

GREEN BAY SCHOOL POLICIES

NAG 5 Health & Safety

5.2 Traumatic Incident Management Policy (Crisis Management Policy)

RATIONALE

Green Bay School has a responsibility to ensure that learning environments are emotionally and physically safe for children and young people and that the work-place environment is emotionally and physically safe for employees. The impact of a traumatic event/crisis may cause intense feelings of grief and post-traumatic stress. The way an incident is managed is critical to the recovery of the school and reduces the potential for further risk.

PURPOSE

- To develop a plan to deal with a traumatic event before an event occurs
- To protect students, staff, and the school from further adversity
- To facilitate the recovery process

Definition

Disasters are usually defined as overwhelming events that can involve destruction of property, include injury or loss of life, affect communities and are shared by many children and families. They are out of the realm of 'normal' human experience and as such are viewed as traumatic, meaning that they can lead to or result in stress reactions.

Traumatic incidents are broadly defined as events that:

- cause sudden and/or significant disruption to the operation, or effective operation, of the school and/or community
- have the potential to affect a large number of children and young people and/or staff
- create significant dangers or risks to the physical and emotional wellbeing of children, young people or people within the community
- attract media attention or a public profile for the school as a result of these incidents.

Examples of traumatic incidents may include:

- the death or serious injury of a child or young person, staff member or family/whānau member
- witnessing serious injury or death of a child, young person, staff member or family/whānau members
- threats to the safety of students or staff, including the presence at the school of an individual behaving in a dangerous or threatening manner
- a lost or missing child, young person or staff member
- floods, fires, earthquakes or other community crisis or natural disaster.
- Pandemics

Procedures that form part of this Policy

5.2.1 *Traumatic Incident Plan*

5.2.2 *Civil Defence Plan*

5.2.3 *Pandemic Plan*

5.2.4 *Emergency School Closure*

GUIDELINES

- The school will have a Traumatic Incident Response Plan and Team (Procedure 5.2.1 will form part of this policy). The plan will not depend on any single person but will promote the coordinated responsibilities of a team of people who will act to support staff and students and the functioning of the school.
- The Board will regularly review the Plan and Procedures, including the constitution of the team, and the system for calling the team together, as part of its review cycle.
- The Principal will ensure all staff are familiar with the Plan and know what to do in the event of a crisis.
- The Plan will aim for the resumption of a normal school programme as soon as possible following a traumatic event, to help reduce the intensity and duration of difficulties that children and staff can experience following a crisis event.
- The Board will provide “psychological first aid” (counseling and support), as appropriate, to members of the Crisis Team during, and immediately after, acute traumatic exposure. Psychological first aid focuses on providing immediate support on the ‘here and now’ and ‘what needs to happen next’ for those involved in the management of an incident in order to deal with any confusion, disorganisation and emotional numbness, in order to promote problem-solving and functioning.
- Clear, positive communication will be part of the Plan as this will act to reduce uncertainty and fear and prompt positive emotional and physical coping.
- All contact with the media will be through the Board of Trustees Chairperson.

CONCLUSION:

By having a plan pre-prepared, it is hoped to minimize the aftermath and adversity caused by a traumatic incident by helping the school, staff, students and affected community to recover.

Signed: _____
Principal

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Approved: 27.08.08