

ST AMBROSE BARLOW

ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

LOVE • LEARN • LEAD



REMEMBERING LILY

Friday 20th March 2026

Lily Procter joined our school in September 2024, a shiny new Year 7 straight from Grosvenor Road Primary School. In the 18 months she was with us she made a huge impression: larger-than-life, funny, involved in all sorts of clubs and activities, known by nearly everyone.

Lily was someone who lived wholeheartedly as the person she was, which meant sharing her feelings, showing great affection and being honest about her frustrations and challenges. She took part in concerts, in cheerleading, in the piece of original drama our pupils wrote for Playful Cities, in the choir, boxing and other sports. She was very creative and expressive, only last week winning a prize for Valentine-themed poetry. Her fellow pupils remember her as a good friend, someone who would stick up for you, pay you a compliment and listen to your thoughts and feelings.

Since we learnt of her passing earlier this week, just a few weeks short of her 13th birthday, our pupils and staff have remembered her, celebrated her life and begun the long process of mourning a pupil and friend. The outpouring of love for her has been staggering. Our chapel is full of tributes, flowers, gifts and cards from all age groups and from families and parents too. The dignity and respect shown by pupils in the face of something that incomprehensible and sad has

been so uplifting. We will continue to ensure that the chapel is available for those who wish to pay their respects over the next two weeks.

Yesterday, on the Feast of St. Joseph (a saint who is often depicted carrying a lily stem) Lily's family joined staff in the chapel to remember and to mourn. They felt that the generous demonstration of love and care for Lily from the school community was very inspiring and provided some comfort in their grief.

Today we concluded the week with a short service in Lily's memory, attended by the whole school during form time. This is, for many people, only the start of a long and difficult process of coming to terms with the loss of a loved one. As well as support from staff in school we have a team from Salford i-Thrive who will be joining us over the next few weeks to give pupils the chance to do just that. In addition, we will be organising a more formal and permanent memorial to Lily and raising money in her name. Again, I encourage you that if you feel your child is struggling because of what has happened, please get in touch with their form tutor or head of year and we will put support in place.

Lily absolutely represented our school mission. She was a both loved and someone who offered

love and friendship to others; she was engaged in learning in all sorts of ways, keen to demonstrate it and is an inspiration to us to learn from her example. Finally, her sudden passing reminds us of the need to work at leading our fragile and imperfect lives with purpose for the good of others, just as she did. She was someone who showed you could make a difference with the smallest of actions.

My thanks to the many parents and carers who have been in touch to express their sadness and the pupils who have brought in mementos in tribute to her. Her loss is an incalculable one for her parents, her Nan and her family and friends more widely - it has brought us even closer as a school community in our shared grief.

We pray that Lily will find rest and peace; that those closest to her will be comforted by the arms of those around them; and that all of us give thanks for the gift of life that was Lily and that we can be still with our feelings knowing that God is with us and we are held by a Love that never lets go.

On behalf of staff, pupils and governors,

Ben Davis,
Headteacher

Supporting Young People Through Grief and Bereavement

In school we run a group for young people who have experienced the loss of a parent or carer. We also keep a close eye on pupils who may be especially affected by loss and work with charities and agencies who specialise in this. The following short points are the main messages we give to staff about how to help young people at a time like this – you may find them useful. This can be summed up as:

Love: listen without judgment, accept and validate the young person's feelings.

Learn: encourage them to see this as a process that is normal and will help them to understand themselves and the situation.

Lead: they are in charge of their reactions, allow them to consider what they feel is most appropriate and remind them that keeping on following their normal routine is helpful and healthy.

Understanding Grief in young People

- Grief can look different in young people
- Shock, anger, withdrawal, or humour are all normal reactions
- Children and young people may move in and out of grief quickly
- There is no "right" way to grieve

How Staff Can Support?

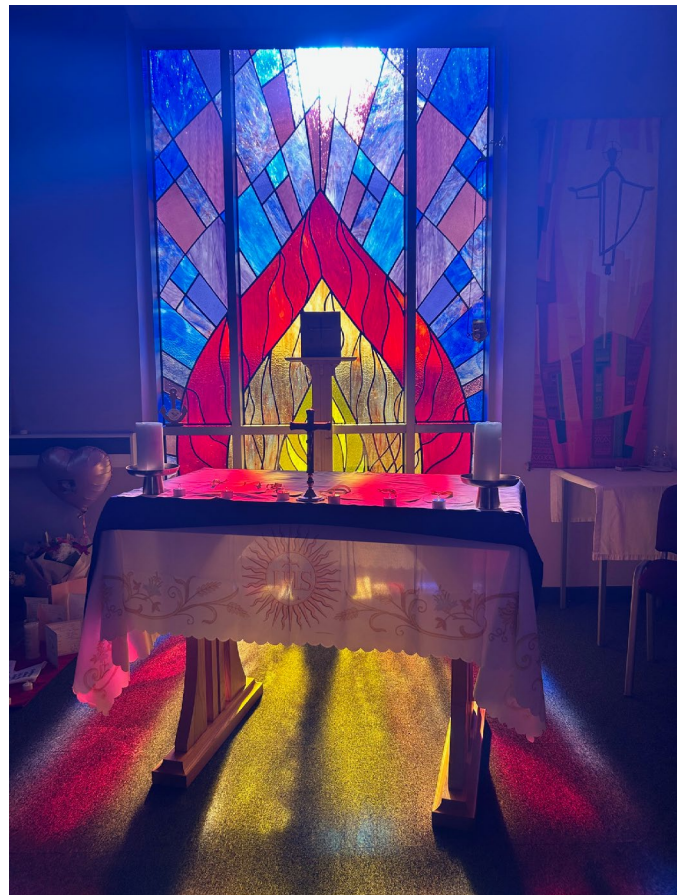
- Acknowledge the loss - don't ignore it
- Listen more than you speak - be present
- Use simple, honest language
- Maintain routine with flexibility
- Avoid cliches e.g. "at least they are in a better place"
- Don't shut conversations down

Having difficult conversations

- Use simple, clear language
- Acknowledge feelings; "I'm really sorry this has happened"
- Allow Silence - they may not want to talk
- Reassure them that support is available
- There may be a delayed reaction in some children – it may take time to process
- Support will still be there

Take a Trauma-Informed Approach

- Prioritise safety, trust and consistency
- Behaviour is a form of communication, people sometimes simply 'act out' what they are feeling in anger, embarrassment or fear of being judged
- Be calm and supportive



Resources

The NHS

'**Children and bereavement**' – includes lots of resources for parents and children, including helplines and tips for creating a memory box

Child Bereavement UK

Videos about:

Telling a child that someone has died (YouTube, 3 minutes)

Parenting bereaved children (YouTube, 7 minutes)

Cruse Bereavement Care

Children and young people's emotional and physical responses to grief

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

On My Mind is a resource for children to learn how to support their own mental health and wellbeing. It stresses the importance of self-care

National Autistic Society

'**Bereavement – a guide for parents and carers**'

