The ATLAS Programme for schools

Supporting children to navigate their way through bereavement
For many children and young people, the death of a parent, sibling, friend or relative can be painful and incredibly difficult to comprehend.

Young people may find it difficult to articulate their feelings following the loss of a loved one and studies show that the death of a family member or close friend may be a factor in:

- reduced academic achievement
- increased risk of offending behaviour
- increased incidence of teenage pregnancy
- increased risk of developing psychological distress including anxiety and depression

Children often respond to loss differently from adults. A strong support network, particularly when a bereavement has impacted the whole family, provides a bereaved young person with more opportunities to process their grief in age-appropriate ways.

With children spending up to six hours a day in school, teachers and other staff working in the school environment are highly likely to be considered a key source of support and comfort to pupils affected by bereavement.

In 2017, it is estimated that over 12,000 11-16 year old pupils in Wolverhampton were affected by a significant bereavement.

A 2011 study found that of 1000 pupils interviewed, 44% said they would confide in their teacher before their parents, friends and grandparents.

By the age of 16, almost 8 out of 10 young people will have experienced the death of a friend or close relative.
As children develop, they create an internalised map of how the world works. When they experience either a sudden or anticipated bereavement, this challenges their view of the world. Over time, they will need to construct a new map to help them make sense of what has happened and to better understand the world around them.

The Atlas programme aims to equip all staff working within schools with the knowledge, skills and confidence to help pupils navigate their way through their journey of bereavement. Whilst the nature and progress of this journey will differ for each individual, there are many ways in which those in schools can support the grieving process.

Atlas is a free programme available to those working within Secondary Schools in the Wolverhampton area, empowering staff with:

• **Knowledge** – about how bereavement can impact the lives of children and young people

• **Skills** – to support, listen and talk to children through bereavement in effective ways

• **Confidence** – to move forward and manage situations with confidence and pride

The programme can be tailored to suit school and staffing needs and includes:

• Skills & Needs-based audits
• Workshops for staff – ranging from 2-hour sessions to whole day events
• Study days – facilitated at your school or in our dedicated Learning & Development Centre
• One-to-One sessions – at times to suit you

Atlas includes free workshops and study days for staff

In addition, the programme can also provide focused support to develop a whole school approach integrating effective bereavement-related actions, underpinned by research, into existing policy, procedure and practice.
During 2017/18, the Atlas programme is funded by a generous donation from the Connie and Albert Taylor Trust.

**Get involved**
To register your interest in joining the Atlas Programme please email atlas@compton-hospice.org.uk or call 01902 774555

Atlas also offers workshops on ‘Supporting Young People After A Bereavement’ to Universities who provide teacher education programmes