A Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults in Scotland

Bereavement Charter
FOR SCOTLAND

This Charter provides a set of statements which describe how in Scotland we can support a person or a group of people experiencing bereavement. Good bereavement care is a human right. This Charter is underpinned by a desire to make sure that in Scotland, we can do all that we can to support people who might be experiencing difficulties following the death of someone they know or somebody in their community. It is the responsibility of everyone within Scotland to ensure that this is achieved. These are our statements:

IN SCOTLAND, PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN BEREAVED SHOULD:

- be treated with compassion, empathy and kindness
- have their wishes, choices and beliefs listened to, considered and respected by all

SCOTLAND SHOULD BE A PLACE WHERE:

- grief, bereavement and death are recognised as a natural part of life
- there is an open culture which is supportive of people having the opportunity to grieve
- accessing support (including emotional, practical, financial, social, and spiritual) is seen as a right
- efforts are made to ensure that adequate bereavement support is accessible for everyone
- people have space and time to grieve
- it is recognised that bereavement might affect all aspects of a person's life (e.g. relationships, school, workplace)

IN SCOTLAND, PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTIVE OF FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN BEREAVED, WHICH MEANS THAT:

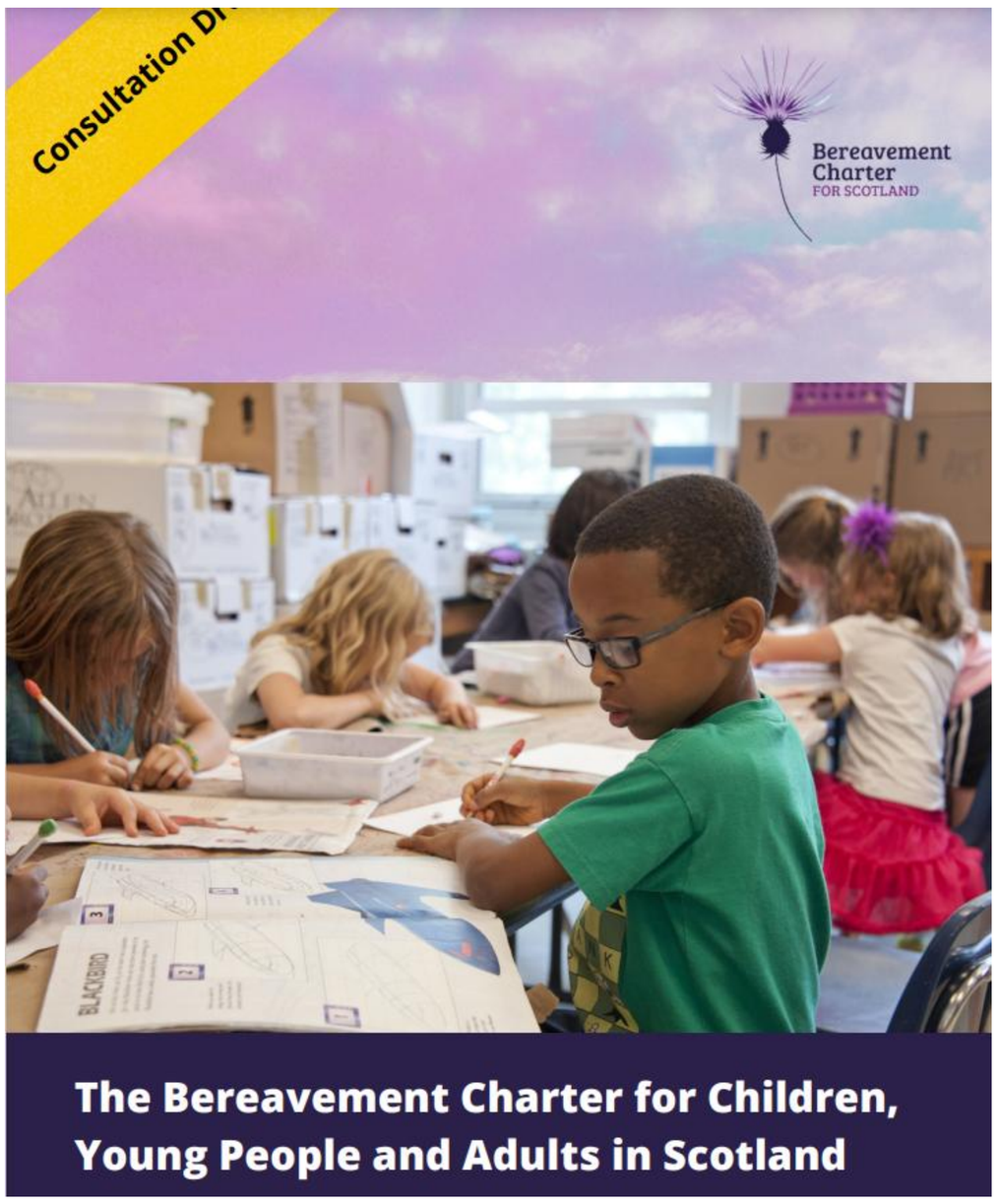
- people's needs and grief reactions are recognised and acknowledged as being different at different times
- grief and bereavement can begin before death and can be lifelong
- people who have been bereaved should feel supported to talk about the person who has died if they wish to
- bereavement and grieving can be experienced by the whole community and not just by individuals
- there is help to know where to refer or signpost people to for additional support

The Charter and additional information can be found at
www.scottishcare.org/bereavement

By displaying the Bereavement Charter Mark on your website or within your buildings, you can demonstrate that your organisation endorses the statements within the **Bereavement Charter for Scotland**.

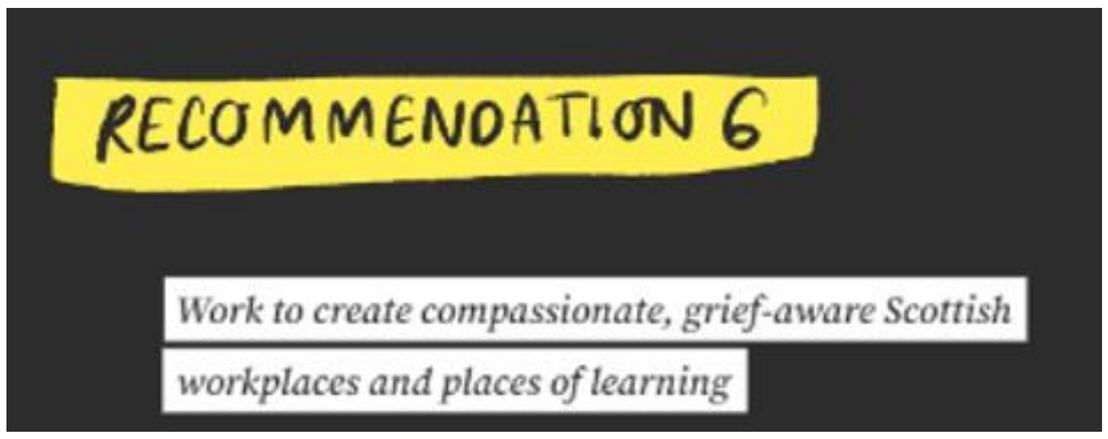
Having the charter mark on your website demonstrates that you are working to make your community a place where people who are bereaved feel supported by the people around them.

Schools/places of education have a key role to play in providing a supportive environment for children, young people and staff who have been bereaved. How a bereaved CYP is supported at school will make a huge difference to their ability to cope both now and in the future.

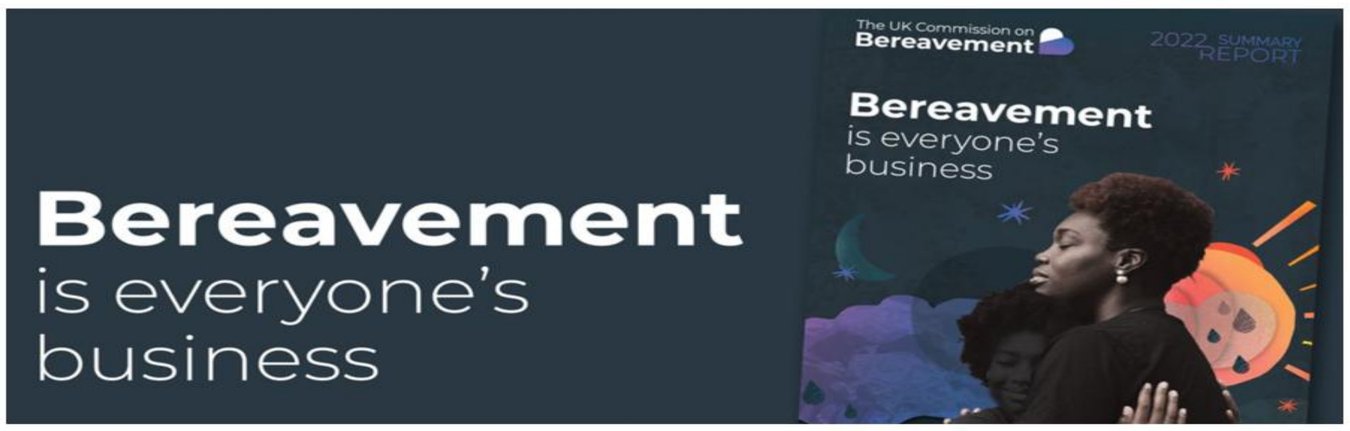








Enable schools and educational institutions to be more supportive of people who are bereaved.



Commission Principle	Scottish Government recommendation
…I can easily find and access the right emotional bereavement support that recognises my needs and circumstances	The National Bereavement Charter must be independently funded for mainstreaming of its work

Commission Principle	Employers' recommendation
… the professionals I am in contact with at all stages through my bereavement are compassionate and helpful	All employers in Scotland must work towards the National Bereavement Charter Mark

Supporting Tayside Schools to achieve the Bereavement Charter Mark for Primary Schools

Dr Katharine Thompson, NHS Tayside
Vikki Nicoll, The Archie Foundation
Dr Deans Buchanan, NHS Tayside
Donna Hastings, St Columba's Hospice Care
Rebecca Patterson, Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care

Rationale

Schools can play a key role in supporting bereaved children and staff.

However, when it comes to bereavement in school communities, staff may feel uncertain about how to help or worry about making things worse.

The bereavement needs of children can often go unmet and many children report having no-one to talk to.

Aims and Approach

A Scotland-wide pilot of the bereavement charter mark is currently underway, supported by the University of Strathclyde. This Tayside project was part of this wider pilot, and, in alignment with National and local Tayside Palliative Care Strategies, aimed to:

- explore the feasibility of supporting schools across Tayside to achieve the BCM.
- support three primary schools, one in each Tayside locality, to achieve the Bereavement Charter Mark.

Dedicated time from a Child Bereavement Support Worker with The Archie Foundation was secured, to work alongside an NHS Tayside Palliative Medicine Consultant (non-funded time)

Three primary schools were selected based on locality and existing links with the Child Bereavement Support Worker, one in each of Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross.

Bereavement Charter Mark Criteria

- Provide Staff and parents with information about bereavement support.
- Ensure the management team knows how to support bereaved staff.
- Develop Bereavement Policy/Guidance for the school.
- Each class undertakes an activity exploring themes relating to death and bereavement annually.
- Staff and students work together to develop and display a School Bereavement Charter.
- Staff receive an education session on understanding childhood grief.



What next?

Work is underway to trial a Cluster Model, whereby bereavement education is shared with several schools in one locality via cluster in-service development days. The Kinross-shire Cluster Primary Schools have been onboarded and are working through the BCM.

We are working with the Bereavement Charter Group to inform the creation of a new Charter Mark for Secondary Schools, and a local High School has committed to being one of the first schools to pilot these new resources.

Background

The Bereavement Charter Mark for Primary Schools is a Public Health Palliative Care initiative aiming to help schools become more grief aware.

Developed by the Bereavement Charter Group and Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief, the Charter Mark provides a framework and resources to guide schools towards becoming more supportive places for bereaved staff and students.

Results

- All three schools successfully completed the required criteria and are progressing their BCM applications.
- The pilot experience was unanimously described as positive.

The schools agreed to share their learning, information, resources and supporting documents to help facilitate implementation in other schools across Tayside.

The project shows that:

- The BCM is achievable within primary schools
- Minimal additional work is required by schools when appropriate support and resources are available
- Collaboration between public sector healthcare, education and third sector organisations can facilitate implementation
- Learning and resources can be shared to support future roll-out

"Our aspiration is for every Tayside school to be confident and equipped to support children, families and staff experiencing bereavement."
Poster Authors

A Partnership approach was key! Thanks for the support of:

www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/about-charter-mark-schools