



Mitchell School District 17-2 POLICY

Category	Approval	
Series 500: Foundations and Basic Commitments	Adopted	Revised
	3/31/88	12/15/97, 7/9/01
	Reviewed	
	8/9/04, 8/11/08, 6/25/12, 6/27/16	

DISTRICT CRISIS POLICY/PROCEDURES

MSD 502

The violent or unexpected death or other significant tragedy involving a student or staff member can cause serious emotional trauma for students and staff. When an emotional trauma occurs, both immediate and longer term action is necessary. To assist in the necessary actions, a Crisis Affirmative Response Enabling (C.A.R.E.) Team shall be appointed by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Recommendations by counselors and administrators will be made to the Superintendent or designee for consideration as appointments to the C.A.R.E. Team. Action related to such a crisis shall be coordinated through the Superintendent or designee and the C.A.R.E. Team as outlined in the administrative procedure.

In the event of a crisis, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Release of information related to an incident will be coordinated through the Superintendent's* office. Contacts with hospitals, media, insurance representatives, law enforcement, parents, relatives, etc., will be made through the Superintendent's* office. Other school personnel may be delegated by the Superintendent* to assist where appropriate.
2. The C.A.R.E. Team shall consist of all administrators and counselors of the building(s) directly affected, and others as appropriate. Others may include, but are not limited to, other district counselors and administrators, clergy, hospital personnel, law enforcement, counselors from area schools, and private counselors.
3. The C.A.R.E. Team will be immediately informed by the Superintendent*. Other school district staff will be informed as appropriate. The C.A.R.E. Team will remind them of the symptoms of grief and strategies to use with students, especially "high risk" students. The C.A.R.E. Team will coordinate school personnel with appropriate support agencies to help facilitate a smooth and orderly school routine.
4. If an incident occurs during school hours, students will be informed only if the C.A.R.E. Team and sufficient other experienced counselors are available to assist with venting of emotion.
5. The C.A.R.E. Team will make counseling assistance available for those friends and acquaintances who volunteer or who are referred. Occasionally, it may be necessary to assign unwilling students to such counseling.
6. Media presence for pictures, interviews, or video tapes will be approved by and regulated by the Superintendent. In most incidents, the media will not be allowed in the school building.
 - a. Media or insurance representatives will not be given access to students during school hours or on school property without oral or written permission of parent or guardian and contact will be limited to the student's non-class time.

- b. Media or insurance representatives will not be given access to staff members during their assigned class time. Access during other times will be coordinated by the staff member and immediate supervisor.
7. Release time for students and staff to attend memorial or funeral services will be determined by the Superintendent* on a case by case basis. Students wishing to attend such services must submit oral or written parental or guardian permission.
8. School related memorials, remembrance gifts, scholarships, etc., will be monitored by the Superintendent*. Any memorials shall be such that they serve a functional purpose and do not highlight this status as a memorial.
9. In the event of a death, school may or may not be closed based upon circumstances.
10. Funeral and memorial services shall not be conducted in school facilities.

Suicide of staff or student is handled differently than other kinds of crisis. Suicide is of special concern because episodic depression is common among adolescents. This creates a high risk of subsequent suicide among friends and peers. The priority of the district must be placed on lowering the risk of subsequent suicides. To that end, and in contrast to other types of loss, the school district will take the following actions in response to suicide:

1. A building staff meeting may be held to provide information following a staff or student suicide. The C.A.R.E. Team will inform staff of symptoms of severe depression and potential suicide, counseling strategies to use with students, and remind staff to watch closely all high risk students, especially friends of the victim.
2. No memorial service may be held on school property. An assembly or other school action that would draw attention to the suicide will not be permitted unless deemed absolutely necessary. If such an assembly is to be held, other than giving factual information concerning the death, presenters should convey only the attitude that the person made a tragic mistake.
3. School will be conducted as usual as much as is possible. Staff and students will be allowed to attend the funeral but school will not be closed nor classes cancelled.
4. Any school staff who overhears or is cognizant of a suicide threat shall immediately report the conversation to a counselor. The counselor will assess the seriousness of the threat and report to the administrator. Attempted suicides and threats of suicide will be communicated, as appropriate, to staff. All suicide threats will be communicated to parents or appropriate family members immediately.

* Superintendent or designee

7/9/01- revision merged 502 and 502R, gave greater specificity to memorial donations and re-emphasized the importance of communicating student suicide threats to parents.