

## **GUIDELINE 6.10 – TRAUMATIC INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN**

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### **Rationale**

In the event of a traumatic incident, it is essential that appropriate management steps are in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff, students and their families, and members of the wider school community.

### **Purpose**

To identify the steps to be followed immediately, should there be any death, serious injury or other traumatic event affecting any person who has a direct association with the College.

1. Key people are identified to co-ordinate the situation and duties are allocated.
2. Staff, students and the school community are provided with accurate information.
3. An action plan specific to the situation is put in place to support staff and students.
4. Facilities and Facilitators are put in place to provide for the immediate needs for those affected.
5. Outside 'Help Professionals' are identified and help sought as necessary.
6. Provision is made for on-going help and counselling.

### **Guidelines**

1. Traumatic Incident Response team will meet and follow the procedures and appendices for traumatic incidents response.
2. The Principal or their nominee shall approve a statement to be issued by office staff in event of enquiries other than from the media.
3. An update is given daily or as appropriate. Office staff should be fully briefed.
4. Decides on the duties of the Traumatic Incident team members who will coordinate the process and what duties these people will relinquish during the next few days.
5. The Library will be designated as a support space initially
6. Students requesting permission to go home should be directed to one designated person who should first contact the parents.
7. Spiritual and cultural needs are to be met along with the emotional needs, with regard for the available resources.

8. School routines should continue as much as possible. Have all students start each period in class and then go to the library if needed. If a student has more than two periods in the library then they should probably go home.
9. The Traumatic Incident team should regularly reassess the College's needs.
10. Within ten school days the Traumatic Incident team will meet to debrief and evaluate. Follow up may include procedural changes to the plan or changes in protocols for school acknowledgements and expressions of support and sympathy. Full staff debrief also.
11. Organise follow-up support groups as necessary.
12. Remember those people most affected may have a direct or an indirect relationship with the person/people involved or be reminded of past traumas and grief issues.
13. Monitor the need for courses on Traumatic Incident resolution, stress management and understanding grief. These may be for staff, students, parents, or community.
14. This plan should be stored in the school in a visible place and in the homes of all staff.

### **Traumatic Incident Team**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Cell Phone Number</b>
Principal	Mason Stretch	03 4451934	0276092001
Assistant Principal	Sarah Hill		0211247443
Assistant Principal	Tony Streeter	034450624	0279483737
Assistant Principal	Greg Thomson		021443412
Guidance Counsellor	Rachel Cassaidy		02102502833
Guidance Counsellor	Holly McDiarmid		0211505281
Guidance Counsellor	Kieran Parsons		02102463139
BOT Presiding Member	Terry Davis		0212846844

### **Action Plan**

1. Whoever first becomes aware of a major incident, must firstly inform the

Principal - Mason Stretch.

If the Principal is not immediately available, work down the following list until contact is established.

Assistant Principals - Sarah Hill  
 - Tony Streeter  
 - Greg Thomson

Guidance Counsellor - Rachel Cassaidy (Tues/Wed)  
 - Holly McDiarmid (Mon/Tue)  
 - Kieran Parsons (Thu/Fri)

Relevant Dean

NAME	HOUSE	CELL PHONE NUMBER
Gavin Jenkins	Clutha	0273349634
Jane Swire	Clutha	0212159154
Stephanie Davis	Kawarau	0211367789
Kirsten Dixon	Kawarau	0212963518
Bridget Carter	Nevis	0274270150
Amy Dickey	Nevis	0272774226
Katie Thomson	Pisa	0212937642
Kate Borrie	Pisa	0274453051

2 The Principal, or the most senior deputy, will:

1	Ascertain and note the facts relating to the Traumatic Incident – probably through the Police, doctor, family/s or others involved.
2	If an International student (Permanent Resident, Exchange or Fee Payer) is involved, the Director of International Students must be notified immediately. *Director's duties are listed below.
3	Call an immediate meeting of the "Traumatic Incident Team" (or such members of the team that is deemed to be necessary) – phone numbers as above.
4	Decide whether to contact the Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident Team (0800 TI TEAM or 0800 848326)

\* Director of International Students Duties – Sandra Aitchison 0211541992

- Become a member of the Traumatic Incident team.
- Arrange for an interpreter immediately.
- Establish contact with birth parents.
- Contact homestay parents if applicable.
- Contact Agent if applicable.
- Aided by an interpreter, remain in regular contact with the birth parents.

**The Traumatic Incident Team will address the following issues -**

1. The caregiver/family of the victim will be contacted to establish requests for any specific approach to be taken. It is important that their wishes be respected. Contact throughout will be maintained – preferably by the same person and probably the Principal.
2. Decide on the role of the school and the level of school resources.
3. Decide on the duties of the Traumatic Incident team member who will coordinate the process and what duties these people will relinquish during the next few days.
4. Media liaison person to be established. In most cases this will be the Principal. No other person is to enter into any discussion with the media.

5. A phone tree (appendix 2) will be used to ensure that all necessary parties are notified promptly. A written statement will be prepared and either delivered or read over the phone. This is to ensure that information given is accurate and factual rather than speculative or emotive.
6. The Principal or their nominee shall approve a scripted statement to be issued by office staff in the event of enquiries other than from the media. Fully brief the office staff as the first point of contact. They need to be able to direct / transfer / inform. Update them daily or as appropriate.
7. Consider establishing an inbound 0800 number if an incident involves an international or apartments' student.
8. Students and staff who are particularly close to the victim/s will be identified as possibly needing special help. Assign them to an appropriate staff member or counsellor to make contact. See "Support Register", appendix 3.
9. Consider employing relief staff and assigning extra staff for duties.
10. Method of informing students to be decided. Probably best done through a whanau time rather than an assembly but may be individuals or small groups. (Note: an assembly is not recommended for suicides). Include information about the availability of support services. Be aware that through texts and facebook etc there will be a lot of information in the public arena already. Some accurate and some not.
11. A statement to be read to students will be prepared. This is to ensure information is accurate and factual. (It is important, particularly for suicide, that the death is in no way glorified or sensationalised).
12. A staff meeting will be held to prepare staff for their work with the students. At this time the written statement for reading will be given to staff. This meeting will include guidance on what to say, how to cope with various responses, those likely to be affected and signs to watch out for. It will also give the opportunity to deal with their own emotional issues, and if necessary, request that others deal with their form class for them or with them. Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to employ relief staff so that other staff have time to address their own issues.
13. Communication with parents and community to be decided on.
14. Outside 'Help Professionals' will be identified and notified (see attached list, appendix 4).
15. Consider how to meet spiritual, cultural and emotional needs, with regard for the available resources.
16. A 'Traumatic Incident Room' will be established (space needed, privacy, phone, writing and drawing, talking, and milo making facilities need to be considered). This room will be staffed by people considered appropriate for dealing with individuals and groups needing emotional support e.g. GSE, local minister, Board Chairperson, youth worker and other support people as required. Consult the Register of Support Agencies.
17. School routines should continue as much as possible. Have all students start each period in class and then go to the library if needed. If a student has more than two periods in the library then they should probably go home.
18. Students requesting permission to go home should be directed to one designated person who should first contact the parents.

19. Victim's property is to be secured and then left untouched (e.g. locker etc).
20. The Traumatic Incident Team will regularly reassess the situation, and as soon as possible, re-establish 'normal' classroom activity. This provides a sense of security.
21. Consider written updates on the whiteboard twice daily.
22. Later, this team will consider the College's approach to the funeral/hospital/home visits and by whom – probably Principal and one other. The same people should continue to make all contact with the family and respect their wishes, eg, attendance at funeral; flowers; memorial service.
23. Ensure on-going contact with Emergency Services if appropriate – write down contact names and numbers.
24. Consult [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) (keyword: traumatic incident) there are many pages of resources including templates for letters etc.
25. Within ten school days the Traumatic Incident team will meet to debrief and evaluate. Follow up may include procedural changes to the plan or changes in protocols for school acknowledgements and expressions of support and sympathy. Full staff debrief also.
26. Organise follow-up support groups as necessary.
27. Monitor the need for courses on Traumatic Incident resolution, stress management and understanding grief. These may be for staff, students, parents or community.
28. This plan should be stored, possibly at home, by each member of the Traumatic Incident Team and be accessible to all staff.

#### **Issues to be aware of:**

- Your own emotions, attitudes to death, stress levels.
- Walking and talking slowly helps maintain a sense of calm and confidence that you know what you are doing and are in control.
- Overly stressed staff who may require leave, counselling, or other provisions. Victim Support can fund GP visits who can then refer to brief intervention counsellors.
- May need a time-out place for staff.
- Remember those people most affected may have a direct or indirect relationship with the person/people involved or be affected by memories of past traumas and grief issues.
- Grief reactions – shock, denial, guilt, anger, bargaining, acceptance.
- The media - protect students from interviews, the Principal, or their deputy, is responsible for all media liaison.
- Monitoring rumour.
- The likelihood of future enquiries (school, police, coroner).

Guideline audited and reviewed by the Self Review Committee

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