

# St Nessian's Community College



## Crisis Response Plan

*For the purpose of this plan a crisis situation is one where death has occurred or has been perceived i.e. Suicide, Death or life threatening injury of a student or staff member. It may not be a necessary step in all instances.*

# **Intervention Responsibilities:**

## **Leadership / Family Liaison / Communication**

### *Principal/Deputy Principal will:-*

- ☛ Confirm the death has occurred. Get accurate information
- ☛ Express sympathy to Family, assure of school's support
- ☛ Ensure family know who is the contact person with the school
- ☛ Consult with family on school involvement in funeral.  
(Family wishes to be respected)
- ☛ Organise the crisis response team to meet
- ☛ Prepare an announcement for staff/students
- ☛ Plan a staff meeting if required
- ☛ Prepare statement and distribute procedures to Class Teachers  
in breaking the news
- ☛ Devise a process for dealing with telephone enquiries from  
anxious parents
- ☛ Have written and/or oral response to enquiries prepared
- ☛ Notify BOM
- ☛ Prepare media statement
- ☛ Discourage any student or staff from dealing with media
- ☛ Make decisions on who should attend funeral
- ☛ Should the school be closed on the day of the funeral?  
(Notification to parents/buses/visitors of closure)

# **Intervention Responsibilities:**

## **Chaplain/Counselling:**

- 🔦 Set up Crisis Team Room in the College
- 🔦 Outline services available to affected students during the first hours
- 🔦 Assist class teacher of the class affected in breaking news
- 🔦 Have guidelines for staff in dealing with students in distress i.e. information on grief responses, identifying those with need of counselling and support
- 🔦 Take time with the most affected students in Crisis Response Room
- 🔦 Organise a Year Group Prayer Service for mid morning, once all students have been notified
- 🔦 Contact parents where some students request to go home
- 🔦 Encourage those who feel able, to return to class
- 🔦 Meet and support any distressed parents and staff
- 🔦 Liase with local clergy re: funeral

## **Crisis Response Team: Step by Step**

1. The Principal having confirmed the death makes contact with the family
2. Crisis Team meet to plan strategy, keeping in mind the guidelines above
3. Key tasks are distributed
4. Have all guidelines for teachers ready
5. Have written and oral statements ready for all communication with the school
6. Have a notice at entrances to the school for staff to report to the staff room at 8.45am
7. Meet staff (note any absences or late arrivals to ensure that all staff know the news)
8. Crisis Response Team outline to staff the plan for the day and the support available
9. Location of Crisis Response Room announced (base classroom)
10. Class Teachers break news to their classes (handouts given on guidelines)
11. Deputy Principal to make alternative arrangements for classes normally using base room
12. Deputy Principal to also ensure that Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor are freed from all other commitments for the day
13. Plan another update staff meeting later in the day
14. Clarify funeral arrangements for staff later
15. Crisis Team meet to plan procedures for school involvement in removal and funeral
16. **Day 2:** Students who are not coping are referred to chaplain/ counsellor on an individual basis. Important for the school to run as normal as possible
17. **Day 3:** Crisis Team meet to plan response after the funeral and in the next few days (Involve Class Teacher and/or Year Head at this stage)

# **Breaking the News to Students:**

## *Guidelines for Class Teachers 1*

- 🗨️ Only if the tragedy is confirmed as a suicide by the family, can it be relayed as such to students
- 🗨️ The Class of the student who has died should be the first to be told, with Chaplain, Counsellor and Class Teacher present
- 🗨️ Other classes to be told by their class teachers
- 🗨️ Not every class is going to be traumatised, some students may not even know the deceased, but it is important to acknowledge the loss for the whole school community
- 🗨️ Tell the class you have sad news and it is difficult for you to do this
- 🗨️ Let them know the name of the person the news is about
- 🗨️ Let them know the facts, as you know them. (It is important to prevent rumours through misinformation)
- 🗨️ Encourage questions
- 🗨️ Let the class know of common reactions to tragic news
- 🗨️ The most common reaction is shock
- 🗨️ Expect tears and outbursts
- 🗨️ Don't allow a student to leave the classroom alone in a distressed state
- 🗨️ Students must be supervised within the building while in a distressed state
- 🗨️ Let them know that you will support them
- 🗨️ Don't be afraid to let them know that you are also upset by the news
- 🗨️ Allow them time to mingle and talk to one another in groups
- 🗨️ Explain how they can support one another
- 🗨️ Be attentive to identifying those who are not coping well with the news

# **Breaking the News to Students**

## *Guidelines for Class Teachers 2*

- 💡 You may need to remind students again who is there to help, as little information is assimilated once in shock
- 💡 Let them know where the Crisis Response Team will be (possibly base classroom)
- 💡 Arrange to have refreshments ready also boxes of Kleenex
- 💡 A short prayer for the deceased would be appropriate
- 💡 If the students appear ready, a Year Group Assembly may be held later in the day
- 💡 Some students may be able to continue and go to class
- 💡 Some will need to stay with the Crisis Response Team for the morning
- 💡 Encourage students to stay in school to support their friends
- 💡 Some may need to go home, (only if parents come and collect them)
- 💡 Those who go to class may not be able to concentrate on the work of the class
- 💡 Subject teachers will need to make allowances for them to talk in groups as the need arises

# **Breaking the News to Students**

## *Guidelines for Class Teachers 3*

### Common Reactions on Hearing Traumatic News

#### **Emotional and Physical**

Shock  
Fear  
Guilt  
Grief  
Tears  
Panic  
Denial  
Anxiety  
Depression  
Anger  
Emotional Outbursts  
Overwhelmed  
Nausea  
Fainting  
Pain

Dizziness  
Weakness  
Palpations  
Breathing Difficulties

#### **Mental and Behavioural**

Confusion  
Blame  
Poor Concentration  
Disorientation  
Withdrawn  
Restlessness  
Let Down  
Uncertainty

## **Sample Statement for Media**

It is with profound sadness that the Management, staff and students of St Nessian's Community College, have learned of the tragic death of .....

Our sincerest sympathy is extended to the family of .....

On hearing the tragic news the College trauma plan was put into immediate operation. The Crisis Response Team convened a meeting to ensure that students affected by this loss are cared for adequately. Procedures are in place to ensure that all in the College Community affected by this loss are given all the help they need to cope at this time.

The College is offering Counselling and support for students and parents affected by this tragedy. Prayer services have been held with each class in the College. Students will attend and participate in the funeral service, in consultation with the wishes of the family.

Our prayers and support are with everyone affected by this tragedy.

## **Contacting Staff if Tragedy Occurs over a Weekend**

1. If it is the death of a colleague a system of informing staff needs to be in place.
2. If it is the death of a student, The Crisis Team need to be informed immediately. Other staff will be informed on the Monday.