

WAITAKERE COLLEGE

Section E (NAG 5) SAFE, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Policy: Traumatic Incidents/Sudden Death within the School Community

Date of Review: August 2019

Reviewers: Sandra van Eden (HOD Counselling), Michelle Chrustowski (School Nurse), Deputy Principal, Staff Health & Safety Committee

Goal

- To provide a Traumatic Incident Response Plan (TIRP) framework for use in the event of traumatic incident/sudden death.

Guidelines

Note: This framework recognises that every crisis is likely to be different. The impact of Traumatic Incident/Sudden Death in the school community is far reaching.

- 1 Whoever is first alerted to the situation verifies that the information is correct with the family or police and quickly phones the Principal who initiates the crisis procedure.
- 2 Key members of staff will meet to resource and support the crisis situation. The likely Crisis Team should include the Principal, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Pastoral Care Team (PCT). Others to be included as appropriate.
- 3 School will provide space, time, resources and personnel to effectively manage the situation.
- 4 The school will respond in a culturally appropriate manner.
- 5 Communication to the school community will be handled sensitively and effectively.
- 6 The PCT must be informed and will be involved as appropriate.
- 7 Priority focus will be on the care and support of every person affected.

N.B. Procedural guidelines are available in reference to this policy.

Procedure

The crisis team could consist of:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- PCT as appropriate
- Tutor class teacher/s
- Whanau / Aiga / or family member.

Depending on the nature of the crisis, other people/agencies may be called on to join the crisis team.

Crisis Team members are assigned areas of responsibility eg;

- consultation and communication with the family/families
- communication with media
- staff phone tree information
- information for parents
- action plan for teachers

- action plan for students
- counselling for students in the school and in the community including Whanau
- counselling for staff
- school routines

Information on these are in the Waitakere College crisis team checklist.

Staff Phone Tree - Crisis team member in charge rings HODs list, they in turn ring the members of their department. Therefore all key staff and HOD are required to have a current phone list of staff.

Action Plan for Teachers - When appropriate a full staff briefing is called ASAP where teachers will be provided with a an update of the situation, accurate information to give to students, signs to watch out for among students and what to do with a distressed student. After that, staff will be informed of all updates of the situation. Following the staff briefing, if appropriate, students will go to a special Home Group meeting where they will be informed about what happened.

It is preferable to have a written document, the wording agreed upon in the initial meeting, which is given out to all teachers at the full staff briefing. It is important that this document is read out by the teacher to their students, so that all students receive identical information about the event in the next step below.

Action Plan for Students - Tutor class teacher/s effectively communicate a statement of the relevant information ASAP. (See Crisis Team checklist: Working with Students).

Crisis Room - For some days, usually up until the funeral/tangihanga, a room is made available throughout the day for students, teachers and parents to come to whenever they are distressed or need counselling. Counsellors, teachers and support agencies are rostered there to provide personal counselling in crisis resolution, understanding grief, stress management and suicide prevention. Depending on numbers of people affected, counselling rooms may be suitable.

Students most likely will find comfort in being able to play music, set up a noticeboard with photos/poems/letters, and will need to be provided with tissues, refreshments, paper, pen etc.

Funeral Arrangements/Tangihanga - Depending on the wishes of the family, many students, parents and staff may wish to attend. The school will co-ordinate this. Encourage students to wear uniforms as representatives of the school. A memorial service may be held at school for the whole school, at a later date. The College may make facilities available for families if they wish to hold the funeral service at school. This offer could be made by the Principal or a member of the school whanau. At the wish of the Waitakere whanau, facilities may be made available for special circumstances (e.g. a service for a Maori staff member, en route to their final resting place).

Chairperson

Principal

Date

Crisis Team Check List

1	First person aware or informed, verify that information is correct (via family or police) OR contact Principal (SMT member)	
2	Notify Principal (or delegate)	
3	Determine information to be shared via family and/or police & MoE Traumatic Response Team (TRT) 0800 84 8326	
4	Crisis Team established: Team leader (Principal or delegate) plus other SLT, Deans, House Leaders, Youth Workers, Counsellors, as appropriate.	
5	Phone tree implemented to notify all staff asap: SLT/ HODs/all staff including ancillary staff/ BOT/ Kaumatua /contributing or neighbouring schools etc	
6	Inform all staff of timing for 'special' staff meeting: to explain situation, respond to questions, plan first day strategy, etc.	
7	Crisis team meet/prepare statement for release to school/website/death notice. Assign roles within the TIRPS framework	
8	Set schedule for communication to staff and students.	
9	Arrange support systems for student and staff, facilities and staffing and organising resources refreshments, tissues, paper, pens etc	
10	Communication with parent community: (information, cautions re student welfare, etc.)	
11	Regular contact and updates with affected family: (offers of support and facilities as appropriate) Communicate with contributing schools and secondary schools	
12	Principal only (or delegate) to make a statement in case of media approach; students to be advised accordingly.	
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Book and manage transport to the funeral/Tangi (or home visit) ● Letters of permission for students ● EOTC 	
14	Work with MoE TRT re: Internet / comments and risk evaluation	
15	Calendar anniversary check of students at possible risk.	
16	Reconvene crisis team to evaluate progress and plan return to and maintenance of daily routines.	
17	Refer to latest version of MoE Student Support Handbook – “Responding to Traumatic Incident – on MOE website) MoE TRAUMATIC INCIDENT TEAM – 0800 84 8326	
18	Review 1 week following the TIRP implementation done by Crisis response team	
19	Check that Whanau support is in place	