

# Piloting a Bereavement Charter Mark for Primary Schools in Scotland

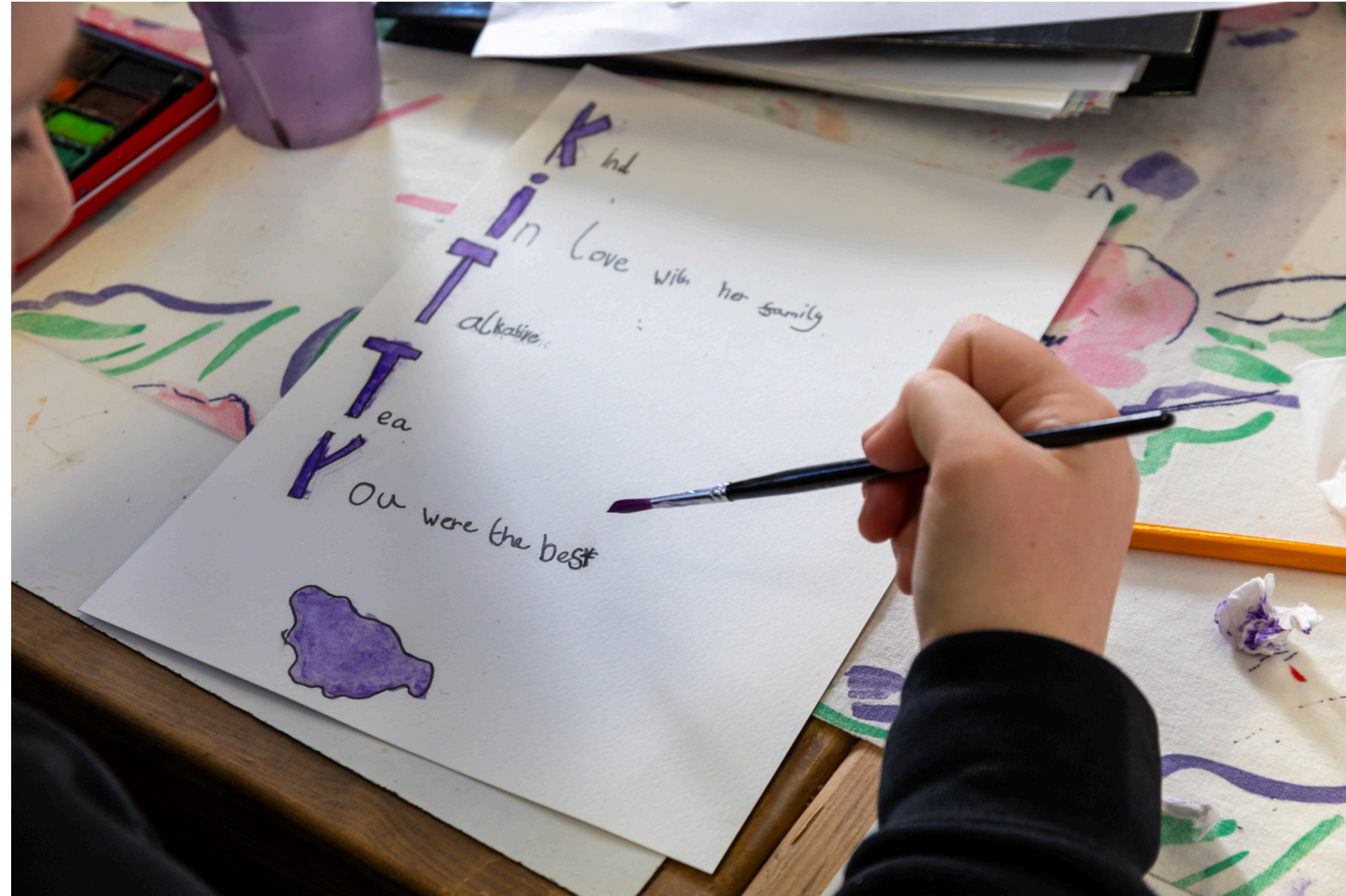
Donna Hastings, St Columba's Hospice Care  
Rebecca Patterson, Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care  
Sally Paul, University of Strathclyde



**Schools can play a key role in supporting bereaved children and staff.**

However, when it comes to bereavement in school communities, **staff may feel uncertain** about how to help or **worry about making things worse.**

The **bereavement needs** of children **can often go unmet** and many children report having no-one to talk to.



**The bereavement charter mark for primary schools aims to help schools become more grief aware.**

By working through the suggested criteria, **a school community can become a more supportive place** for staff and students.

Do 4 from the following 6 criteria to achieve the Bereavement Charter Mark:

- Provide Staff and parents with information about bereavement support.
- Ensure the management team knows how to support bereaved staff.
- Develop Bereavement Policy/Guidance for the school
- Each class undertakes an activity exploring themes relating to death and bereavement annually.
- Staff and students work together to develop and display a School Bereavement Charter.
- Staff receive an education session on understanding childhood grief.

**A small pilot study of the bereavement charter mark is currently underway.**

We aim to understand whether schools find the charter mark process a useful tool, how it can be improved, and what impact the charter mark has in participating schools.

Participating schools so far include St Frances Xavier RC Primary School in Falkirk, Victoria Primary School in Edinburgh, Whitdale Primary School in Whitburn and St Joseph's Primary School in East Renfrewshire. We aim to recruit 10 schools to participate in this pilot. **We welcome new schools so please get in touch if you'd like to be involved.**

**A web page brings together lesson plans, activities, good practice guidance and training** to support schools achieve the charter mark:

[www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/about-charter-mark-schools](http://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/about-charter-mark-schools)

I feel that the work done on the website for the charter mark is excellent and made clear what was expected of us..

...I honestly feel you have found the right balance between making the mark achievable and making it meaningful for schools, and therefore impactful for staff, pupils and families.

Teacher



Contact email:  
[dhastings@stcolumbashospice.org.uk](mailto:dhastings@stcolumbashospice.org.uk)