



Supporting Pupils with the news of The Queen passing away



The death of Queen Elizabeth II will touch everyone as the country enters a period of mourning. Many young children across the county will see and hear news of the royal death but may not properly understand what it all means.

Children may likely be curious and will ask lots of questions about the Queen and death itself. Children who have experienced their own bereavement may also struggle with this period of mourning.

Here are some tips to support talking to your children about the Queen's death:

- * Use clear, age-appropriate language - don't say the queen has 'gone to sleep', 'passed away' or 'lost', this can be confusing to children who often take things literally. If she's gone to sleep, why can't we wake her up? If she's lost, why can't we find her?
- * Explain what death is using concepts they understand. Try this: When someone dies, their body has stopped working and they can't be brought back to life. They are no longer able to do the things they could when they were alive, such as move or talk. When someone dies, their heart stops beating, they stop breathing, their brain stops thinking. Sometimes it helps to start by talking about the concept of being alive.
- * Reassure your child. Make sure you deal with any worries about people around them dying. If you can, offer them reassurance but without making impossible promises. Saying things like "we are healthy and we're going to do all we can to keep that way because I want to do X in the future" Or if someone is seriously ill, you can still offer reassurance but being honest is important. An explanation such as "you know Dad is very ill at the moment and has an illness called X. The doctors are giving Dad special medicine and working very hard to make him better."
- * Be honest Without clear information children tend to fill the gaps to try and make sense of what is happening. There will also be lots of information available to them elsewhere which they may start searching for- on TV, online, overhearing conversations and playground talk. This can mean that children imagine all sorts of things about a death, which are often worse than the reality.
- * Encourage questions and honest answers. Their questions could come all at once or they may come back to you several hours or days later. Try to answer them honestly and if you don't know the answer, let them know you will try to find out for them. By reassuring them that questions are ok, and you'll do your best to answer it, they are learning to trust the responses you give.
- * Let them know their feelings are normal. Anger, sadness, guilt, worry, confusion and more - are all normal reactions to hearing that someone has died. They may not feel upset as they didn't really have a connection to The Queen, and that's ok. However, if they do feel upset, it's important not to also honour their reaction and sadness, and allow them to explore their feelings.
- * Don't be afraid of showing your own emotions. Children will look to adults around them to make sense of grief and try to understand how should react. It's ok to explore feelings with children and give them permission to explore their feelings with you. For example, if they see you upset you could say 'I'm sad because I am sad that The Queen has died' or 'I'm crying because The Queen's death has made me think about when your Granny died'.

Where to get support?

[Supporting children following the death of the Queen | Winston's Wish \(winstonswish.org\)](#)



[Supporting children following the death of the Queen](#)

Help to answer questions from children about the Queen's death and supporting grieving young people affected by the news.

www.winstonswish.org

If you know a child who has been bereaved or is impacted by The Queen's death, Winston's Wish provides support for grieving children, young people (up to 25) and adults supporting them. Call them on Freephone Helpline on 08088 020 021 (open 8am-8pm, Monday to Friday) or email ask@winstonswish.org. If you need urgent support, the Winston's Wish Crisis Messenger is available 24/7 for free, confidential support in a crisis. Text WW to 85258.

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

Child Bereavement UK helps families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. We support children and young people (up to the age of 25) when someone important to them has died or is not expected to live, and parents and the wider family when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying.

We offer free, confidential bereavement support for individuals, couples, children, young people, and families, by telephone, video or instant messenger, wherever you live in the UK. We also offer face-to-face support from a number of locations.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13865002>

If you are upset by the news, it's important to know that you are not the only one and it's OK to have those feelings.

You can rely on Newsround to tell you the important facts about a story - but some things you hear might be scary or make you feel worried.

This section gives you some tips about what to do if you are feeling sad about what you've seen, heard or read.