

Woonsocket School District 55-4

101 N. 2nd Ave. PO Box 428

Woonsocket, SD 57385

Ph# 605-796-4431 Fax# 605-796-4352

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Adopted November 2003

Purpose

The purpose of the Crisis Management Plan is providing our school district personnel, students, and community members to better manage and assist with duties and responsibilities when responding to a crisis situation.

Goal: To maintain the orderly operation of the schools and to meet the needs of students, their families, and the staff of the school district.

Objectives:

- 1) To meet the special needs of individual students by working with parents, school staff, community resources, and/or specialists.
- 2) To communicate with staff, parents, and the general public through the most effective practical methods.
- 3) To present a unified and predictable plan of action to be enacted by school staff in the event of any crises.
- 4) To continue effective instruction and carry out established routines, and regulations.
- 5) To maintain a safe environment for students and staff.

CORE CRISIS TEAM MEMBERS:

**Superintendent
High School and Elementary Principals
Business Manager
School Counselors
Law Enforcement Officers
Legal Counsel
Ministerial Chairperson
Teacher Closest to the Situation**

For each core crisis team member listed above, a notification chain of command phone tree shall be maintained. (See Below)

Phone Tree

SUPERINTENDENT

(Legal Counsel, Law Enforcement, Business Manager, Principals, and Counselor)

<u>Bus. Manager</u>	<u>Principals</u>	<u>Counselor</u>
School Board Pres.	HS Teachers	Ministerial Chair
Bus Drivers	El. Teachers	School
Psychologists		
Cooks	Support Staff	
Secretary		

CRISIS SITUATION MEDIA PARAMETERS

Unless a duty is specifically delegated to another, the Superintendent of Schools shall make all official statements to the media. The following applies:

- All media correspondence, news releases, interviews, etc., shall be made from the Superintendent’s office.
- Students will not be interviewed by any media representative without parent permission, and the interview will be off school premises.
- No faculty or staff shall participate in an interview or media presentation without the approval of the Superintendent and Building Principal.
- No cameras or video recording and transmission equipment of any type will be allowed within the district properties during emergencies. Otherwise, this type of equipment will be allowed by approval of the Superintendent only.

- All official school district communications will come from the office of the Superintendent.
- All members of the media are asked to show consideration for the emotional welfare and educational interests of the students through their cooperation with the above-stated regulations.

CORE CRISIS TEAM MEMBERS ABSENT:

In the event that the superintendent is not available at the time of the crisis, the school district shall implement its local chain of command for decision-making purposes. If any other member of the core crisis team is not available, the superintendent shall assign that person's duties and responsibilities to the other team members of the core crisis team.

CORE CRISIS TEAM MEETING:

Ideally, the core crisis team meeting shall be called by the superintendent the day after the crisis. However, the superintendent or designee, shall have the authority to call a meeting at any time to address the crisis. At this meeting, the superintendent or designee shall be responsible for coordinating the district's response action plan and reviewing individual responsibilities. This planned meeting should take place at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the general meeting consisting of all teachers and other school employees.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS(S):

Will notify the ministerial association chairperson and the visiting counselors regarding the crisis, and inform them that the superintendent is the sole spokesperson for the school district. Will determine the number of visiting counselors needed and making accommodations for them prior to arrival.

MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION CHAIRPERSON:

Will notify all members of the ministerial association regarding the crisis and inform them that the superintendent is the sole spokesperson for the district regarding the crisis. Will inform all members of the ministerial association that they are invited to attend the general meeting of all teachers and employees

regarding the crisis and the district's proposed response action plan. May develop after school counseling services for students at risk.

LEGAL COUNSEL:

Will provide technical assistance to the superintendent in responding to inquiries from the media and community. Will assist in writing correspondences relating to the crisis explaining the district's position and actions.

TEACHER CLOSEST TO THE SITUATION

Typically, this person would be the teacher of an elementary student or a J.H. or H.S. teacher with closest ties to the student. The teacher's major role is to obtain as much information about the crisis as possible and to assist the team in communicating with students adversely affected by the crisis.

NOTIFICATION OF THE CRISIS

The superintendent or designee shall:

1. Contact Law Enforcement officials or other appropriate sources of information to
 identify as many "accurate" details of the crisis as possible.
2. Make a determination, based on the information presented, that a "crisis" exists and put the crisis management plan into action.
3. Notify all members of the crisis core team by invoking the crisis notification chain of Command telephone tree that also notifies all employees and support personnel that a crisis has been declared and that the district's crisis management plan is being implemented immediately.
4. Notify the crisis core team members to report to the superintendent's office at
 at a designated time to review procedures and develop specific actions.
5. Direct the principals, business manager and school counselor(s) to invoke the
 the
 internal phone tree to notify all teachers and support staff to report to a designated room at a specific time, for an explanation of the crisis and the district's proposed response action plan. The bus drivers may
 receive the same briefing by the business managers after the buses arrive.

6. Direct the principals and business manager to notify all teachers and support personnel that there will be a meeting after school to discuss results of the crisis intervention plan and to address additional concerns.

DURING THE CRISIS

PRINCIPAL'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Ensuring that all teachers and support staff are in attendance for the crisis meeting describing the crisis and the actions to be taken.
2. Ensuring that all teachers and support staff understand that the superintendent is the sole spokesperson for the district when inquiries are made by the media, visitors, or community members.
3. Ensuring that all teachers and support staff have copies of the following correspondences:
 - Superintendent's letter to parents. (Appendix A)
 - Home Room Teachers announcement. (Staff)
 - Teacher's response to students. (Appendix C)
 - Staff response to visitors. (Appendix D)
 - Secretarial response to phone inquiries. (Appendix E)
4. Assigning personnel to watch entrance/exit doors to ensure that all visitors report to the main office and to report any students leaving the building without permission.
5. Designating specific rooms/areas in the building for individual counselors to be assigned for the purpose of providing counseling to students, employees, and community members.
6. Ensuring that all visiting counselors and other visiting support personnel have identification NAME TAGS. Individuals without identification name tags must report to the main office.
7. Assisting the school counselor(s) in assigning the visiting counselors to specific rooms or areas for counseling services.

8. Informing teachers and employees that there will be a meeting after school with the crisis core team to review the overall effectiveness of the district's actions and to address additional concerns.
9. Assisting the superintendent in the dissemination of information and coordinating the actions proposed by the core crisis team.
10. Contacting the funeral director or ministerial group regarding funeral arrangements.

DURING THE CRISIS

MINISTERIAL GROUP DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Working closely with the school counselors in providing counseling services to students, employees, and community members adversely affected by the crisis.
2. Providing individual and group counseling services for students and family members, and community members adversely affected by the crisis outside the school setting.
3. Working directly with the superintendent to develop an appropriate plan for dismissal of students, if a funeral is to be held on a school day, including making arrangement for staff and teachers who plan to attend.
4. Working directly with the school counselor(s) to arrange for a common location for students to gather before or after the funeral to share and discuss their feelings and needs.
5. Serving as a communications agent between the family directly affected by the crisis, and the school district. Making the wishes and desires of the family now to the district and likewise advising the family of the actions proposed by the district.
6. Working directly with the family and school personnel regarding the return of any personal items that the school may have in its possession.
7. Assisting the school counselors in providing on-going counseling services after the crisis subsides.

8. When appropriate, providing counseling services at the church setting, during the school day, for students with the approval of the school administration.

FOLLOWING THE CRISIS

SPECIFIC ACTION

For most situations involving schools, intervention by a formal crisis intervention team is required for one day. However, instances may arise where additional services to students, faculty, staff, parents and possibly the community may be required.

In such instances, the following actions shall be followed:

1. Crisis Core Team

Should remain organized and continue to function as in the first day after the crisis. The decision to continue with the before and after school meetings with teachers and employees shall be decided by the crisis core team. As a general rule, these meetings should fade-out as the crisis subsides.

2. Administrators:

Continue to provide overall supervision of crisis activities. Address the needs of anxious individuals, meet with concerned staff or teachers, and refer those needing more “in-depth” assistance or specific answers to members of the crisis core team.

3. Teachers

Undertake no further direct class discussion of the crisis unless initiated by the students as a group.

When individual students approach a teacher with particular concerns, the teacher should do his/her best to address those needs and seek referral to a

crisis core team member or obtain counseling services to ensure that the student's needs are addressed.

- a. Don't overly control discussion if students spontaneously express their feelings. However, discretely limit discussions if feelings begin to build or 'set-off' children in a resonating effect.
- b. Avoid building or adding to emotions by trying to excessively 'draw-out' feelings of expressing one's own concerns.
- c. Reinforce the idea that people grieve in different ways. All feelings or responses are OK - there is no "one" way to feel.
- d. Talk about what they can do with their feelings:
 1. talk with a friend or people they trust;
 2. encourage talking with parent, guardian, teacher or minister;
 3. inform them that counselors are available and their specific locations, and encourage them to visit. Use "bandwagon"
 4. give permission to visit the team/counselor at any time;
 5. discuss what they can do to help each other;
 6. dispel rumors, advise students how they should deal with information concerning the event/crisis or tragedy;
 7. send a student who is upset, accompanied by a friend, to the team/counselor location.
- e. Close discussion by reminding students of where to go to see someone personally.
- f. State and reinforce the stability of the school routine. After allowing appropriate time for sharing of feelings, return to the schedule of instructional activities of the day.
In fact, draw no assumptions nor mention possible causes.
- c. Mention in one or two sentences that there are alternatives had "Joe chosen to talk to a professional" for "half solving whatever was bothering him." Note who to see and where.
- d. encourage a student to see you if they aren't sure who else to talk with should they have bothersome feelings in the day, personally or accompanied by a friend, take them to see a member of the crisis team with whom they might be comfortable...

3. Where no suicide was involved doesn't mean that vulnerable or "at risk" individuals

won't think of killing themselves. Take appropriate precautions and listen carefully. Anyone reacting strongly should be observed and reported to the counseling team for possible help.

4. Briefly, teachers might mention and focus student attention on the positive memories
or experiences they had with the person who died.
5. When appropriate, discuss funeral and appropriate behaviors and concerns they
may have about attending.
6. Avoid focusing on:
 - a. suicidal thoughts, feelings, or experiences, if the death was by suicide;
 - b. constant talk about the actual death or explicit details of the event
(morbid focusing);
 - c. blame.
7. Bring some closure to the discussion or activity and encourage pupils to talk with
parents, clergy, or counselors.

Appendix A

Superintendent’s letter to parents:

WOONSOCKET SCHOOL DISTRICT 55-4

Date:_____

Dear Parent(s),

Today the school district was notified of the sudden death of _____ who was a member of the_____class.

The death of anyone we know impacts on all of use in different ways. With this in mind, the school district has made arrangements to have additional counselors available at school to provide counseling services to those students who are in need of, or desire services.

If you would like additional information about counseling services, please call the Woonsocket School and talk to one of the principals at 796-4431.

Thank you for your understanding during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

Appendix C

Teacher's Response to students.

(Sample)

I know it may be difficult for some of us to continue our work today. To help us deal with our feelings, the counselor along with the visiting counselors have set up areas through the school to assist those of us who need someone to talk to.

Remember, it is normal for us to feel sad and upset. Talking to someone helps us deal with these emotions. If you would like to speak to a counselor, just let me know, and I will make arrangements for you.

Appendix E

Secretarial response to phone call inquiries

(Sample)

“Hello Woonsocket School District. (Identify whom you are talking). **How may I help you?”** (If the call is concerning the crisis, refer the individual who has called to the Superintendent). **“Questions concerning the sudden death of _____ are referred to the superintendent’s office.”** (If you are not sure how to respond to an individual phone call about the crisis refer that person to the principal.