



Cason's Place

FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS, TEACHERS, AND STAFF

When a death affects your school

A death in your school community touches everyone differently. You don't need to have perfect words. Students mostly need honest information, steady adults, and permission to feel what they feel.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS

Share the news with care

- Confirm the facts and talk with the family about what they want shared.
- Tell staff first, so they are ready for questions.
- Tell students in classrooms or small groups with a short prepared statement, not over the intercom.
- Use clear words like "died." Phrases like "lost" or "passed" can confuse younger kids.
- Set up a quiet space with a counselor for anyone who needs it, and send a note home to parents.

THE GRIEVING STUDENT

Before and after they return

- Reach out to the family before the student comes back.
- Ask the student what, if anything, they want classmates to know.
- Give them a quiet signal or pass to step out, and a safe adult to go to.
- Lighten the workload for a while. Grief makes it hard to focus.
- Check in again in a few weeks and months, not just the first days.

THE REST OF THE CLASS

Make room for questions

- Let students talk, ask questions, and share memories.
- Answer honestly and simply. "I don't know" is okay.
- Give them something to do, like writing cards for the family.
- Watch for close friends, teammates, and students with past losses. They may be hit hardest.

DOWN THE ROAD

Grief comes back around

- Expect hard days around birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and graduation.
- Think ahead about Mother's Day, Father's Day, and family tree projects. Offer choices.
- Grief can look like anger, tiredness, acting out, or falling grades.
- Take care of your staff, too. They are grieving and helping at the same time.

Follow the family's lead

Ask about cultural, tribal, and faith traditions before planning a memorial or using the person's name or photo. Some families do not say the name of the person who died for a period of time. If the death was a suicide, follow your district's crisis plan and safe messaging guidelines, and keep the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline handy.



We're here to help

Cason's Place offers free peer grief support for kids ages 5 through high school and their families, on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month in Pendleton. We can also talk with your staff or students. Call or text **(541) 612-0828** or email **info@casonspplace.org**.