Grief Response Guide (One Page)

Supporting Students After the Death of a Loved One
Why This Matters: Childhood bereavement affects academic performance, behavior, and emotional well-being. Students often struggle silently. Your presence and consistency can make a profound difference.
Grief can look like:
• Difficulty concentrating or remembering instructions
• Irritability, emotional outbursts, or withdrawal
• Fatigue, headaches, or frequent nurse visits
• Declining grades or missing assignments
• Increased absences or tardiness
These are grief responses—not misbehavior.

What You Can Do
1. Acknowledge the Loss
Simple, caring statements help students feel seen:
• "I'm glad you're here today."
• "I'm thinking of you."
Avoid clichés ("They're in a better place") unless aligned with family beliefs.
2. Offer Predictability and Flexibility
• Maintain routines
• Allow extra time for assignments
• Provide quiet breaks when needed
3. Create a Supportive Classroom Environment

- Seat the student near supportive peers
- Offer alternative activities during triggering lessons (e.g., family tree projects)
- Provide choices to increase a sense of control

4. Communicate with the School Counselor

Share observations such as:

- Changes in mood
- Academic decline
- Social withdrawal
- Concerns about safety

We'll coordinate support and keep you informed.

When to Seek Additional Help

Contact the counselor immediately if you notice:

- Persistent hopelessness
- Self-harm statements
- Intense guilt or avoidance
- Extreme behavioral changes