

25<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parents / Carers,

Over the weekend school received the very sad news that our Assistant Headteacher Mr James died on Saturday. Mr James had terminal cancer, but his health deteriorated very rapidly and his death has come sooner than expected and has brought great sadness to everyone who knew him.

I have been liaising with Just 'B' Bereavement Support, a specialist bereavement service based in Harrogate, together, we have discussed how as a school we can best support each other at this time.

Today, we have told the school's staff members the sad news, with consent from the family. This message will also be shared with the children in school by myself or their class teacher tomorrow.

As a staff team we will ensure that all children are given a space to ask questions and we will answer them as honestly as we can with the information we have. We will also ensure there is a space for feelings to be explored. I am aware that this may well bring up lots of emotions for some of the children, including remembering their own experiences of bereavement and loss.

We will ensure that there are named staff members within school that the children can speak to should they need some additional support or reassurance whilst they are in school. We would recommend that you inform your child what has happened at home this evening, so they have the 1:1 support from yourselves if needed. You may have questions as to how best to deliver this news and support your child with this information. I have attached a copy of the Just 'B's bereavement booklet on supporting children who are grieving. If you need any additional advice please do contact Just 'B' via 01423 856790.

A possible script for you to share this news with your child/ren may be:

*'I have received an email from school regarding Mr James. I would like to sit with you and talk about it for a few minutes. School heard from Mr James' wife that Mr James died at the weekend. (Ask if the children understand what it means when people die).*

*When someone dies, their body stops working, and this means that they don't need anything to eat or to drink and they can't feel anything. Because their body has stopped working, they can't come back to life, even though we may really want them to.*

*School are going to share this news with everybody on Tuesday. All the teachers, staff and parents have been told. This news has made some people feel very sad and it might make you feel sad too.*

*If you want to send a card or draw a picture to tell his family that you are thinking about them, we can do this together. If you want to talk or ask questions about this, you can always speak to me or your teacher when you are back at school'.*

T. 01423 864583 E. [admin@forest-school.org.uk](mailto:admin@forest-school.org.uk)

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**The Forest School**  
Every Child, Every Chance

If you or your child would like some additional support, please note you are welcome to refer them for one to one bereavement support through Just 'B'. For a child referral, please ring 01423 856790 or for an adult referral please ring 01423 814480.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 01423 864583 or by Email at [admin@forest-school.org.uk](mailto:admin@forest-school.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Shona Crichton  
Principal

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