

19 May 2019

Dear Parent and Caregivers,

As you may be aware, there has been a bereavement in our community. Ian Morrison, husband of Suzanne and father of Corey in Year 3 passed away on Saturday, 18th May. Our thoughts and condolences are with the family and Ian's friends and colleagues.

Parents can send messages they wish to give to the family or offers of practical support through the school and we will share this with them.

The knowledge that one of their classmate's fathers has passed may trigger questions and concerns for some children. They may want to talk about what they have heard and it's important that we respond in a developmentally appropriate and respectful way. Children understand and respond to tragedies in different ways depending on experiences, temperament and development. In general children's understanding of death and the grieving process are different to adults.

If children bring up concerns with staff, staff will quietly acknowledge their concerns and emotions and help them return to their routine. Research highlights the value of maintaining regular routines during difficult times. We will report any concerns they share to the family.

General advice for supporting children when there is a bereavement is:

- Keep adult conversations away from children. Please be mindful of what you say especially when on the school grounds and in public.
- Keep your own emotional responses away from children.
- Respond to what your children say in a calm, supportive manner. Only share what they need to know at a level they will understand for example, "Yes, it is really sad that Corey's father has passed."
- Recognising that children's understanding of death is different – simply sharing and reassuring may be enough, if you are still concerned about their response please speak to their teacher or GP.

If you have any questions or needs, please contact us by calling the school office.

We know that the Methven community joins us in our concern, support and sympathy for Ian's family and friends. We also greatly appreciate your cooperation and assistance.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Chris Murphy".

Chris Murphy
Principal