can call upon its foundation of Christian faith, conveyed in its deeply Christian vision, to shape its response to such situations. That response includes helping the people of its community to deal with the practical processes that have to be addressed whilst also supporting the range of emotional needs and mental health of each other. The Christian faith gives us the hope that is needed to journey through traumatic situations and to be able to heal and grow from experiencing them . . . hope through sadness.



“Life in all its fullness.”

*John 10:10*

### **Educating for Hope and Aspiration.**

In the drama of ongoing life, how we learn to approach the future is crucial. Good schools open up horizons of hope and aspiration, and guide pupils into ways of fulfilling them. They also cope wisely with things and people going wrong. Bad experiences and behaviour, wrongdoing and evil need not have the last word. There are resources for healing, repair and renewal; repentance, forgiveness, truth and reconciliation are possible; and meaning, trust, generosity, compassion and hope are more fundamental than meaninglessness, suspicion, selfishness, hardheartedness and despair.”

“Hope in God’s future for the world, in God’s ongoing love and compassion for all people, and for the whole of creation, and in God’s promise of life in all its fullness are at the root of our dedication to educating for hope and aspiration.”

“Jesus and the love he embodies are at the heart of our faith, offering hope that wrongdoing and sin, suffering, evil and death are not the last word about reality. The drama of his life, teaching, death and resurrection, set within the larger story of God’s involvement with the whole of creation and history, is fundamental not only to affirming the goodness of life but also to facing and finding ways through whatever goes wrong with ourselves and our communities. He inspires both a realism about how flawed and fallible we are and a confidence in transformation for the better. Even while involved in much difficulty, disappointment, failure, suffering and even tragedy, our trust and hope in Jesus inspires perseverance, patience, gratitude, openness to surprises, and celebration.”

“The combining of hope with particular aspirations for our society, for each school, and for each pupil is crucial to the continuing health of society and its educational ecology.”



## Talking with Children and Young People - When the Talking Gets Tough.

Wars, shootings in schools, natural disasters, deaths at sporting events - as adults we hope that these and other tragic outcomes will never happen anywhere and definitely will not impact the children and youth we care about. We would like to protect those young minds from the pain and horror of difficult situations. We would like to ensure that they have happy, innocent, and carefree lives.

So what is a parent, teacher, or other caring adult to do when disasters fill the airwaves and the consciousness of society?

- **Don't assume that the children and young people don't know about it.** They probably know more than you think. The reality of today's world is that news travels far and wide. Adults and children / young people learn about disasters and tragedies shortly after they occur, and live video footage with close-ups and interviews are part of the report. Children and youth are exposed to the events as soon as they can watch TV or interact with others who are consumers of the news. Not talking about it does not protect children and young people. In fact, you may communicate that the subject is taboo and that you are unavailable if you remain silent.
- **Be available and "askable."** Let children and young people know that it is okay to talk about the unpleasant events. Listen to what they think and feel. By listening, you can find out if they have misunderstandings, and you can learn more about the support that they need. You do not need to explain more than they are ready to hear, but be willing to answer their questions.
- **Share your feelings.** Tell young people if you feel afraid, angry, or frustrated. It can help them to know that others also are upset by the events. They might feel that only children and young people are struggling. If you tell them about your feelings, you also can tell them about how you deal with the feelings. Be careful not to overwhelm them or expect them to find answers for you.
- **Help children and young people use creative outlets like art and music to express their feelings.** Children and young people may not be comfortable or skilled with words, especially in relation to difficult situations. Using art, puppets, music, or books might help children and young people open up about their reactions. They may want to draw pictures and then destroy them, or they could want to display them or send them to someone else. Be flexible and listen.
- **Reassure young people and help them feel safe.** When tragic events occur, children and young people may be afraid that the same will happen to them. Some young children may even think that it already did happen to them. It is important to let them know that they are not at risk—if they are not. Try to be realistic as you reassure them, however. You can try to support them and protect them, but you cannot keep all bad things from happening to children and young people. You can always tell them that you love them, though. You can say that, no matter what happens, your love will be with them. That is realistic, and often that is all the children and young people need to feel better.
- **Support children and young people's concern for people they do not know.** Children and young people often are afraid not only for themselves, but also for people they do not even know. They learn that many people are getting hurt or are experiencing pain in some way. They worry about



those people and their wellbeing. In some cases they might feel less secure or cared for themselves if they see that others are hurting. It is heart-warming and satisfying to observe this level of caring in children and young people. Explore ways to help others and ease the pain.

- **Look for feelings beyond fear.** After reassuring children and young people, don't stop there. Studies have shown that children and young people also may feel sad or angry. Let them express that full range of emotions. Support the development of caring and empathy. Be careful not to encourage the kind of response given by one child: "I don't care if there's a war, as long as it doesn't affect me and my family."
- **Help children and youth find a course of action.** One important way to reduce stress is to take action. This is true for both adults and children / young people. The action may be very simple or more complex. Children and young people may want to write a letter to someone about their feelings, get involved in an organization committed to preventing events like the one they are dealing with, or send money to help victims or interventionists. Let the young people help to identify the action choices. They may have wonderful ideas.
- **Take action and get involved in something.** It is not enough to let children and young people take action by themselves. Children and young people who know that their parents, teachers, or other significant caregivers are working to make a difference feel hope. They feel safer and more positive about the future. So do something. It will make you feel more hopeful, too. And hope is one of the most valuable gifts we can give children, young people and ourselves.

*Adapted from work distributed by Judith A. Myers-Walls, Extension Specialist, Purdue University, United States*

*Developed in the days following the shootings at Columbine High School and distributed via listserves, web pages and handouts at training programs, and re-distributed on 11 September 2001.*

# After the event

## *Supporting children and young people after a frightening event*

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This leaflet is designed to help adults to understand how children and young people might react to frightening events, and to give some ideas of what might help. Further copies are available from [www.traumaticstress.org.uk](http://www.traumaticstress.org.uk)

### Reactions after a frightening event

Children and young people sometimes witness or are involved in things that they find very scary or stressful such as accidents, violence or terrorist attacks. As they try to understand what happened and “get their heads around it”, the following reactions are common:

- Nightmares
- Memories or pictures of the event unexpectedly popping into the mind
- Feeling as if it is actually happening again
- Playing or drawing about the event time and time again
- Not wanting to think or talk about the event
- Avoiding anything that might remind them of the event
- Getting angry or upset more easily
- Not being able to concentrate
- Not being able to sleep
- Being more jumpy and being on the lookout for danger
- Becoming more clingy with parents or carers
- Physical complaints such as stomach aches or headaches
- Temporarily losing abilities (e.g. feeding and toileting)
- Problems at school



It's quite normal to be upset, even for quite a while *after* a frightening event; children and young people (and adults) may feel angry, sad, guilty, confused, or any combination of feelings. Some people continue to feel scared, even though the danger has passed. Children and young people worry less if you can help them to see that their reactions are normal and understandable.

Memories of frightening events often start out as pictures and sounds that pop into people's heads when they don't want them to.

The memories may bring with them all the fear and distress that came with the original event.

### What can be done to help?

#### ***Try and make things as normal as possible***

Everyone feels safer when they know what to expect. A frightening event often makes people unsure of what's coming. You can help children and young people feel safer sooner, by sticking to their normal routines as much as possible, and continuing with their normal activities when possible.

#### ***Help children and young people to understand what happened***

Children and young people need a truthful explanation that makes sense of the main facts, which is appropriate for their age. Even younger children can really benefit from being given a description and explanation of what happened.

Having an understanding of what happened helps in many ways:

- It helps the child or young person to make sense of the upsetting event and to reduce some of the unpleasant feelings such as fear, anger and sadness.
- Talking through the events can help to correct misunderstandings. For example, some children and young people may think that it was their fault; others are confused about important and open.
- It is helpful for children and young people to be prepared so that they can talk to others about what has happened or answer people's questions, if they want to.

- Thinking things through with your child can also help children and young people to realise that although bad things can happen, they don't happen so often that we need to be scared of them all the time.

### ***Be available to talk with children and young people, as and when they are ready***

Sometimes parents and carers try to protect children and young people by avoiding talking about the event. They worry that they will upset them unnecessarily or make things worse. Some people hope that by keeping quiet, children and young people will forget all about the event. In fact, children and young people are likely to benefit from talking about what's happened, and they may need adult help to do this.

Talking is usually helpful, but needs to be done carefully and sensitively at the right time for the child or young person. Try and provide opportunities, support and encouragement to help them to talk about it when they are ready to, rather than force them. Some children and young people may want to use dolls or toys, or draw pictures to help them to understand what has happened.



It can be difficult or distressing, but by thinking about, talking about and drawing what happened, you can help children and young people to take more control of the memory and be less afraid of it.

If it's too difficult for you to talk to your child, you could get another adult to help, such as a family member or a trusted teacher. It is helpful if all adults keep to the same story so that the child or young person is not confused.

### ***Answer questions truthfully***

Encourage children and young people to ask questions. Try to answer them simply and honestly. They may need to ask the same question several times, as a way of coming to terms with what has happened. If they ask the questions, they are probably ready to hear the answers.

### ***If someone has died, explain what that means***

Often people take time to accept the reality of a death, particularly if it happened in a traumatic way. Younger children might need help to understand that death is permanent, that it happens to everyone, and that it has a cause.

Some children will seem to understand that the person has died, but then keep asking if the person is coming back. So it's important to be patient and take time to explain it in clear language (for example it's clearer to say that "John has died" than to say "John has gone on a journey"). You may need to do this several times.

### ***Look after yourself as well***

If you are upset by what has happened, it may be more difficult to talk about the frightening event. You might want to talk to another adult about it or seek more support.

## **When and where to seek more help**

Many children and young people feel upset for a few weeks after a frightening event. They may show this in the ways mentioned earlier. But over time, most become happier and more confident again. Some children and young people will continue to have problems several weeks after the event. If you are worried that a child or young person is very distressed, or continues to be distressed after a month or so, you could seek further help from your GP. They can check your child's health and talk to you about who else could help.

Adapted from © David Trickey, Richard Bailie, Lucy Serpell. The original version was dated 28/04/10. Illustrated by Alberto Bona

## Words of Hope.

"I don't think of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains."

*The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank*

"It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart."

*Anne Frank*

"Oft hope is born when all is forlorn."

*J. R. R. Tolkien*

"You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep Spring from coming."

*Pablo Neruda*

"In a time of destruction, create something."

*Maxine Hong Kingston*

"Sometimes good things fall apart, so better things can fall together."

*Jessica Howell*

"Never lose hope. Storms make people stronger and never last forever."

*The Light in the Heart by Roy T. Bennett*

"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

*Selected Poems, 1956-1968 by Leonard Cohen*

"But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars."

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

"Hope is a waking dream."

*Aristotle*

“Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.”

*Langston Hughes*

“We dream to give ourselves hope. To stop dreaming - well, that’s like saying you can never change your fate.”

*The Hundred Secret Senses by Amy Tan*

“Hope can be a powerful force. Maybe there's no actual magic in it, but when you know what you hope for most and hold it like a light within you, you can make things happen, almost like magic.”

*Laini Taylor*

“Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words - And never stops at all.”

*Emily Dickinson*

“It's amazing how a little tomorrow can make up for a whole lot of yesterday.”

*Landscape of the Body by John Guare*

“They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.”

*Tom Bodett*

“We are all the pieces of what we remember. We hold in ourselves the hopes and fears of those who love us. As long as there is love and memory, there is no true loss.”

*City of Heavenly Fire by Cassandra Clare*

“You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.”

“It never hurts to keep on looking for sunshine.” (Eeyore)

“Never stop dreaming.”

“This is the beginning of a new day. You have been given this day to use as you will. You can waste it or use it for good. What you do today is important because you are exchanging a day of your life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever. In its place is something that you have left behind. Let it be something good.”

*Quotes from Winnie the Pooh by A.A. Milne.*

“One of our greatest freedoms is how we react to things.”

““Is your glass half empty or half full? Asked the mole.

“I think I’m grateful to have a glass,” said the boy.””

““This storm is strong” cried the boy.

”Our love is stronger.””

“Sometimes all you hear about is the hate, but there is more love in this world than you could possibly imagine.”

““Living can hurt sometimes” said the boy.

“Yes,” said the horse, But your wounds make you beautiful.””

““What do we do when our hearts hurt?” asked the boy.

“We wrap them with friendship, shared tears and time, till they wake hopeful and happy again.””

*Quotes from The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse by Charlie Mackesy.*

“There is a saying in Tibetan, 'Tragedy should be utilized as a source of strength.' No matter what sort of difficulties, how painful experience is, if we lose our hope, that's our real disaster.”

*Dalai Lama XIV*

“You’ve got to believe that God is in control of your life. It may be a tough time but you’ve got to believe that God has a reason for it and he’s going to make everything good.”

*Joel Osteen*

Where others see but the dawn coming over the hill, I see the soul of God shouting for joy.”

*Williams Blake*

“Let this one great, gracious, glorious fact lie in your spirit until it permeates all your thoughts and makes you rejoice even though you are without strength. Rejoice that the Lord Jesus has become your strength and your song – He has become your salvation.”

*Charles H. Spurgeon*

“When we walk with the suffering, when we shoulder a little of the burden, we become that figure walking alongside the 2 disciples, the mysterious Christ they cannot see and hope is born.”

*The Most Revd. And Rt. Hon Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury.*

“Free your mind from worries.”

*Talmud Yevamot 63b*

“A little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness.”

*Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi*

“Do not lose hope, nor be sad. You will surely be victorious if you are true in faith.”

*Qur'an 3:139*

“Your Lord has neither left you nor has He detested you.”

*Qur'an 93:3*

“Be patient over what befalls you.”

*Sura Luqman, verse 17*

“The birds of hope are everywhere, listen to them sing.”

*Terri Guillemets. (Buddhist teaching.)*

“Hope is the one thing that is stronger than fear.”

“Never give up. Today is hard, tomorrow will be worse, but the day after tomorrow will be sunshine.”

“Don't close the book when bad things happen in your life, just turn the page and begin a new chapter.”

*Teachings from The Buddah.*

“Little by little, through patience and repeated effort, the mind will become stilled in the Self.”

*The Bhagavad Gita*

“I’ve read the last page of the Bible. It’s all going to turn out all right.”

*Billy Graham*



## Readings of Hope from The Holy Bible.

*Rather than blaming God for all that goes wrong, Christians emphasise that God wants people to share their feelings with him and this includes our sadness, anger and questioning.*

*Psalm 139 begins -* "O Lord you have searched me and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise;

You perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;

You are familiar with my ways . . ."

*and ends with* ". . . Search me O God and know my heart;

Test me and know my anxious thoughts."

See if there is any offensive way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

"The Lord is my shepherd . . . He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water. He gives me new strength. He guides me in the right paths . . . Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid, Lord, for you are with me. Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me."

*Psalm 23: 1-4*

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult . . . He makes wars cease to the end of the earth."

*Psalm 46:1-3,9*

"He heals the broken-hearted and bandages their wounds."

*Psalm 147:3*

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."

*John 1:5*

"If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father; and He shall give you another Comforter; that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth.

*John 14:15-16*

“When Paul saw that some of the group were Sadducees and the others were Pharisees, he called out in the Council, “Fellow Israelites! I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees. I am on trial here because of the hope I have that the dead will rise to life!”

*Acts 23:6*

“I have the same hope in God that these themselves have, namely, that all people, both the good and the bad, will rise from death.”

*Acts 24:15*

“This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.”

*Romans 5:5*

“For it was by hope that we were saved; but if we see what we hope for, then it is not really hope. For who of us hopes for something we see?”

*Romans 8:24*

“But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

*Romans 8:25*

“Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times.”

*Romans 12:12*

“Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures give us.”

*Romans 15:4*

“May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

*Romans 15:13*

“Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.”

*I Corinthians 13:7*

“There is nothing love cannot face. There is no limit to its faith, its hopes, its endurance. Love will never come to an end.”

*1 Corinthians 13:7 and 8*

“If our hope in Christ is good for this life only and no more, then we deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world.”

*1 Corinthians 15:19*

“So our hope in you is never shaken; we know that just as you share in our sufferings, you also share in the help we receive.”

*2 Corinthians 1:7*

“As for us, our hope is that God will put us right with him; and this is what we wait for by the power of God's Spirit working through our faith.”

*Galatians 5:5*

“I ask that your minds may be opened to see his light, so that you will know what is the **hope** to which he has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings he promises his people.”

*Ephesians 1:18*

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you.”

*Ephesians 4:4*

“When the true message, the Good News, first came to you, you heard about the hope it offers. So your faith and love are based on what you hope for, which is kept safe for you in heaven.”

*Colossians 1:5*

“You must, of course, continue faithful on a firm and sure foundation, and must not allow yourselves to be shaken from the hope you gained when you heard the gospel. It is of this gospel that I, Paul, became a servant - this gospel which has been preached to everybody in the world.”

*Colossians 1:23*

“To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

*Colossians 1:27*

“For we remember before our God and Father how you put your faith into practice, how your love made you work so hard, and how your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ is firm.”

*1 Thessalonians 1:3*

“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and in his grace gave us unfailing courage and a firm hope.”

*2 Thessalonians 2:16*

“So that by His grace we might be put right with God and come into possession of the eternal life we hope for.”

*Titus 3:7*

“There are these two things, then, that cannot change and about which God cannot lie. So we who have found safety with Him are greatly encouraged to hold firmly to the hope placed before us.”

*Hebrews 6:18*

“We have this hope as an anchor for our lives. It is safe and sure, and goes through the curtain of the heavenly temple into the inner sanctuary.”

*Hebrews 6:19*

“Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep His promise.”

*Hebrews 10:23*

“To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.”

*Hebrews 11:1*

“Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of His great mercy He gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope.”

*1 Peter 1:3*

“Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from death and gave Him glory; and so your faith and hope are fixed on God.”

*1 Peter 1:21*

“But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honour Him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you.”

*1 Peter 3:15*

“Cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.”

*1 Peter 5:7*

“Everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure, just as Christ is pure.”

*1 John 3:3*

## **Prayers for Traumatic Situations.**

Be open to the night...

Pray with open hand, not with clenched fist...

(Lord Dunsay, from The Lion Prayer Collection, by Mary Batchelor pub. Lion ISBN 0 745 93133 2)

### **A prayer for Endurance and Hope**

Loving Father,

Give us Hope.

When evil darkens our world, give us light.

When despair numbs our souls, give us hope.

When we stumble and fall, lift us up.

When doubts assail us, give us faith.

When nothing seems sure, give us trust.

When ideals fade, give us vision.

When we lose our way, be our guide

That we may find serenity in Your presence

and purpose in doing Your will.

Amen.

*Written by John D Rayner.*

### **A Prayer when Feeling Overwhelmed.**

Lord, when my heart is overwhelmed, overwhelm me with Your peace.

Lead me to You, my rock.

Guide me to Your Word which gives me strength and refuge.

Help me not to run to lesser things.

Draw me to come to You first.

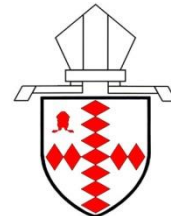
Help me to replace my feeling of “overwhelmed” and place it into your loving arms.

Thank You, Lord.

In Jesus’ Name,

Amen.

*Written by Grace Cathedral San Francisco and adapted by Marcus Cooper.*



## **An Act of Collective Worship**

### **Responding to and Reflecting on a Traumatic Situation**

**Opening Sentence**    The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
**We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

**Opening prayer**    Father God, as we come together today  
open our hearts to listening to you,  
open our minds to thinking about everyone around us,  
bless the community we live in,  
bless those who are here to help and support us,  
shape our thoughts at this time,  
give us strength to do your will,  
hold our hands and touch our hearts. **Amen**

**Introduction**    Coming together as a school today is very important.

We have come together because (*outline the event, time, place and circumstance*).

We are probably all thinking different things at this time. We may be feeling anxious, afraid, unhappy, perplexed, angry and sad. There will be a mix of emotions as we come together, listen together, sing together and pray together. You may be thinking:

Why has this happened?

How has this happened?

Why here in our community?

Our emotions and thoughts run deep at this time. Many people will be talking about what has taken place, some may even gossip or exaggerate the situation. Some may be quiet and numbed by the situation. Coming together today isn't easy for any of us, but it is important that we hear the truth, have time to think, make our prayers to God and build hope for the future.

Life is never straight forward. There are times when the journey we are on gets disrupted, damaged and changed. Even at these times we have to trust in the love of God.

In the Book of Proverbs we are told:

*'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Think about Him in all your ways and He will make straight your paths.'*

(Proverbs 3 v5-6)

Isaiah reminds us:

*'For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you.'*

(Isaiah 41 v13)

**Song or hymn**

A song of peace and stability

**Reading**

**A Time for Everything**

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die

A time to plant and a time to uproot

A time to kill and a time to heal

A time to tear down and a time to build

A time to weep and a time to laugh

A time to mourn and a time to dance

**Reflection**

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us of the many contrasts of life:

Weeping and laughing

Killing and healing

Planting and uprooting

We live in a world of extremes. Sometimes it is hard for us to make sense of what is happening around us. We see things on television, listen to the news and are exposed to social media.

**Remembering**

This section of worship falls into two parts.

- (i) The leader should give a brief synopsis of what has happened, putting this into context and saying what is likely to feel and look different over the next few days, weeks...(e.g. police presence, media, flowers).
- (ii) Next, pupils and staff may be invited to share what they are thinking or what they have experienced. It may be appropriate to have an artefact to focus on or a picture on the screen. This section is an open invitation to respond.



**Time to reflect** Allow those assembled time to think and have their own thoughts. It may be appropriate to light a candle, have some quiet background music playing or even use photographs of the locality.

**Hymn** Make me a Channel of your Peace

**Hope for the future** In time, our community will be able to become restored. The pain, anger and sadness will get less and we will carry on along our journey. At the moment we don't know how long that will take.

Hope is a word that we often use and can be found in the Bible. Hope is a kind of wish for the future that things will get better. Our prayers are all prayers for hope and strength, as we look forward.

## **Prayers**

### **A Prayer for Hard Times**

Lord, help us when we face trials in this life. Help us to call on you, knowing you always hear us. Help us to lean on you instead of leaning on our own understanding. Give us the strength we need, and remind us always that you are aware of what touches us. Thank you Lord, for not leaving us comfortless. Thank you for your great love. We pray this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

### **A prayer for Hope and Strength**

Almighty God,

You reach into the darkness with hope, truth and light. Stretch out your strong hand in this situation, hold and rescue those who have suffered. Let your almighty love move mountains, cross seas and breathe life into the darkest places.

Light that redeems

Light that restores

Light that heals

Light that protects

Light that saves

There is nothing higher, stronger or greater than your love.

We trust in your love now and always. **Amen.**

### **A Prayer of Hope**

Lord Jesus,

Hope overcomes

Hope heals

Hope restores

Hope inspires

Hope conquers

Hope frees

Hope is your gift to the world. **Amen**

Let's say together the Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen**

**Blessing**

(An old Irish Blessing)  
May the road rise up to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
and rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.  
**Amen**

## **Advice for Managing Critical or Traumatic Incidents.**

### **Planning.**

It is wise to have a Critical and Traumatic Incidents Policy. Where these have plans as appendices, they are far more helpful. However, a policy does not mean you are prepared – in fact, too often people will think it is all taken care of because one person spent time writing a policy.

Be clear about what a critical or traumatic incident means to you and your school community– what would you class as one? It is advisable not to make these decisions alone; it must be a discussion for the senior leadership team and then further discussed with governors.

Having a working understanding is important. In a critical incident, time should not be spent debating its status: the leader in charge, likely the Head teacher, should be able to deem it such and in these circumstances one should be able to confidently expect colleagues to begin a series of actions. This saves time and helps to make a better response.

Questions to consider:

- Is one person capable of dealing with an incident in the course of their normal duties?
- Do our policy and procedures cater for a response to the matter at hand?
- Can time be taken to come to a decision on our actions in response to events?
- Whilst the event may be unusual or rare, can we deal with it without causing major distress to our community and without unusual and adverse public attention?
- Can the school continue its normal day-to-day life without an immediate or rapid response to the situation?

If the answer is yes to the above questions, it is likely that this is not a critical or traumatic incident.

Do the following apply?

- A serious injury, accident or death of a member of the pupil body or staff, whether on or off-site.
- It will not be possible to continue teaching on the site for some or all pupils.
- A serious allegation has been made about a colleague, a parent, governor or pupil and details are likely to be made public, e.g. charges are to be brought, details will reach the press.

This could likely be a critical or traumatic incident.

Of course, judgement needs to be exercised. Closure of the school due to heavy snowfall overnight is a very different matter to a major fire destroying most of the building in the middle of a school session.

Planning also needs to incorporate the fact that many serious incidents are unexpected and the first steps are often not taken in any order or context which one would choose. For instance:

- A serious fight breaks out between two groups of pupils, from your school and a neighbouring one. A colleague returns to school having tried to intervene, bloodied. Whilst he initially appears to be a victim in this instance, police then arrive wishing to question the teacher in the meeting room as they suspect him of having used violence against a pupil;
- A parent makes a serious allegation of financial misconduct at the school online over a weekend and it has gained great traction before you first hear of it from a member of the premises team;

- An intruder appears on site, according to pupils who are running away from the lunch hall. They shout that he has a knife.

## **Practice.**

It is important to not just plan for, but to practise responses to these situations and other similar ones.

The last one here, a sudden intruder, is a critical incident which needs acting on immediately through the school's lockdown procedure.

Who knows which colleague will instigate the procedure?

It may well not be a leader.

If procedures rely on leaders or the 'top leader' taking all critical time-sensitive decisions, then situations can quickly get worse.

With lockdown procedures, we know it is important to sensitively brief pupils themselves on what to do in such events, including how to raise the alarm.

It will not be long before someone takes a lead in unexpected situations, but it will go better if practice has taken place.

To assist, please find in the following pages some possible summary advice to leaders who find themselves deputising, (not necessarily 'the deputy head'). These examples will make for useful discussion – you may consider how they might be 'critical' or not; more helpful though would be to talk through how you might handle them.

As a Head teacher, remember that it is far easier for you to make decisions: you are likely to be more experienced, but also you are acting under your own initiative and with very clear ideas of how you want things to be done. It is not so easy for your colleagues to do so unless they are clear on your **principles** for managing critical and traumatic incidents.

## **Principles.**

Whether sudden and unexpected or where there is time to take stock, all colleagues will play a better part in managing serious situations if they are clear on important principles.

You will want to discuss the ones presented here and you may add more.

- The paramount principle, as ever, is to ensure pupil safety as the first priority;
- Staff are encouraged to act if they feel that they have to, in order to ensure pupil safety or to manage an incident until they can involve others at the first opportunity;
- Where physical intervention is required, it is only as a last resort, with the minimum force and duration required to ensure safety;
- No one other than the Head teacher, or their deputy if absent, is to make public comments on behalf of the school. However this should always be in liaison with and following the advice of the Press Department of the diocese / local authority (LA) / academy trust;
- Confidentiality and a chain of communication is vital in most serious and traumatic incidents and all colleagues **must** maintain this when asked to do so;
- No one should continue to manage a situation where someone in a formal leadership position is able to take charge.

Strong shared understanding of important principles such as these means that colleagues acting on your behalf can do so with greater confidence. Talking through scenarios is very important, but not as important as discussing the principles which will enable colleagues to either deal with the unforeseen or act when written advice is not to hand.

Leaders and governors must also consider that well established advice and procedures have been put together by subject matter experts who have been involved in far more critical incidents than a Head teacher is likely to have been.

Critical incident procedures written by your LA and / or academy trust will reflect best practice principles as outlined above and sound practical advice in handling matters. Of course, procedures must be amended to reflect the local context, e.g. buildings, alarm systems, emergency contact details, etc. But it is important to seriously question diverging from established guidance where it exists: there should be good reason for doing so.

Once you have amended the established guidance to suit your own context and structures, ask others to cast a critical eye over it. Business managers are excellent colleagues to look at this from a different perspective, as are governors. Seek expert advice and comments from your LA and / or academy trust.

Importantly, make these documents accessible to your staff. They should be available on the school's computer network or intranet, in paper copy at reception, in the staff room and in the homes of key staff. However, never publish these documents online – for instance, a potential intruder could turn knowledge of your lockdown procedures to their advantage.

### **Decision-making and Recording.**

As Head teacher, make sure that your staff know how you will alert them to 'declaring a critical or traumatic incident'. A specific routine should then begin, albeit that the events may well have already begun to unfold, e.g. a member of staff has already dealt with queries on the switchboard from parents asking if it is true that a certain member of staff has indeed collapsed in a classroom and been taken to hospital.

Once the immediate actions have taken place (i.e. ensuring pupil safety, calling emergency services,) it is important to establish a **Critical Incident Meeting** as soon as possible. Have a practised routine so that all members of the group know where to go to, (e.g. the Head teacher's office) and what the structure is, including who will chair, speak, which specific duties individual leaders have in such situations, if they are available, etc.

Always include a trusted member of the admin team (e.g. Head teacher's PA, / Office Manager) to minute these meetings in detail. This person should keep an incident timeline and a key item towards the start of the first meeting is likely to be establishing the timeline of events prior to the meeting having being called.

These meetings are crucial in coming to wise decisions. These will be corporate decisions wherever possible, although, as Head teacher, you will sometimes have to take a lead and make a choice between different possible actions.

Critical incident meetings are about managing a planned response, for instance, organising counselling for pupils who have witnessed the collapse of the member of staff in the previous example, who we now know has died.

Planned responses, well recorded, help to minimise the harm that can be done from mishandling sensitive situations. Records are crucial for external agencies, such as the Health and Safety Executive or the Police, should they need to intervene.

## **Referral.**

One of the most important things a critical incident meeting can do is to refer the matter on. This is not to abdicate responsibility, but it is to share a difficult burden and get expert advice at a time that you may all be finding difficult as well.

Always call the official agencies first:

- Emergency services where there is a risk to life or of serious harm;
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where there are allegations against members of staff;
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) where there are concerns related to child safeguarding;
- Standards and Testing Agency (STA) in relation to primary national assessments including SATs and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in serious incidents relating to exams.

Always make sure that you contact your LA emergency contact, even if you belong to an academy trust. You should also, of course, contact the diocese, your Chair of governors and your academy trust, if your school is an academy.

## **Listening.**

Careful handling of the first steps of an incident can 'buy time' to slow down the next steps and consider the plan in more detail – a good example may be a well-constructed press holding statement.

Listen to the advice you are given. You are dealing with experts who deal with these situations more frequently and they are at a greater distance emotionally. However, if you have serious misgivings as to advice offered, share these. It is better to do so.

Wherever you can, call the people who are assisting you on a speaker phone. This will enable the rest of the critical incidents team to hear it, including the note taker. If you have facilities to do so, ask the person you are speaking to for permission to record the call. You may want to revisit the advice again and sometimes things can be missed, even if you are making quick notes. You are quite possibly still suffering from some shock or high level of adrenaline yourself.

If there are some difficult decisions to make, around communication of bad news for instance, have courage to speak up in the meeting and ask for support in exploring what would be the best way to proceed in line with the values of the school. Holding statements can play an important role for a short period, but the human response is what will reassure the community and will be the beginning of helping them come to terms with moments of great difficulty. After the initial, very pragmatic steps have been taken, consider involving your chaplain and / or incumbent in planning how to react to the community's emotional and spiritual needs.

**Reflection.**

Every critical or traumatic incident sticks in the memory of those involved. These moments can cause great pain to the school community, often for longer than expected, and sometimes small reminders can create an echo-effect which brings the pain back to the surface. Great healing can also take place over time and being open to these feelings through your collective worship is important – it gives permission for the school community to react, respond and process.

It is also vital to use every critical incident to, afterwards, look back upon plans and procedures to consider how they might be improved in future. It is natural to want to look forward but do not lose these opportunities to learn and to be better prepared in future.

## Deputising for the Principal

### Dealing with difficult situations

1: Ensure health and safety of students and staff at all times and as first priority

2: Then, if safe to do so, call Principal on xxxx xxxxx for further advice. If un-contactable, consider other sources of advice

3: Remember, it is often safer in a crisis to make a decision than to make no decision or take no action. Brief the team and gain their support wherever

#### Ofsted Phone Call

- PA will take the call from Ofsted and try to get the Principal
- If I can't answer or am not well, you will need to take the call from HMI/Li at the time they set
- Go to my office, take a pad and pen, write everything down. On the call, ensure timings, numbers of inspectors, inspection focus is all noted down
- Inform Chair of Governors
- Email staff to let them know and call a briefing for 3.15
- Send all SEF materials plus anything else requested to the lead inspector

#### Child Protection Issue

- Wherever possible, DSL must deal with this—if you have to be involved, move it to them asap
- Isolate the child concerned in a safe place and make sure others can't come into contact
- If it involves a member of staff, call LADO and safeguarding governor
- If it involves Principal or one of safeguarding team, call LADO and don't inform the staff members
- Staff may need to stay late and might need your support to deal with parents who want to take their child away but aren't permitted to
- If you are concerned about how a referral is going or the response of one of our safeguarding team call MASH for advice

#### Whistleblowing

- If someone makes an allegation about malpractice, corruption, fraud, bullying etc by staff (anything bar child protection), ask for full details but explain you can't keep it to yourself
- If there's chance, read the policy, available from PA, Clerk.
- Inform Chair of Governors of the concern as appropriate
- If it involves Chair of Governors contact Local Authority

#### Emergency Rest Centre

- The Council will make contact saying they need to take over the site
- If during the day, follow our strategy for getting children home safely (parent telephone tree)
- Council will arrive and take over. You must remain on site, including overnight
- You may be called in overnight – they have your mobile number + site team
- Council must ask for permission to use further rooms
- You must close the school on the School Closures website
- Keep the school closed the day after the emergency is over. You must check the site for damage with the Council

#### Rooms out of action / utilities failure

- Take affected classes to a suitable rendezvous point to await further instructions, don't tour them round the site looking for rooms
- Evacuate and isolate the affected rooms/blocks. It may need to be a corridor. Are other rooms likely to be at risk, e.g. ceilings falling in?
- Seek advice from site staff
- Can the academy run without the block in danger? Can it be blocked off? If the kitchens are affected and lunch hasn't happened, the site may need to close.
- We can run with just cold food for a short time only (1-2 days)
- If it's a utilities failure - the site can't run without running water, heating, or working toilets. However, where part of the site is running, we need to keep going.
- If necessary to close the site, follow the strategy for getting children home safely in the day and close the site on the School Closures website
- As it's unexpected, inform radio stations—ask them to confirm online

#### Threat of fight

- Speak to 'informants' if there are any, isolate the potential participants
- Where possible, send these students home separately and with parents
- Inform Community PC who will ensure police/PCSO presence at gates
- Speak to the other local heads if it seems to be 'inter-school' in nature
- Email staff or get a message around to ask them to come out at the end of the day to exits - e.g. ...

#### Serious student incident, e.g. fight

- Assess the immediate seriousness and call emergency services if required
- Isolate students, take initial statements if possible. Pass investigation on to others wherever you can; you may need to be the decision-maker, so stay neutral
- Inform Community PC if it seems clearly criminal in nature, for advice to begin with
- Can the situation be investigated before a decision to exclude or must someone leave to ensure safety?
- If excluding and it is to do with violence, only ever 'release' the student to a family member—otherwise they may return
- Do not be drawn on the number of days unless you are confident it is 1 or 2. If needs be say it may go permanent and we will investigate further

#### Injury

- Check First Aid is on the scene and emergency services en-route if required
- Clear the area of students/tell eyewitnesses to rendez-vous for statements to be taken
- Close off the area for longer if needs be/re-route student traffic
- Call the parents /next of kin to inform them of what is happening (take advice from emergency services if possible)
- Once the injury is dealt with, the people on the scene must report in the Accident Book. First aiders must fill out First Aid forms.
- For serious incidents, inform Chair of Governors

#### Death

- If it's an accident/incident at school, the police must be brought to the scene
- Chair of Governors must be informed
- The LA should also be informed
- Read the critical incidents policy/procedure
- Ask the LA to deal with any media approach
- If a member of staff dies suddenly, outside of school hours, use the emergency contact tree to inform school staff once close friends on the staff have been informed
- The LA may be able to offer a counselling service

#### Major staff absence

- How much can we run in the academy, as above?
- Can we tell families early enough that we can only manage some year groups?
- The emergency tree and school closures website can be used for full/part closures
- If staff go home ill in the day in numbers, do whatever is safe to keep going until the end
- But, be aware that collapsing classes and so on is voluntary. SLT can be asked to cover though, other staff can cover normal groups



#### Missing Child

- If they go missing during the day—contact staff to check if seen. If not found within ten minutes, parents must be informed
- If after school, parents will often contact us
- Check with DSL if the child is a CP concern—the two are often connected. If yes, advise caution on phoning parents until MASH are contacted
- Call homes of friends or check with them in person to see if they know anything about whereabouts
- Keep Community PC informed
- Ensure parents have a point of contact, including mobile number if needs be
- Media would only contact if this became a Missing Persons case—advice would be taken from Police re a statement

#### Fire Alarm

- Evacuate the building and assemble.
- Reception will bring registers and check what the panel says
- If obvious sign of fire, call 999
- Check location of alarm with appropriate staff: is there any explanation? If someone explains it (steam has set it off for instance) and you and site staff are happy to go in and check - send them in
- Staff continue to check all are present
- Site staff are to stay in touch with you to inform you that all is clear or that there is a problem, by phone
- If the all clear is given and all are accounted for, send staff and students back in
- Note the disruption to breaks and lunches—it may be safer to extend these

#### Drugs/alcohol

- Doubts about this will come from other staff or students - if possible, observe the student(s) in a lesson yourself and check for suspicious behaviour
  - As Acting Principal you can conduct a bag search and ask for pockets to be emptied, but only when accompanied by another
  - Take care as to whether to involve Community PC at this stage—he would be obliged to deal with it as a criminal issue: we aren't
  - Check if the child is a CP issue
  - Move the investigation onto someone else asap—you may need to be the decision maker
  - If drugs are involved, an exclusion is likely. If suspicion of dealing drugs, it is likely to be permanent. BUT, there's no need to set the number of days there and then
  - Parents will often be disbelieving that their child has taken a substance - if appropriate, get them in early so that they can see
- Weapons

- As per Alcohol/Drugs
- Involve Community PC immediately
- Is the 'suspect' someone who has made threats or someone who has been subject to threats or bullying? This will influence how you handle it
- Is the child a CP issue or do they have mental health issues?
- If you feel comfortable, undertake a bag search or ask them to put it on a table away from you - try not to threaten but inform them that it's for their own good to do this
- If you feel there's a dangerous situation, let the police deal with it. There might be extreme situations where you have to ask people to lock themselves in rooms — hopefully never (see protocol)

#### Snow/Poor Weather/site not safe

- If it gets bad during the day, try to avoid sending home early, if you must set up a parent telephone tree. Send staff home asap once kids go, starting with furthest to travel
- If overnight, site staff will call if site is under snow. Make all efforts to go in and see it on the ground, by 5.30 am
- Assess: is the site safe for children to get in and around? Are the surrounding roads passable and safe? Will staff make it in on time and in enough numbers? You must be certain that all 3 answers are definitely yes to open
- Call other local heads to check their thoughts and plans - if it's borderline it always feels better to make a decision together to close, though we do have a duty to open if the three tests says it's safe. Any serious doubts though = closure
- Ring the first people on your list for the emergency tree to get the message going
- Then, close the academy on the School Closures website
- Only call the local radio stations if you think it would be unexpected for us to close—otherwise they'll check online

#### Major staff/student issue

- Isolate one from the other and take initial statements
- If there is clear evidence that one or the other has committed a major offence and shouldn't be on-site, one or both can be sent home (it would need to be a 1 day exclusion pending extension possibly to permanent, for the colleague it's not a suspension at this stage)
- If the colleague walks out, call them and tell them to stay at home until they hear from you next
- Move the investigation onto someone else asap—you may need to be the decision maker
- If the colleague has been violent, threatening, 'sexual' in some way, call the LADO, then HR for advice ASAP
- Parents of involved students need to be informed. If a bigger number have witnessed something inappropriate or traumatic compose a neutral, holding letter and invite students to bring in any statements the following day
- Call Chair of Governors - there may well be press interest. Teachers now have protection of anonymity when suspended for instance and this has to be maintained

#### Major complaint/media contact

- The press may get in touch as someone has complained to them. Explain that there's a procedure for complaints and you want to engage with the parent through that
- If needed, issue a neutral holding statement—it's better than 'no comment'
- If someone comes to site making a complaint, use your judgement as to whether to see them. If angry, it often won't go well for you to see them
- Issue a copy of the policy, offer a proper appointment. You need to get a short summary of the person's problem so you can get your facts in order
- If press contact is threatened, remain calm and explain that it's far preferable for the child(ren) involved to have this dealt with here and with sensitivity

#### Major exam disturbance

- See if the student causing disturbance will leave. Or it could be an accident or problem with the room
- If not, there may be a need to pause the exam
- In this case or if someone is very unwell, have everyone leave everything on desks and remove all other students to another room where they must remain in silence
- You should call JCQ hotline as Head of Centre for advice
- Hopefully you will be able to restart the exam in the same space or an alternative
- Take full notes as you might need them for an appeal with the board. Similarly, if it's to do with poor behaviour, statements need to be taken. If it's affected everyone I would keep them all at desks and get them all to write about it for our records.
- Compose a letter for students to take home so that they know our 'line'

#### Emergency School Closure

- Wherever possible, this should only be done by Principal, but it is possible that you may have to take the decision
- Go to xxxxxx Log on is DFE number xxxx. Password is xxxx
- Go to Close My School. Add in the details, read carefully. The location code is xxxx
- Ring the contacts on your emergency tree to get it going. As I would be unavailable in these circumstances, you also need to ring the people I would call, e.g. all senior team
- If you have to evacuate/close in the day, set up an emergency tree for families. Ask Heads of House to print contact lists for all their tutees. They should call five trustworthy parents from their lists, pass on the message that students must be collected and ask them to name five further families they will contact. Use twitter and local radio to ask families to come and collect.

**Case Studies of  
How Two of our Schools Coped and Dealt with a Traumatic Situation.**

**St. Mark's C of E Primary Academy, Croydon:**

# South Norwood school wants Croydon to 'stand together' to tackle knife crime

Teachers and staff at the school believe they can help solve the knife crime epidemic

BY

**SAM TRUELOVE**

12:45, 7 JUL 2018

A school in Croydon has called on the borough to “stand together” in an attempt to tackle knife crime.

St Mark's CofE Primary Academy has launched an initiative called Stop, Think, Croydon – a project which will see members of the community work together to tackle youth and gang violence.

The school, on Albert Road, in South Norwood, held a meeting on Monday (July 2) and invited councillors, anti-knife groups, parents and members of the public to air their views.

Sue Sandy, the school's safeguarding, behaviour and welfare lead, organised and helped to lead the event with the JAGS Foundation.

She believes the school can help solve an epidemic which has been a cause for concern for not just Croydon, but the whole nation in recent years.

Ms Sandy said: “We want to talk about this problem from every aspect we could think of. This meeting was originally mothers uniting but it was the whole community uniting.

“We tried to have a solution focus and we looked at what police could do, what the government could do and what us parents could do.



**Left to right: Chantel Gordon (parent), Sue Sandy (teacher) and Kate Wilson (head teacher)** (Image: Sean Aiden)

“These meetings are about coming to the table with an idea and solution and everyone contributed. It was about thinking of how many ways we can tackle this problem.

“We are determined to not stop until we can see something which can help our community.”

The *Advertiser* reported in May earlier this year that figures from a Freedom of Information (FOI) request have shown there were 201 stabbings reported in the borough in 2017, the equivalent of four every week.

Almost a third of those that were stabbed were teenagers, and in some instances victims were aged between eight and 12 years old.

The St Mark’s event, which ran from 6.30 to 9pm, saw a range of ideas put forward, including visiting “high risk” areas which are most prone to knife crime, offering sessions with the London Ambulance Service (LAS) that can teach children lifesaving skills, and actively going out and speaking to young children on estates about knife crime.

It was also decided that special t-shirts will be designed for those involved, with the hope it will show the whole borough everyone is united as one.

Ms Sandy, who regularly takes part in weapons sweeps and encourages others to do the same, added that the initiative means a lot to her due to her past experiences.



“It touches me personally,” she said.

“Last August one of my son's best friends was murdered – Jermain Goupall. He was my son’s first best friend at his secondary school and he even stayed at my house.

“For me, what I found very difficult, these arms have hugged the victim and my child who cried for his best friend.

“I don’t want any other empty seats in schools and we need to stop this from ever happening again.”

Kate Wilson, head teacher of St Mark’s, told the *Advertiser* the school will be running further events in the future, and believes it is their role to educate children about the dangers of knife crime.



**The school held a meeting and invited councillors, anti-knife groups, parents and members of the public to air their views** (Image: St Mark’s CofE Primary Academy)

She said: “Our children need to be thinking about these issues and they need to be making the right decisions from an early age and as they get older.

“We are trying to help them do that. The school is in the heart of the community and in the heart of an area where our children are frightened at school sometimes.

“We have even had a Year 4 child who has expressed anxiety and it’s a very early age to be thinking about gang activity.

“We try and make children feel safe and we try to get these children to have their own identify, which empowers them to make the right decisions.

“We have a behaviour system here based on forgiveness, reflection and restoration and if children can forgive they can recognise it’s a secure way of moving forward.”



**St Mark's CofE Primary Academy wants to tackle youth and gang violence** (Image: Sean Aiden)



# Grieving mother pens heartfelt letter to the Southfields community following son's death

By [Riley Krause](#), *Wandsworth Times*. 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019

**A grieving mother has penned a heartfelt letter to the [Southfields](#) community following the sudden death of her 18-year-old son.**

It was 1am on April 23 when Lara Maskhadova walked into her son's bedroom. There she found Peter lying on the floor next to his desk.

Lara called 999 and started CPR while still on the phone. The ambulance came within minutes but sadly Peter passed away.

The post-mortem could not discover any specific cause of death. This led to an intermediate death certificate being issued which called it 'sudden death syndrome'.

In the months since that tragic night, Lara has been greatly supported by the community to which she calls home and wanted to thank those who have helped her in this time of need.

"The reason for writing this is not to talk about my grief, nothing can put into words how I feel about losing my son," she said.

"I wanted to write about kindness and in particular the kindness I have been shown by certain people."

A "scientist in the making", Peter attended St Cecilia's School.

Lara said the Southfields teachers have been with her every step of the way.

"People have sent flowers and cards, of course, but the students and teachers at Peter's school have gone above and beyond what I could have imagined and I've been overwhelmed by their kindness and support," she added

"They have sent me his school certificates, coursework and official school photos that I didn't even know had been taken as Peter would never tell me.

"They arranged a coach for students and teachers to attend his funeral and in June, just before the end of term, they organised a memorial service for Peter and created a book of memories signed by everyone, including photos and personal messages from his friends and tutors."

The school even went so far as to raise money so that a memorial bench could be bought in his honour.

It was Peter's dedication to school that will live on in Lara's mind for the rest of her life.

"At a time where many other teenagers have nowhere else to go but run around the streets causing harm to one another, my son was focused on his coursework and working long shifts at his job, keeping fit and always making time for his friends," she said.

"I am so proud to have raised a good member of society and I know he would have continued to make me proud."

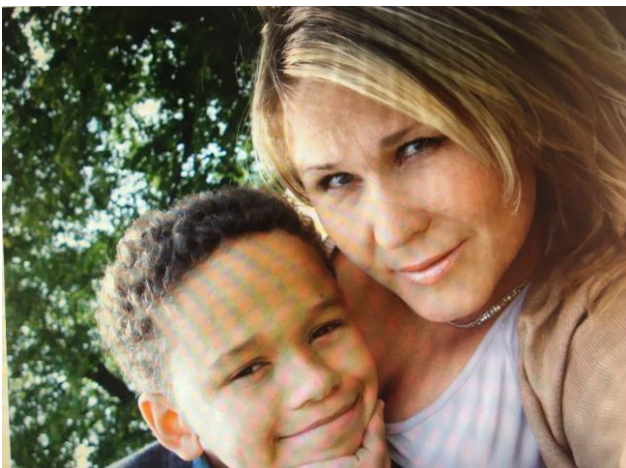
Lara paid special mention to three of the school's teachers, Mr Burkes, Mr Bishop and Mrs Joseph, all of whom went the extra mile both before Peter's tragic death and afterwards.

Lara now wants to set up an afterschool debate club to help other children focus on positive achievements and build their self-confidence in a safe environment.

"So to everyone who reads this, be inspired by the incredible people at St Cecilia's," she finished with.

"And like these teachers do, inspire children, encourage them and believe in them. And most of all - show your children kindness and love."

Peter's heart was donated to St George's Hospital for research in the hope that it may one day help someone else.



## **Directory of Useful Resources.**

### **Bereavement Pack**

A pack of information and suggestions when faced with a death in the school community

*Southwark Diocesan Board of Education*

### **Responding To Crises**

– Advice for Schools in the Context of Terrorist Incidents Claiming Religious Motivation

*Southwark Diocesan Board of Education*

### **Business Continuity Plan Template**

<https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/School-management/Emergencies/Business-continuity-and-managing-emergencies/NCC097477>

A useful document from *Norfolk County Council*. All LAs will have a similar document.

### **Helping Children Cope with Trauma**

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/helping-children-cope-with-traumatic-stress.htm>

*HelpGuide*

HelpGuide is a non-profit mental health and wellness website. Their mission is to provide empowering, evidence-based information that you can use to help yourself and your loved ones.

### **Helping Children Cope after a Traumatic Event**

<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/>

*Child Mind Institute*

The Child Mind Institute is an independent, national non-profit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders.



## **The Key for School Leaders**

<https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/pupils-and-parents/pupil-health-and-wellbeing/pupil-wellbeing/supporting-pupils-who-have-experienced-traumatic-events/>

Supporting pupils who have experienced traumatic events.

## **Are You Trauma Informed?**

<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2017/12/05/trauma-informed/>

@TeacherToolkit

## **Children and Trauma: How Schools Can Help With Healing**

<https://www.lifespan.org/centers-services/bradley-hasbro-childrens-research-center/children-and-trauma-how-schools-can-help>

*Lifespan* Delivering health with care.

## **Managing Traumatic Incidents Manual for Schools**

[https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/hackney/fsd/files/manual\\_for\\_managing\\_traumatic\\_incidents.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/hackney/fsd/files/manual_for_managing_traumatic_incidents.pdf)

*The Learning Trust*

## **Signposts to Appropriate Organisations That Can Help.**

### **Southwark Diocesan Board of Education**

48, Union Street, London. SE1 1TD.

For further help or support, please contact Shaun Burns, *Primary Religious Education Adviser*

020 7234 9218      [Shaun.Burns@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:Shaun.Burns@southwark.anglican.org)

### **Neighbourhood Police**

To find details of your local team and find out more about the work they are doing in your area call your local constabulary.

### **Victim Support**

Supportline    0808 1689111      [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Victim Support provides immediate specialist, emotional support and practical help to both victims and witnesses of terror attacks and major incidents. They can also refer people to other services if needed. Their support is available whenever needed – either now or in the longer term.

### **Centre for Anxiety Disorders and Trauma – South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust**

[www.national.slam.nhs.uk/cadat](http://www.national.slam.nhs.uk/cadat)

### **NHS**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

The NHS can help people deal with the effects of distressing events.

### **The Children's Society**

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/trauma-resource-leaflet.pdf>

Trauma and young people - A guide for parents, carers and professionals

### **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000      [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Support for children and young people

## **Mind**

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

Mind provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

## **The Mental Health Foundation**

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

Lots of helpful resources and contacts to support good mental health.

## **Ptsduk**

[www.ptsduk.org](http://www.ptsduk.org)

“Tomorrow can be a new day.”

Ptsduk’s vision is that everyone experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) gets support, understanding and respect.

Their mission is to provide support and information for anyone experiencing PTSD. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding of the condition and treatments available.

## **Youngminds**

<https://youngminds.org.uk>

Youngminds are leading the fight for a future where all young minds are supported and empowered, whatever the challenges. They’re there to make sure young minds get the best possible mental health support and have the resilience to overcome life’s difficulties.

## **For Jimmy**

[www.forjimmy.org](http://www.forjimmy.org)

Formerly The Jimmy Mizen Foundation.

## **Say No 2 Knives**

[www.sayno2knives.co.uk](http://www.sayno2knives.co.uk)

Say No 2 Knives offers help to those affected by knife crime and provides statistics and facts for those wanting more information. Say No 2 Knives was founded by Sarah Armstrong after she became a victim of knife crime herself, and she hopes to set up a charity to create support groups for other victims of knife crime.

## **Knifecrimes**

[www.knifecrimes.org](http://www.knifecrimes.org)

Knifecrimes is a charity that provides help and support to families and friends affected by serious violent crime or bereaved as a result of murder or manslaughter. Their website provides information about knife, gun and gang related violence.

## **The Schoolbox Project**

[www.schoolboxproject.org](http://www.schoolboxproject.org)

Trauma informed education, art and play for the littlest refugees of war Schoolbox brings trauma informed programming to children in refugee camps and crisis situations. They provide mobile, trauma informed education art and play to children displaced by conflict and crisis.

## **Trauma Informed Schools UK**

[www.traumainformedschools.co.uk](http://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk)

Trauma Informed Schools UK's vision is to provide appropriate training for schools, communities and organisations so that they become trauma informed and mentally healthy places for all.

## **Resilience**

[www.resilience-england.recouncil.org.uk](http://www.resilience-england.recouncil.org.uk)

REsilience is a self-evaluation, planning and training opportunity for teachers of RE. The programme is school based and can be tailored to individual needs. Its purpose is to help increase teachers' confidence when addressing contentious issues, particularly where religious ideas are sometimes used to try to justify extremism and violence.

## **Education Support**

Helpline: 08000 562 561 [www.educationsupport.org.uk](http://www.educationsupport.org.uk)

Education Support is the only UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in schools, colleges and universities.

## **The Forgiveness Project.**

Tel: 020 7821 0035 [www.theforgivenessproject.com](http://www.theforgivenessproject.com)

Stories have the power to transform. The Forgiveness Project shares stories of forgiveness in order to build hope, empathy and understanding.

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**Can you help  
with any contributions for the next version of 'Hope Through Sadness' please?**

If you or your school have produced any helpful resources that you would be prepared to share with others or you have found / used any resources or organisations that would be valuable to share with others please do get in touch.

We would also like to feature some case studies of how our schools have already dealt and coped with such traumatic situations. If you would be prepared to share your experiences to help others or have anything else that may be useful, please do get in touch.

Thank you.

Shaun Burns.  
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