

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of BASK	Date for next review
13 July 2021	Andy McEwing	July 2025

## BASK Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

At **BASK** we recognise that children will experience many transitions; some of these planned and some unplanned. We are sensitive to the impact of such changes to children's mental and emotional health and wellbeing, and this policy sets out the ways in which we support children going through these transitions.

Some examples of transitions that children may experience are:

- Starting BASK
- Starting school or moving school
- Family breakdowns
- New siblings
- Moving home
- Death of a family pet.
- Death of a family member or close friend

Staff are trained to observe children and to be sensitive to any changes in their behaviour and personality. We respectfully ask that parents inform us of any changes in the home environment that may impact on their child's mental and emotional wellbeing so staff can be aware of the reasons behind any potential changes in the child's behaviour.

### Starting BASK

We recognise that starting BASK may be difficult for some children and their families. We have a settling in policy to support the child and their family.

When a child is ready to move to join BASK, we follow the process set out below and work with the parents to ensure this is a seamless process in which the child is fully supported.

- The child/ren and parent/carer are invited to visit BASK to enable them to feel comfortable in their new surroundings
- Wherever possible groups of friends will be identified to enable these friendships to be kept intact and support the children with the peers they know.
- Children will be 'buddied' with another child who is already familiar with BASK routines etc so that they can help the new child adapt and learn routines

### Family breakdowns

We recognise that when parents separate it can be a difficult situation for all concerned. We have a Separated Families' policy that shows how BASK staff will act in the best interest of the child.

## **Moving home and new siblings**

We recognise that both these events may have an impact on a child. Normally, parents will have advance notice of these changes and we ask parents to let us know about these events so we can support the child to be prepared..

## **Bereavement and Loss**

At **BASK** we recognise that children and their families may experience grief and loss of their family pets, or close family members or friends. We understand that this is not only a difficult time for families but it may also be a confusing time for children, especially younger children, if they have little or no understanding of why their parents are upset and why this person/pet is no longer around.

We aim to support both the child and their family and will adapt the following procedure to suit their individual needs and family preferences:

- We ask that if there is a loss of a family member or close friend, or if family circumstances change, that parents inform BASK as soon as they feel able to. This will enable us to support both the child and the family wherever we can and helps us to understand any potential changes in behaviour of a child who may be grieving.
- The manager will talk with the family to ascertain what support is needed or wanted from BASK. This may be an informal discussion or a meeting away from the child to help calm a potentially upsetting situation
- The child may need extra support or one-to-one care during this difficult time. We will adapt so the child is fully supported by the most appropriate member of staff on duty.
- We will be flexible as possible to adapt to what the child and family may need during this time.

We will adapt the above procedure as appropriate when a family pet dies to help the child to understand their loss and support their emotions through this time.

We also recognise that there may also be rare occasions when BASK team is affected by a death of a child or member of staff. This will be a difficult time for the staff team, children and families. Below are some agencies that may be able to offer further support and counselling if this occurs.

**The Samaritans:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) 116 123

**Priory:** [www.priorygroup.com](http://www.priorygroup.com) 0800 691 1827

**Child Bereavement UK:** [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org) 0800 02 888 40

**Cruse Bereavement Care:** 0844 477 9400 [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)

**British Association of Counselling:** [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk) 01455 883 300

**Stillbirth and Neonatal Death (SANDS):** [www.uk-sands.org](http://www.uk-sands.org) 020 7436 5881