

CRISIS INTERVENTION/PREVENTION

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1. In the event of a death or accident involving a student, the following notification hierarchy is followed: Police _ Superintendent _ Building Principal _ School Crisis Team _ Staff _ Students.
2. Any staff member, who becomes aware of a death or life threatening injury, should immediately alert the Principal or designee. The Principal notifies the Superintendent. The Superintendent notifies the School Committee.
3. Actions are taken to maintain as routine a school day as possible so as to avoid sensationalizing the death or accident. Representatives of the media should be kept off school grounds and inquiries should be referred to the Superintendent and the Principal who are the only official spokespersons to the community.
4. The Principal or designee contacts the family to determine what information should be shared with the school community. In the event of a death, the Principal contacts the bereaved family to extend sympathy and asks about customs and wishes concerning the funeral/memorial and designates a place in the building for students to create a memorial display.
5. The Principal assembles the members of the School Crisis Team. This group is identified at the start of each school year. Primary participants include administrators, school nurse, counselors/social workers, and a school secretary. Prior to meeting with the Crisis Team, the Principal contacts authorities to discover as much reliable information about the death/injury as possible and prepares a synopsis of the facts.
6. Members of the Crisis Team are assigned to cover each of the student's classes/activities for the day to answer questions and to maintain continuity. An area in the building staffed by guidance counselors/social workers is established for affected students to share their concerns or grieve together.
7. The Principal and Crisis Team make every effort to inform the staff of the death/injury prior to the opening of school. The Principal establishes the tone to acknowledge the death/injury, but focuses on quickly restoring routine. (If school is not in session the "Snow Tree" is activated to inform staff)
8. The Principal informs the student body in a manner consistent with these regulations and the family's wishes.
9. Individuals, who were close friends of the deceased or injured and who seem upset, should be monitored closely. Those students should be encouraged to meet with a counselor if necessary.

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10. During the first day, the Principal prepares and sends to all parents a letter including the following:
 - a. Synopsis of the facts as known and statement about the school response.
 - b. Copies of the memos on the warning signs and stages of grief.
 - c. Statement encouraging parents to contact their child's counselor if they have concerns.

11. The Principal designates an individual to deal with the deceased person's belongings – i.e. lockers, books, etc.

12. Based on staffing availability, the Principal should permit staff members to attend the funeral. Priority should be given to those who had direct contact.

Regulations Adopted:
Regulations Reviewed:
Regulations Revised:

WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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