

CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

Purpose

Our plan exists to provide direction, support, coordination and communication to the students, staff, and community following a sudden death or other tragic event involving a student or staff member of our district. It must be remembered that each crisis is different and must be treated accordingly. The plan is to be regarded as a guideline for action.

Synopsis of Crisis Response Plan

1. By having a crisis response plan, the school is prepared to assist the student body, staff, and community.
2. A Crisis Response Team, directed by the school counselor, will implement the plan.
3. School will be as normal as possible. No large group assemblies will be called.
4. Staff members will be kept informed, and will be asked to be honest and accurate with students.
5. Resource people will be called upon to meet individuals or small groups.

Response Procedures

1. Following the crisis event, information funneled by the administration to the Crisis Response Team. The administration and Crisis Team gathers as much information as possible by speaking with the authorities, i.e. police, family, clergy, and friends. In the event of an attempted suicide or other crisis that did not result in death, a crisis team meeting will be called to discuss concerns and staff notification.
2. As soon as information is gathered, a statement that contains as many facts as available is prepared. The statement will be utilized in a calling tree of all staff members and may be used in communicating with students and the community. Any questions from, or communications with, the media will be handled by the superintendent.
3. The Crisis Response Team will meet to plan any needed activities and services to the students, staff, and community. Possible tasks of the team meeting could be:
 - a. Counselors or crisis team members from other schools may be asked to participate.
 - b. Opening the school after hours or during the weekend may be necessary for students and parents to talk to crisis team members or counselors.
 - c. Classroom activities and discussions may be organized to assist students dealing with grief.
 - d. Assisting staff members with grief reaction may include time to discuss the crisis of the hiring of substitutes.
 - e. Preparing a statement to be read to students by staff members at the beginning of first period, not over the intercom.

Reviewed _____ Revised _____

- f. Taking care of personal property owned by the deceased.
 - g. Organizing phone calls to parents of students who are particularly upset or at risk.
 - h. A letter from the school to be sent home notifying parents of the crisis events with information regarding ways to assist their children.
 - i. The availability of handouts to parents and teachers to deal with grief.
 - j. Assess the impact of the crisis on district students and staff members as well as neighboring districts. If necessary, communication with other districts affected by the tragedy will be made.
 - k. A Crisis Response Center will be identified where students, staff, or parents can talk to counselors or Crisis Team Members.
4. A staff meeting will be held thirty minutes prior to the beginning of the school day. A statement will be read by all teachers in all first hour classes, not over the intercom. No school assemblies will be held. In the event the crisis occurs during the school day, the staff will be informed by Crisis Team Members and asked to read a prepared statement before their classes that day. All members of the building staff need to be in attendance, including the school secretary, custodians, cooks, and aides.

Staff Crisis Meeting Agenda

- a. Allow staff members to express their reaction to the crisis.
- b. Provide a prepared statement for staff members.
- c. Explain how to relate accurate information to students.
- d. Generate a list of at-risk students.
- e. Schedule the day's events.
- f. Impress upon staff members the importance of expressing feelings.
- g. Provide handouts on grief reaction and ways to assist students.

At the end of the day, a staff meeting will be called by the Crisis Team Leader. The purpose of the meeting will be to assess students at risk and review student needs that will impact the next day's schedule. Staff members unable to attend the meeting will need to contact the team leader.

5. No student will be allowed to leave school during the school day unless accompanied by a parent. In extreme cases, a student may not be able to cope with the tragedy within the school setting.
6. Throughout the day, crisis counselors will contact parents of at-risk students as deemed necessary or appropriate.
7. The Crisis Team will meet at the end of the first day to assess student needs for the following day. The team will also evaluate the implementation of the Crisis Response Team.
8. Students and staff members may be given directions about what is appropriate as a memorial. There is a fine line between dramatizing a death, and doing something that allows students and staff members to express a sense of loss, channeling their

feelings. It is important to remember the emotional well-being of the survivors. To keep control of the grief, there are several things that must not be done.

- a. Do not fly the school flag at half-staff.
- b. Do not have a moment of silence in an all-school assembly or at the beginning of the day.
- c. Do not have a memorial service at school during school hours.
- d. Do not have an "In Memorial" page in the school yearbook or "InNMemorial of..." on property within the building.

These things tend to glorify the death. We need to ask, "Will this alleviate the pain?" or "Will this compound the pain?"

Suggested memorials include:

- a. Outdoor plantings.
- b. Park benches.
- c. Blood drive.
- d. Letters of remembrance to the parents and family.
- e. Poetry
- f. Funds to support prevention and educational activities such as scholarships.

Memorials plaques should not be attached to memorials. A list of memorials will be kept in the office.

9. Within a week following the event, staff, parents, and community crisis team members will be given the opportunity to evaluate the crisis response plan. The team will then meet to review the evaluations and comments, and decide what changes or modifications are needed in the plan.