

**CRISIS
MANAGEMENT
PLAN**

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

FOR

SCHOOL DISTRICT

It is the policy of the School District to provide services to all persons without regard to race, creed, religion, sex, disability, ancestry, or national origin in accordance with State Law (SDCL 20-13) and Federal Law (Title VI of Civil Right Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990).

FORWARD

The purpose of the Crisis Management Plan is to provide school district personnel, students, and community members with a structured outline of specific individual duties and responsibilities when responding to a crisis situation.

The overall effectiveness of the plan requires the administration to provide in-service activities on an annual basis to ensure that teachers, support staff, students, and community members know the plan contents and the actions that will follow during a crisis situation.

The following crisis management plan was adopted by the school board on _____.
(Date)

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(Phone Tree)

>Legal Counsel
>School Board

>Board Members

President

Phone Tree

>Bus Drivers
Phone Tree

>Business Manager
>Cooks
Phone Tree

>Secretarial Staff

Phone Tree

>Secondary Teachers
Phone Tree
>High School
Principal
Phone Tree
>Superintendent

>Support Staff

>Elementary
Phone Tree
>Elementary
Principal
Phone Tree

>Support Staff

>Cooperative
Director

>School
Psychologists

>Law Enforcement

>Ministerial Group
Phone Tree

>School Counselor

>Visiting Counselors
Phone Tree

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

GOAL: The goal of the crisis management plan is to establish appropriate policies and procedures to assist the school district and community in managing crises or unexpected tragedies that adversely affect students, school employees, and community members.

PURPOSE: The main purpose of the plan is to maintain the orderly operation of the school and to meet the needs of students and their families, the school employees and the community members in the event of a crisis or unexpected tragedy.

OBJECTIVES: The main objectives of the plan are:

1. To maintain a safe school environment for students and employees.
2. To meet the needs of individual students, employees, and community members adversely affected by the crisis.
3. To communicate effectively with students, employees, and community members in the most practical method.
4. To continue effective instruction and maintain as much as possible, a natural school schedule reflecting normal routines, rules, and regulations.
5. To present a unified plan that clearly outlines and describes individual duties and responsibilities in the event of a crisis.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CORE CRISIS TEAM:

The school district shall establish a CORE CRISIS TEAM with the superintendent serving as chairperson. The main function of the core crisis team is to develop a response action plan utilizing the policies and procedures described in the crisis management plan.

CORE CRISIS TEAM MEMBERS:

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

For each core crisis team member listed above, a notification chain of command phone tree shall be maintained, updated and distributed annually to all individuals involved.

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 at 7:00 a.m. 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.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CRISIS CORE TEAM:

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:

Will ensure that all of the crisis core team members know and understand their individual duties and responsibilities as described in the crisis management plan. Will also ensure that all team members understand and relay to all other employees that the superintendent or designee is the sole spokesperson for the school district regarding the crisis.

PRINCIPALS:

Will ensure that all teachers and support staff are notified of the crisis via internal phone tree and that all individuals know that the superintendent is the sole spokesperson for the district regarding the crisis.

BUSINESS MANAGER:

Will ensure that all bus drivers, cooks, custodians, school board members and secretarial staff are notified of the crisis via internal phone tree, and that all individuals know that the superintendent is the sole spokesperson for the district regarding the crisis.

COOPERATIVE DIRECTOR:

Will notify the school psychologists regarding the crisis and will ensure that they understand the superintendent is the sole spokesperson for the district regarding the crisis. Will assist the superintendent in developing an appropriate response action plan.

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Will report to the superintendent and the crisis core team factual information regarding the crisis to eliminate rumors and provide students, employees, and community members with accurate information.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST(S):

Will provide technical assistance to the crisis core team and the crisis intervention team of school counselors in developing counseling strategies to assist students, employees, and community members adversely affected by the crisis.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR(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 teachers' 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.

THE DAY OF THE CRISIS

A crisis will be an event that has significant emotional impact on students and families, employees, and community members. Generally, on the day a crisis occurs (e.g., unexpected death, suicide, community disaster, etc.) the most important action includes appropriate notification of individuals and putting into action the district's crisis management plan.

REPORTING A CRISIS

Any person learning of the crisis shall immediately notify the superintendent. In the event the superintendent is not available, the person shall follow the local district chain of command.

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 7:00 p.m. or at a designated time to review procedures and develop specific actions.
5. Direct the principals, business manager and school counselor(s) to invoke the internal phone tree to notify all teachers and support staff to report to a designated room at 7:30 p.m. or at another 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

SUPERINTENDENT'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Notify all members of crisis core team that superintendent is the sole spokesperson for the school district regarding the crisis and that all media inquiries and community questions be directed to the superintendent. Likewise, all team members are to notify all teachers, employees and community members that the superintendent is the sole spokesperson.

TO BE COMPLETED AT THE 7:00 A.M. CRISIS CORE TEAM MEETING OR AT A TIME DESIGNATED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT:

2. Present all known factual details of the crisis to the crisis core team with Law Enforcement assistance. Develop a log of all activities and actions.
3. Have ample copies of the District's Crisis Management Plan available.
4. Provide copies of the specific duties and responsibilities for each member of the crisis core team as outlined in the crisis management plan. If a core team member is absent designate those duties and responsibilities to other team members. Assign additional duties and responsibilities as deemed necessary.
5. Designates one central location for the crisis core team to function from throughout the day.
6. Review the superintendent's letter that will be sent to the parents regarding the crisis. (Appendix A)
7. Review Home Room Teacher announcement. (Appendix B)
8. Review Teacher's response to students. (Appendix C)
9. Review Staff response to visitors. (Appendix D)
10. Review Secretarial Staff - response to phone call inquiries. (Appendix E)
11. Review media parameter policy. (Appendix F)

DURING THE CRISIS

PRINCIPAL'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Ensuring that all teachers and support staff are in attendance for the 7:30 a.m. general meeting or at a difference time, 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 Teacher announcement. (Appendix B)
 - Teacher's response to students. (Appendix C)
 - Staff response to visitors. (Appendix D)
 - Secretarial response to phone inquiries. (Appendix E)
 - Media parameter policy. (Appendix F)
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

SCHOOL COUNSELOR(S) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Ensuring that all visiting counselors are introduced to the core crisis team and to all teachers and support staff.
2. Ensuring that all visiting counselors know their assigned counseling areas within the building(s) and have name tags.
3. Ensuring that all assigned counseling areas have appropriate chairs and an environmental setting conducive for counseling.
4. Assigning selected visiting counselors to specific classrooms adversely affected by the crisis to support classroom teachers in making announcements regarding the crisis and assisting the teachers in helping the students cope with the crisis.
5. Establishing a communications system with all teachers and support staff in identifying individuals in need of immediate counseling services. This will be accomplished by requiring all teachers and support staff to write the names of individuals they feel are in need of counseling services, on a sheet of paper, and giving it to one of the school counselors at the central location.
6. Working directly with the ministerial group in providing counseling services during the school day and arranging for after school counseling services and other support services.
7. Assisting the ministerial group in identifying parents and students adversely affected by the crisis for additional counseling and support outside the school setting.
8. Arranging with the ministerial group a common location for students to gather after the funeral to share and discuss their feelings and needs.
9. Determining the need and extent of on-going counseling services after the crisis subsides.
10. Notifying the students regarding the 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 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.

DURING THE CRISIS

PSYCHOLOGIST(S) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Review at the 7:30 a.m. meeting (or designated time) with teachers, employees, and community members the feelings and reactions or behaviors which might be expected following the specific crisis (e.g., Disbelief, Anger, Denial, Sadness, and Loss).
2. Review at the same meeting how teachers, employees, and community members should respond to the reactions and behaviors listed above and recommend approaches and strategies they should use with students.
3. Encourage all employees and community members to extend mutual support for each other and assure them that it is okay to openly express feelings and concerns.
4. Notify all teachers that support counseling services are available and that counselors will assist them in making announcements to students and help them with students adversely affected by the crisis.
5. Provide technical assistance to school counselors as they provide counseling services for students, employees, and community members.
6. Work directly with the ministerial group and school counselor(s) in establishing communications between the family adversely affected by the crisis and school district.
7. Assist the counselors and the ministerial group in providing counseling services for students after the funeral.

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.

GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS:

Children's emotions vary depending upon their age, level of maturity, emotional strength, temperament, and prior experience with a crisis. Some children have experienced tragedy or loss, while others have not.

In addition to emotional differences among children, are the children's proximity to the crisis and their direct involvement to persons affected that determine their responses.

Just as children vary, so too will the circumstances and seriousness of the loss or tragedy.

Sometimes, almost equally as influential as individual characteristics, nature of the crisis, and emotional or physical proximity, will be the reactions of the child's peers or social group, important adults, relatives, parents, community and school.

While teachers cannot respond to or control all variables, their response and management or influence on students in the classroom can be significant.

While certainly not inclusive, the following guidelines will enable teachers to respond to crisis situations and meet the needs of most students.

WITHIN THE CLASSROOM:

I. Situation A:

For children not adversely affected by the crisis.

1. Simply inform the students of the incident/death/crisis by telling them, or by reading announcement provided by your superintendent.
2. In simple language, briefly comment in effect: "I'm sure we feel sad by the (event, death, loss)." If anyone would like to talk with someone... like the counselors just let me know, you can go to room _____ and visit with _____.
3. If students ask questions or want to talk about their feelings it is advisable to let that happen for an appropriate - though generally short period of time. During such discussion, some things you might include or consider are:

- a. Don't overly control discussion if students spontaneously express their feelings. However, discretely limit discussion 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 or 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" wording when talking about this option, as it helps the hesitant: e.g. "... many students like to stop in and visit with counselors to talk about their feelings."
 - 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.

II. Situation B:

For children adversely affected by the crisis:

1. If uncomfortable leading or facilitating students, contact your principal to arrange for a member of the crisis counseling team, to visit at the immediate start of class or alternatively.
2. Proceed as in Situation A.
3. Additional steps to be followed include:
 - a. Permit more time for sharing of feelings;
 - b. In the case where a student's immediate family is involved, i.e. death of a brother, talk with the students about how to respond when their classmate returns to class.
 - c. Encourage students to write letters or cards which can be delivered to the family.

COUNSELING TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHERS:

When working with students, particularly where the crisis involved a death or loss, teachers should:

1. Use terms like "died/dead/death" rather than phrases like "passed away," or "taken from us." Give an honest explanation for the person's death.
2. Where suicide was involved, keep in mind the serious potential for that death to trigger another. To help prevent this, counseling must be handled in a caring-warm but matter-of-fact-way, but caution must be taken not to do, or say things which could motivate others such as:
 - a. don't glamorize or pay excessive attention to the act or how it makes other feel since may kill themselves for just this reason, particularly when they see others gaining the attention they want;
 - b. when describing the event, matter-of-factly note:
"Joe choose to _____," rather than speculating on how possibly breaking up with a girl friend must have caused his action. 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. Inform them that district’s policy does not permit classes to be dismissed to attend a funeral. The policy of the district is that students may only be dismissed from school for a funeral if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- 7. 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.
- 8. At the end of class discussion(s):
 - a. Bring some closure to the discussion or activity and encourage pupils to talk with parents, clergy, or counselors.
 - b. Proceed with the school routine: it cannot be overemphasized that the philosophy “life will go on” is one employed for preventative reasons, not convenience.
 - c. If on subsequent days students bring the subject up, or appear to need to discuss matters, allow brief moments to do so, then return to instructional activities.

Superintendent's letter to parents

Dear Parent(s):

Today the school district was notified of the sudden death of _____
name
who was a member of the _____ class.
grade

The death of anyone we know impacts on all of use in differing 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 one of the principals at _____.
phone

You and your child(ren) need to make a decision concerning attendance at the church service. If your child(ren) plans to attend the funeral, we recommend that they be accompanied by you or another responsible adult.

The principal's office must be notified by either a parent's phone call or a written note, to release a child from school.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools

Home Room Teacher announcement

(sample)

TO: Home Room Teachers
FROM: Superintendent
RE: Death of a student or employee

The following information should be used in your home room this morning. You may choose to read this announcement to your student or talk to them informally. If you feel uncomfortable talking to your students, or feel you need additional support, the crisis team counselors will be available to assist you.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Today, I was notified that _____ died last night as a result of an automobile accident. Visitation for John will be Tuesday, from 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at the Hofmeister Funeral Home. Funeral services will be Wednesday afternoon at 1:00 p.m. at the Resurrection Catholic Church. You and your parents should make the decision concerning attendance at the service. If you plan to attend, we recommend that you are accompanied by a parent or an adult. The principal's office must be notified by your parent either by phone call or by a written note, for you to be released from school.

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 throughout 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.

*Teachers - please read the classroom teachers guidelines before meeting your classes.

Staff response to visitors

(sample)

“We are saddened by the sudden death of one of our students. Further questions you may have are to be directed to the superintendent.”

If visitors are media, a handout should be made available for them explaining the district’s policy regarding MEDIA PARAMETERS during the crisis situation.

If a visitor does not have a name tag on, please inform them that they are to go to the crisis core team room to register.

Secretarial response to phone call inquiries

(sample)

“Hello _____ school district. (Identify with 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 a principal.

Media Parameters During a Crisis Situation

To be a hand-out to all media, teachers, support staff, and any other individuals identified by the superintendent.

The following media parameters shall be in effect during a crisis situation:

1. All media correspondence, news releases, interviews, etc., shall take place in the superintendent's office with the administrator present.
2. No students shall be interviewed within the school or the school premises.
3. No teachers or support staff shall be interviewed except those who have been designated by the school administration in charge.
4. No cameras, video equipment, or recording devices shall be allowed within the school building.
5. All media questions shall be directed to the superintendent or designee.
6. All official school district communications shall originate from the superintendent's office with administrative approval.
7. All members of the media are required to display consideration for the emotional welfare and educational interests of all the students and school employees by following the media parameters listed above.

CRISIS INTERVENTION VISITING COUNSELORS

The following counselors are available to assist your crisis counseling team. The number of counselors needed to assist a district will be determined by that district's counselor and administration.

Jenelle Sigler (Bridgewater-Emery)
Work Phone: 729-2541
Jenelle.Sigler@k12.sd.us

Kerri Cox (Canistota)
Work Phone: 296-3458
Kerri.Cox@k12.sd.us

Samantha Olson (Ethan)
Work Phone: 227-4211
Samantha.Olson@k12.sd.us

Yolanda Price (Hanson)
Cell Phone: 507-317-4219
Work Phone: 239-4387
Yolanda.Price@k12.sd.us

Jenna Yusella (Marion)
Work Phone: 648-3615
Jenna.Yusella@k12.sd.us

Kalli Sandine (McCook Central)
Work Phone: 425-2264
Kalli.Sandine@k12.sd.us

LaDonna Merkel (Montrose)
Work Phone: 363-5025
LaDonna.Merkel@k12.sd.us

Darmi Vogel (Parker)
Home Phone: 297-4926
Work Phone: 297-3456
Darmi.Vogel@k12.sd.us

*updated November 2021