



AP 1 – 19 Deaths

Related Policies:	Initial Approval: 2010 March 30
Related Procedures:	Last Amended: 2020 January 14
Exhibits:	Last Reviewed: 2020 January 14

PURPOSE

To ensure that schools are acknowledged as they may become profoundly affected when a tragic death occurs to a student or staff member. To offset the initial reaction of shock, a concrete plan of action is essential. The major guiding principle is to return to normal routines as soon as possible within the school.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all staff.

DEFINITIONS

None

PROCEDURES

1. Upon receiving information that a student or staff member has passed away, contact the Superintendent, Liaison Superintendent and Associate Superintendent of Student Services. The Associate Superintendent of Student Services will work with the Clinical Team Lead for the Family School Wellness Program to arrange for support from Family School Wellness Workers and external consultants/support if needed.
2. The Principal will arrange for a space/location in the school for students to gather and receive counseling support or take time to grieve.
3. A parent committee may be formed to meet with community leaders to discuss a community-wide response to a death.
4. Administrative staff should meet with division office support personnel (Liaison Superintendent, Student Services Superintendent, FSW Clinical Team Lead, School FSW worker) to plan and implement a course of action.
5. The Principal will arrange a staff meeting that should be held as soon as possible so the known facts of the case are reviewed in order to establish a common reference base and to dispel rumours.
6. Review with the staff the characteristics of high risk students. Request staff to compile a list based on staff observations of individual student reactions which may need follow-up. These students should be directed to the crisis center for counseling.
7. The Principal shall inform the total student body that a tragic death has occurred and that further information will follow.
8. A team composed of the Principal, guidance counselor, family school wellness worker, peer support team and division office members shall meet to make a plan for working with students and parents.
9. The Principal, teacher, counselors or Division office staff may meet with each grade, either by individual homerooms or the total grade in order to:
 - 9.1 Review the known facts and to dispel rumours
 - 9.2 De-mythologize the act
 - 9.3 Inform them of the location in the school where they can go to receive support or grieve.

- 9.4 Encourage them to express feelings in whatever way is appropriate for them.
- 9.5 Discuss possible guilt feelings or feelings of responsibility
- 9.6 Ask them to be supportive of one another and to escort any friend who is upset to a teacher or to the location identified in the school where support is available.
- 9.7 Reassure them that any adult in the building is available to help
- 9.8 Encourage them to discuss their feelings with their parents
- 9.9 Apprise them of the signs and symptoms of depression to watch for in the next few days.

10. A space/location in the school shall be made available to students for counseling services on a small group or individual basis.

11. High risk students **AP 1-18 Identifying High Risk Students and Staff** will be identified and contact will be made to ensure they are safe. When appropriate, parents will be contacted.

12. Requests for information regarding the death should be directed to the Principal or designated person.

13. The Principal or designate should contact the immediate family members of the deceased to express sympathy on behalf of the school.

14. With regard to students being encouraged to do something in memory of someone deceased, school administration and the FSW from the school should be contacted and a plan decided upon taking all factors into consideration.

15. It is not recommended that funerals or memorial services be held at schools. If a principal receives a request to hold a funeral at school, principals are to work with their liaison superintendent to respond to the request.

16. The following are recommended courses of action when a suicide occurs, or is believed to have occurred:

16.1 The Principal or designate contacts the Superintendent, Liaison Superintendent and Superintendent of Students Services for appraisal and support. Division Personnel and Family School Wellness workers will, in consultation with the Principal, determine the support services needed and these will be made available.

17. Schools may wish to offer assistance to parents and other members of the school community by referring them to appropriate community agencies.

REFERENCE AND LINKS

Education Act

HISTORY

Reviewed: 2013 Feb 22

Reviewed: 2017 Nov 27

Reviewed: 2018 March 02

Reviewed: 2018 April 30

Reviewed: 2018 July 03

Reviewed: 2019 Nov 25

Revised: 2020 Jan 14