



Little Heaton C E Primary School

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Tuesday 19th September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to all families today with the very sad news that one of our members of staff, Miss Dignam, who worked as a TA in last year's reception class, passed away this morning following an illness. She had been off school for several months previously. News like this is obviously most sad and tragic for the family but it is also news that is likely to affect our children.

Please can you share this sad news with your children if you feel that this is appropriate. We have sought advice from the Local Authority's Critical Incident Team who shared that it is helpful for children to be told the basic facts about what has happened, by using simple words that they will understand.

The sad news will be shared with Year 1 children, who were in the class supported by Miss Dignam, this afternoon. They will be reassured that this is a rare thing to happen to a member of staff, it is very sad and that it has happened because she was very poorly. We will talk about the range of different emotions that people might be feeling and we will explain to all children that they may talk to any adult in school at any time about any worries or sad feelings they may have about this news. It is likely that some of our children will feel ok and will not need further time to talk.

Those children who knew Miss Dignam best are likely to feel a range of different emotions about this sad news. Some may feel very sad, some may feel worried and some may want to talk about how they feel. However, it is also likely that some children will feel ok and will not need further time to talk. All of these feelings and reactions are completely normal and it may help them to be reassured that these feelings are normal. They should also be reassured that most people die when they are old and that it is very unusual for someone younger to become ill and die. If any of your children are feeling particularly sad, it may help them to know that these sad feelings will pass over time. Please let us know if you are worried about your children's reactions.

When difficult things like this happen, we know it is also helpful for children to continue to have routine and normality to their days so please try to continue with your normal daily routines at home as much as possible.

Thank you as always for your continued support and care for our community.

Mrs Siân Hamer

Headteacher



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