

The Rights of a Student who is Grieving

I have the right to grieve in my own time, in my own way.

As I grow, my needs and wants may change.

I have the right to collaborate and design my grief support plan with school staff that understands.

This would include me having a school staff support person identified in my grief plan and a safe place to go in school when needed.

I have the right to share or not share about my grief.

I have the right to ask what I share be held in confidence unless I say otherwise.

I have the right to ask for support and not to be identified by my loss.

I will be viewed as a student and not be identified solely by my grief. I am more than my grief.

I have the right to have my school community respect my need to express my grief.

My grief expressions may come at various times throughout the school day, and I may express myself in different ways as long as it does not hurt myself or others.

I have the right to give and get support with other students at my school.

It is important for me to have an opportunity to connect with other students including others who are grieving.

I have the right to flexibility with deadlines to help me stay on track with my academic performance.

My grief may necessitate adjustments to expectations with due dates.

I have the right to choose my level of participation in events that may affect my grief.

I have permission to not attend or participate in special events, activities, or conversations that make me uncomfortable.

The Rights of the Student who is Grieving Agreement between the Student and the School Community

Student	School Community
<p>I have the right to grieve in my own time, in my own way. As I grow, my needs and wants may change.</p>	<p>School personnel shall honor the process of grieving, knowing that each student grieves on a different timeline and in their own way.</p>
<p>I have the right to collaborate and design my grief support plan with school staff that understands. This would include me having a school staff support person identified in my grief plan and a safe place to go in school when needed.</p>	<p>School personnel shall be selected based on the request and needs of the grieving student. A designated space will be established for the grieving student to feel secure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parameters will be agreed upon per the Individual Student Bereavement Plan [ISBP] and preexisting support plan. • Guidelines will be established. • This plan shall be reevaluated as needed. • Support secondary losses through referrals to additional local resources to meet additional family needs.
<p>I have the right to share or not share about my grief. I have the right to ask what I share be held in confidence unless I say otherwise.</p>	<p>This would include having access to grief-informed staff to support the grieving student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is in alignment with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) standards and respects the student’s confidentiality rights. • To support the student’s autonomy, the school community will refrain from advice giving. Choices or options should be offered to the student. Follow the lead of the student and family.
<p>I have the right to ask for support and to not be identified by my loss. I will be viewed as a student and not be identified solely by my grief. I am more than my grief.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student will be viewed as a whole person and not be identified solely by their death experience. • The student will have input regarding who, when, and what others know about the details of the grief.



I have the right to grieve in my own time, in my own way.

Grieving Student	School Community
<p>I have the right to have my school community respect my need to express my grief. My grief expressions may come at various times throughout the school day, and I may express myself in different ways as long as it does not hurt myself or others.</p>	<p>This would include recognizing and respecting the student’s unique expressions of grief while being attentive to signs of behavior(s) that might be harmful and recommending professional support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief expressions are not universal and can come unexpectedly. They can appear as silence, tears, sadness, laughter, need for privacy, or unexpected strong emotions. • Support the student by providing information about and assist with identifying healthy coping skills.
<p>I have the right to give and get support with other students at my school. It is important for me to have an opportunity to connect with other students, including those who are grieving.</p>	<p>Taking into consideration the experience of the student who is grieving, options will be offered to complete missed or pending assignments in accordance with academic requirements or proof of mastery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not a free pass. Students do not need to have all assignments removed. A student may need some accommodation to complete tasks at times during their grief journey. • This can be managed in the Individual Student Bereavement Plan or through a 504 plan. • This plan shall be reevaluated as needed.
<p>I have the right to flexibility with deadlines to help me stay on track with my academic performance.</p> <p>My grief may necessitate adjustments to expectations with due dates.</p>	<p>Taking into consideration the experience of the student who is grieving, options will be offered to complete missed or pending assignments in accordance with academic requirements or proof of mastery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not a free pass. Students do not need to have all assignments removed. A grieving student may need some accommodation to complete tasks in the weightier moments of their grief journey. • This can be managed in the Individual Student Bereavement Plan [IBSP] or through 504. • This plan shall be reevaluated as needed.
<p>I have the right to choose my level of participation in events that may affect my grief. I have permission to not attend or participate in special events, activities, or conversations that make me uncomfortable.</p>	<p>Taking into consideration the student’s loss, any required special events shall be considered optional for a student who is grieving, and exemptions will be made when they request an absence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language shall be considered when developing event titles when appropriate based on situational needs. [Events such as Doughnuts with Dad, Parents Night, Mommy, and me tea.] • Provide professional development on inclusive language for grieving students. Language shall be considered when addressing the school community.

This document is part of NACG Grieffalk : A Toolkit for Supporting Students who are Grieving. Please visit www.childrengrieve for other tools to support your work with students who are grieving.

Thank you to the following NACG members who contributed to this resource: (Listed alphabetically by last name.)

Sara Asch, The Center for Grieving Children, Portland, ME
Nicole Barnes, LICSW, Park Nicollet Growing Through Grief, St. Louis Park, MN
Diane Carlson LMSW, CBC, Hospice & Palliative Care Foundation, Spartanburg, SC
Liz Carson, Kate's Club, Atlanta, GA
Katie Wilberding Cross, LCSW, Judi's House, Denver, CO
Timothy Dearhamer, LCSW, The Tristesse Grief Center, Tulsa, OK
Allyson England Drake, M.Ed, CT, Full Circle Grief Center, Richmond, VA
Michelle Gonzalez, MS, Uplift Center for Grieving Children, Philadelphia, PA
Michelle Halm, MA, M.Ed., CT, Pillars Community Health, La Grange, IL
Kelsey Hoeper, LPC, NCC, CT, Willow House, Bannockburn, IL
David C. Joswick, BS, MS Executive Dir. New Hope for Kids, Maitland, FL
Laura Moore, EdD, CHES, CCLS, The Harbor Lights Foundation, Rye, NY
Lisa Moreno, M.Ed., M.A., LPC, RDT, CSC, NCC, Children's Bereavement Center Rio Grande Valley, Harlingen, TX
Jessi Morgan, LMSW, Communities In Schools of the Permian Basin, Midland, TX
Camille Gerace Nitschky, Executive Director, Children's Grief Center GLBR, Midland, MI
Buffy Peters, Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss, Des Moines, IA
Jessica Porte, The Elizabeth Hospice, Escondido, CA
Therese Ross, M.S., Executive Director, Rick's Place, Wilbraham, MA
Rachel Saffer, LCSW-S, The Austin Center for Grief and Loss, Austin, TX
Elizabeth M. Sergeant M.Ed, M.A., Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Charlotte, NC
Colleen Shannon, LICSW, The Children's Room, Center for Grieving Children and Teens, Arlington, MA
Shawn T. Sledzianowski, NCC, LPC, CT, Highmark Caring Place, Warrendale, PA
Mandi Zucker, LSW, CT, Inner Harbor, Westfield, NJ

NACG Staff Team:

Adam Carter, PhD, LCPC, NCC, CCMHC, ACS, TF, National Clinical Director
Deirdra Flavin, MSc, CFRE, National Marketing & Development Director
Vicki Jay, Chief Executive Officer
Megan Lopez, MSW, LMSW, National Program Director

This toolkit was created with philanthropic investment from our partner the [New York Life Foundation](http://www.NewYorkLifeFoundation.org).



NEW YORK LIFE
FOUNDATION

The Rights of a Student who is Grieving has been endorsed by the Coalition to Support Grieving Students. The coalition is a unique collaboration of the leading professional organizations representing classroom teachers, principals, assistant principals, superintendents, school board members, and central office staff, student support personnel, and other school professionals who have come together with a common conviction: grieving students need the support and care of the school community.

The Coalition’s purpose is to create and share a set of industry–endorsed resources that will empower school communities across America in the ongoing support of their grieving students and we are proud to have this resource endorsed by this group.



Lead Founding Members



Founding Members

