



ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL PLEASANT POINT

Traumatic Incident Procedure

Rationale

This Procedure provides a framework for crisis situations but every crisis is likely to be different. The School's Crisis Team will take the context into account when making decisions.

Traumatic incident support may include:

1. Assisting the traumatic incident response team with planning, problem solving and supporting the school's ability to maintain its day-to-day operations.
2. Assisting staff to communicate appropriately with children, young people and the community about the incident.
3. Promoting basic forms of support and self-help strategies, such as reconnection with daily routines, and care and advice about the meaning of varying survivor responses in emergency situations to those experiencing them.
4. Ensuring safety of children, young people and staff by assisting in the identification of and planning for the wellbeing, especially those who may be particularly at risk owing to previous loss, stress and/or mental health issues.
5. Providing immediate support for those who have witnessed or been involved in the trauma
6. Supporting links to Maori networks and other culturally appropriate services.

The School's Crisis Team will consist of all or any of the following:

1. The Principal
2. Deputy Principal
3. BOT Chairperson
4. MoE Traumatic Incident Team (if called in Ph. 0800 848 326)
5. Parish Priest
6. Teachers as appropriate
7. Secretary (to take minutes)
8. Any other person relevant to the situation e.g. RTLB, Community Constable, other Board members as appropriate, Catholic Education Office
9. Note: Key staff may need to be released from scheduled duties.

In the event of a traumatic incident-

Notification Phase:

The person receiving the information will:

1. Listen to what has happened.
2. Record the notifier's name (and phone number if applicable).
3. Record the names of people involved.

4. Check that appropriate emergency services have been contacted.
5. Inform the notifier of any actions you will take (such as informing the Principal and the Crisis Team).
6. Give the caller your name and phone number in case they need to call back.
7. Immediately the call is over make contact with the principal/senior management.

Dealing with the Crisis Phase

Actions

The School Principal/senior management will:

1. Record and verify the facts of the event.
2. Record and ascertain the individuals involved.
3. If a staff member is involved, contact their emergency contact person.
4. Ascertain the reactions of those involved and record any actions taken.
5. Contact the school's crisis team and ask them to assemble as soon as possible.
6. Inform any education services that may be immediately affected.
7. Contact the MoE Traumatic Incident Coordinator if required Ph 0800 848 326.

The School's Crisis Team will:

1. At the first opportunity, meet and be briefed
2. Consider the recommendations of the MoE Traumatic Incident Team.
3. Check all allocated tasks have been performed
4. At the end of the day, the Crisis Team meets and review events.
5. Plan for the next day, and future events, establishing procedures and requirements – there may be a need to set up a regular meeting at the end of each day.
6. Keep a written record of a running action plan and responsibilities.

Collect and collate information – who is involved in the crisis?

1. What groups require attention (staff, students, student year levels, peer groups)?
2. Ascertain names of other family members or close friends (i.e. enrolled at school)
3. Siblings at nearby schools?
4. Other students closely associated (and their parents)?
5. Students may leave with parents if greatly distressed
6. If a staff member is the subject of the crisis, ascertain which staff are able to take their classes? How long will they be out of action? (Plan for more than minimum time here – avoid placing teachers who are distressed in front of classes).
7. Provisions for staff members' close colleagues will need to be considered.
8. Begin to develop an 'at risk' register.

Assign Roles & Responsibilities:

7. Assign specific roles and responsibilities and clearly communicate these to the team and other key people.
8. Delegate a person to liaise with the family/ies involved (and also the Police if necessary) to receive and pass on information/requests etc.
9. Ask administration team or parish to organise catering for the school crisis team and Traumatic Incident Team if required.

Communication with school community:

1. Establish the most appropriate means of informing staff and students of the incident and the procedures to follow.
2. Inform all staff of the event and identify and notify other key people.
3. Prepare written statements that are factual and accurate to inform staff and for staff to read out to children (see notes at the bottom). The **ONLY** information to be passed on to students is that received in written instructions. If students are asking questions not covered in written instructions tell them you 'will ask someone and get back to them'. Pass these questions on to a Crisis Team member.
4. Contact Parish Priest and Catholic Education Office. In the case of a death, family whanau affected should be consulted in appropriate ways and share the content of written statements.
5. Provide information to the media delegate to enable him/her to inform the media and community. Consider the time journalist will arrive, who they will see and where they will go
6. Keep written records of all actions.

Action Plan for Teachers

1. At the first staff briefing, teachers will be provided with a paper giving an update of the situation; accurate information to give to students; signs to watch out for among students; what to do with a distressed student.
2. Inform staff of all updates of the situation.
3. Update daily whiteboard in the staffroom ie details of daily arrangements eg bell times, extra staff meetings etc).
4. Inform teachers of students involved/affected by trauma.
5. If students need to be sent home, this should be authorized with their classroom teacher and parent/caregiver.
6. If staff need to be sent home, this should be authorized with Senior Management.

Communication with the media

1. Media Delegate- **the BOT Chairperson or their delegate is the ONLY person who will talk to any media groups.**
2. At daily morning meetings the media delegate confirms information to go into pre-written or verbal releases or to be used during interviews.
3. The media delegate will liaise with the family/ies liaison person as able.
4. Under no circumstances will staff or BOT members discuss the incident with the media or community member. Refer all questions to the Crisis Team. Refer all media personnel to the Media Delegate.

After the initial crisis phase

Consultation and communication with the affected family/ies

1. Delegate a person to liaise with families involved and Police if necessary to receive and pass on information/requests etc.
2. Update daily statements to staff and students as required (to avoid rumours etc).
3. Liase with family re funeral participation and/or memorial service
4. If a fatality has occurred plan for the collection and return of the deceased child/ren's and/or staff's personal belongings and equipment to their family/whanau in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner and time.

Information for Parents

1. Answer questions from concerned parents.
2. Ensure parents have names/phone numbers of professional agencies (updated list of support services – typed ready to go).
3. Organise leave arrangements for students wanting to attend funeral as per family wishes (eg consent forms, transport, costs etc).
4. Contact parents of students whom staff have identified “at risk” (eg friendship groups but not necessarily closely associated to the crisis).

Counselling for student/staff in the school and in the community

1. If possible arrange for a room to be made available throughout the day for students, teachers, parents to come to as needed. Set up room with chairs, tissues, food/drinks, prayer table as appropriate.
2. Develop an ‘at risk’ register.
3. Contact/liase with support agencies. Make a list of support agencies to provide counselling, crisis resolution, understanding grief and stress management.

School Routines

1. Reallocate staff responsibilities and duties as appropriate for as long as necessary, may need more staff on duty, inform staff already absent.
2. Use the MoE Traumatic Incident team as required, e.g. to allow teachers time away from the classroom
3. Reschedule/cancel upcoming events.
4. Organise relievers as necessary to cover teachers/staff as necessary.
5. Accurately record and monitor all staff and children and young people's attendance and whereabouts.

Maintain Regular Programme:

1. Support the varying reactions of children and staff members through maintaining normal structures, gathering accurate information about reactions, positive messages, activities in classrooms, extra staff as needed etc.
2. Continue as long as necessary identifying and planning for future actions that may be required.
3. Accept all grieving as genuine. The significance of the relationship to the person(s) affected is irrelevant. Sudden death, traumatic events, etc may trigger grief from past events in people's lives. Ongoing vigilance will be needed to identify grieving students or staff.

Evaluation:

1. Compile a report of actions at the conclusion of the incident in consultation with all traumatic incident team members,
2. Arrange a debriefing meeting.

Formulated by: Documentation and Self Review Committee

Reviewed:

Approved by: B.O.T. October 2011

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Special Character