



## Advice for schools following the death of Queen Elizabeth II

In the sadness following the death of our late Queen, schools may be unsure how best to mark the occasion, celebrate her service to the nation and the Commonwealth, and support their communities.

The suggestions below are intended to help you and colleagues navigate this sensitive time and provide a few starting points in considering your school's approach. While there are some conventions and expectations, schools' private commemorations are not governed by regulations. Schools will act as they see fit and we hope the guidelines below can assist you in this.

Behind all of these suggestions are the principles that schools should respond calmly, with dignity and sensitivity.

### ***Immediate actions***

- Cancel all scheduled social media outputs from both school and associated social media accounts. Review any recently posted content (including on the school website) which might seem overly celebratory in nature.
- Replace all social media profile pictures/banners with suitably subdued images (e.g., logos on a black background, or greyscale logos) or plain black images.
- Post a message of condolence on school websites and social media channels. You may wish to use some variant of:

*"The school, our pupils, staff and parents, are deeply saddened by the passing of Her Majesty the Queen. Our thoughts are with all members of the Royal Family at this time of sorrow. Her Majesty embodied many virtues, and will always be remembered for her selfless service, her warmth, and her gentle strength in leading the nation over seven decades. Her life was an example to us all and she was a constant source of unity and reassurance."*

- Lower all Union Jack flags and national flags to 'half-mast.' Other flags should be removed or replaced with a national flag or Union Jack. The Government's flag-flying guidance can be found [here](#).

### ***Period of mourning***

We expect a period of national mourning lasting approximately 10 days, including the day of the State funeral. Government advice will be updated throughout this period, and schools should check Government communications, or contact ISC or membership Associations for updates.

- Throughout the period of mourning, consider all public statements and social media content. If not urgent or necessary, consider deferring these – particularly if celebratory.
- At the same time, feel free to post tributes, community memories and other memorials.
- Consider cancelling or delaying media appearances not related to commemoration. In any media appearances, ensure subdued dress and tone.
- Physical and digital books of condolence may be appropriate for pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community. After the funeral, these – or cards written by pupils – could be sent to the King & Queen.
- Consider appropriate pastoral support the school community and/or individuals may need. Schools follow their own practices with regard to prayers, religious services, and assemblies. You may also want to consider how they can involve the wider community and parents in their commemorations.
- The Department for Education suggests that charities such as [Minded](#) can help children dealing with death and loss.
- Refer to guidance from national associations on the continuation of fixtures and competitions. Rearrange events and inter-school competitions as appropriate.

### ***Day of national mourning and funeral***

We expect further guidance from the Government on the arrangements for the National Day of Mourning and State funeral.

Wait for government guidance, and for confirmation of the date of the funeral, before making arrangements for that day. On other days the Department for Education has confirmed that:

*“Whilst normal attendance is expected, headteachers continue to have the power to authorise leaves of absence for pupils in exceptional circumstances. Any requests for leave of absence should be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account individual circumstances.”*

It is likely that a 2-minute silence will be held on the day of the funeral – this should be observed if schools are in session on that day.

### ***Further details***

We expect guidance to be published over the coming days and to develop. Contact Associations, or ISC, with any queries or for updates.