

# The charter for bereaved children

Winston's Wish is the leading childhood bereavement charity and the largest provider of services to bereaved families. This 'charter' is based on our conversations with thousands of children and their families. They have told us what helps them to rebuild their lives and face the future with hope.

**B**

## Bereavement support

Bereaved children need to receive support from their family, from their school and from important people around them.

"It helped to know that other people understood what I was going through."  
Rachel (9)

**E**

## Express feelings and thoughts

Bereaved children should be helped to find appropriate ways to express all their feelings and thoughts associated with grief, such as sadness, anxiety, confusion, anger and guilt.

"It's OK to cry and it's OK to be happy as well."  
James (12)

**R**

## Remember the person who has died

Bereaved children have the right to remember the person who has died for the rest of their lives; sharing special as well as difficult memories.

"I like to show my memory box to people who didn't know my dad." Paul (15)

**E**

## Education and information

Bereaved children need and are entitled to receive answers to their questions and information that clearly explains what has happened, why it has happened and what will be happening.

"Mum died of a heart attack but I don't understand why it attacked her."  
Bethany (4)

**A**

## Appropriate response from schools and colleges

Bereaved children need understanding and support from their teachers and fellow students without having to ask for it.

"My teacher remembers the days that are difficult like Father's Day and his birthday."  
Alex (10)

**V**

## Voice in important decisions

Bereaved children should be given the choice about their involvement in important decisions that have an impact on their lives such as planning the funeral and remembering anniversaries.

"I helped dad choose the flowers for mum's funeral. I felt proud of that."  
Tim (7)

**E**

## Enjoyment

Bereaved children have the right to enjoy their lives even though someone important has died.

"Seeing my son meeting other children in the same situation as him was so helpful."  
John (parent)

**M**

## Meet others

Bereaved children benefit from the opportunity to meet other children who have had similar experiences.

"It was good to be with other people who had an idea of what I was going through."  
Chris (13)

**E**

## Established routines

Bereaved children should, whenever possible, be able to continue activities and interests so that parts of their lives can still feel 'normal'.

"I kept going to swimming club. I thought about my brother while I swam."  
Amy (14)

**N**

## Not to blame

Bereaved children should be helped to understand that they are not responsible, and not to blame, for the death.

"I now understand that it wasn't something I did or didn't do that made her die."  
Neela (16)

**T**

## Tell the story

Bereaved children are helped by being encouraged to tell an accurate and coherent story of what has happened. These stories need to be heard by those important people in their lives.

"My picture shows how the car missed me but knocked dad off his bike."  
Sophie (9)