

# Green Bay School Procedures

## 5.2.1 Traumatic Incident Plan

This Plan provides a framework for crisis situations but every crisis is likely to be different. The Crisis Team will take the context into account when making decisions.

### ***Support available from the Ministry:***

In the event of a traumatic incident, Ministry staff, under the guidance of traumatic incident coordinators, will work alongside the school's traumatic incident team to support their traumatic incident plan. Traumatic incident coordinators can be contacted on 0800 TI TEAM (0800 848326).

Traumatic incident support may include:

- *assisting the traumatic incident response team with planning, problem solving and supporting the school's ability to maintain its day-to-day operations*
- *assisting staff to communicate appropriately with children, young people and the community about the incident*
- *promoting basic forms of support and self-help strategies, such as reconnection with daily routines, and care and advice about the meaning of varying survivor responses in emergency situations to those experiencing them*
- *ensuring safety of children, young people and staff by assisting in the identification of and planning for their wellbeing, especially those who may be particularly at risk owing to previous loss, stress and/or mental health issues*
- *providing immediate support for those who have witnessed or been involved in the trauma*
- *supporting links to Māori networks and other culturally appropriate services.*

### ***In the event of a traumatic incident...***

#### **Notification Phase:**

*If you receive notification:*

- listen to what has happened
- record the notifier's name (and phone number if applicable)
- record the names of people involved
- check that appropriate emergency services have been contacted
- inform the notifier of any actions you will take (such as informing the Principal, informing the Ministry of Education traumatic incident coordinator by calling 0800 848326).
- give the caller your name and phone number in case they need to call back
- immediately the call is over make contact with the principal/senior management and/or the Ministry traumatic incident coordinator - 0800 TI TEAM (0800 848326).

*The school Principal/senior management will:*

- record and verify the facts of the event
- record and ascertain the individuals involved
- if a staff member is involved, contact their emergency contact person
- ascertain the reactions of those involved and record any actions taken
- contact and establish the school's traumatic incident team to coordinate support and further arrangements
- inform the board of trustees (BOT) and any education services that may be affected
- contact the Ministry of Education traumatic incident coordinator 0800 service.

*The School's Crisis Team will usually consist of:*

- The Principal
- Associate Principal/s
- Syndicate Leader/s
- Teachers as appropriate, e.g. teacher of victim/s
- Secretary (to take minutes)
- Any other person relevant to the situation, e.g. School Senior First Aid Officer, RTLB, Community Constable, Board member, Youth Aide Officer, Local Counselling Agencies, MoE Traumatic Incident Team.

*Note: Key staff may need to be released from scheduled duties*

## **Dealing with the Crisis Phase:**

*The School's Crisis Team will:*

At the first opportunity, meet and be briefed

### **Communication:**

1. Establish the most appropriate means of informing staff and students of the incident and the procedures to follow
2. Inform all staff of the event and identify and notify other key people
3. Prepare written statements that are factual and accurate to inform staff and for staff to read out to children (*see notes at the bottom*)
4. Provide information to the Chairperson to enable him/her to inform the media and community. Consider the time journalists will arrive, who they will see and where they will go.
5. Seek cultural assistance as appropriate (eg, Kaumatua, Māori staff). In the case of a death, family/whānau affected should be consulted in culturally appropriate ways and share the content of any written statements.
6. Keep written records of all actions.

### **Assign Roles & Responsibilities:**

7. Clearly assign roles and responsibilities and clearly communicate these to staff and other key people:
  - **Consultation and communication with family/ies**
    - liaison with family(ies) involved and Police if necessary
    - to receive & pass on information / requests etc
    - update daily statements to staff and students as required (to avoid rumours etc)
    - liaise with family re funeral participation (eg supports student attendance) and the possibility of memorial service
    - if appropriate contact professional people to speak to / support family/ies
  - **Communication with the media (*the BOT Chairperson or Board delegate*)**
    - the ONLY designated speaker who talks to any media groups
    - confirms information to go into pre-written releases or to be used during interviews at daily morning meetings
    - writes and updates releases that can be read over the phone
  - **Staff phone Tree information (updated at all times)**
    - crisis Team member in charge rings every 5<sup>th</sup> person on the staff list; they in turn ring the 4 names after their name. Therefore all staff members will require a staff phone list.
    - If incident occurs out of school time, this may be the means of informing staff
  - **Information for Parents**
    - answer questions from concerned parents
    - ensure parents have names/phone numbers of professional agencies (updated list of support services – typed ready to go)
    - Organise leave arrangements for students wanting to attend funeral as per family wishes (eg consent forms, transport, costs etc)
    - Contact parents of students whom staff have identified “at risk” (eg friendship groups but not necessarily closely associated to the crisis)

- **Action Plan for Teachers**
  - at the first staff briefing, teachers will be provided with a paper giving an update of the situation; accurate information to give to students; signs to watch out for among students; what to do with a distressed student
  - inform staff of all updates of the situation
  - update daily whiteboard in the staffroom ie details of daily arrangements eg bell times, extra staff meetings etc)
  - inform teachers of students involved/affected by trauma
- **Counselling for students/staff in the school and in the community**
  - if possible arrange for a room to be made available throughout the day for students, teachers, parents to come to as needed. Set up room with chairs, tissues, food/drinks as appropriate.
  - contact/liaise with support agencies. Make a roster for support agencies to provide counselling, crisis resolution, understanding grief and stress management.
- **School Routines**
  - reallocate staff responsibilities and duties as appropriate for as long as necessary, may need more staff on duty, inform staff already absent
  - reschedule / cancel upcoming events
  - organise relievers as necessary to cover teachers/staff as necessary
  - get administration team to organize catering for needs of crisis team when busy (eg providing food/drinks)

8. Carry out the tasks allocated.

### ***Collect and Collate Information Phase:***

9. Collect and collate information – who is involved in the crisis?
- What groups require attention (staff, students, student year levels, peer groups)?
  - Ascertain names of other family members or close friends (i.e. enrolled at school)
  - Siblings at nearby schools?
  - Other students closely associated (and their parents)?
  - Students may leave with parents if greatly distressed (*see notes below*)
  - If a staff member is the subject of the crisis, ascertain which staff are able to take their classes? How long will they be out of action? (Plan for more than minimum time here – avoid placing teachers who are distressed in front of classes).
  - Provisions for staff members' close colleagues will need to be considered
  - Develop an 'at risk' register
10. Ensure key persons can be readily contacted, phone/addresses, etc. needed; arrange to brief resource people, including culturally appropriate resource people, i.e. Kaumatua.
11. Accurately record and monitor all staff and children and young people's attendance and whereabouts.
12. Check Timetable/scheduled special events for the day or nearby days – should these be re-scheduled/cancelled (otherwise it is important for as much normality as possible).

### ***If a Fatality Has Occurred:***

13. Plan for the collection of deceased children's and/or staff's personal belongings and equipment to return to the family/whānau in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways.

### ***Maintain Regular Programme:***

14. At the end of the day, the Crisis Team meets and reviews events
15. Check all allocated tasks have been performed
16. Plan for the next day, and future events, establishing procedures and requirements – there may be a need for a 7:45am meeting to check in or to set up a regular end of day time.
17. Support the varying reactions of children and staff members through maintaining normal structures, gathering accurate information about reactions, positive messages, activities in classrooms, extra staff as needed etc.
18. Continue as long as necessary.

***Evaluation:***

19. Compile a report of actions at the conclusion of the incident in consultation with all traumatic incident team members, with recommendations on future actions as needed.

**IMPORTANT POINTS FOR ALL STAFF**

The ONLY information to be passed on to students is that received in written instructions. If students are asking questions not covered in written instructions tell them you “will ask someone and get back to them”. Pass these questions on to a Crisis Team member.

If students need to be sent home, this should be authorized with their classroom teacher and parent/caregiver.

If staff need to be sent home, this should be authorized with Senior Management.

Accept all grieving as genuine. The significance of the relationship to the person(s) affected is irrelevant. Sudden death, traumatic events, etc. may trigger grief from past events in people’s lives. Ongoing vigilance will be needed to identify grieving students or staff.

Under no circumstances will staff discuss the incident with the media or community member. Refer all questions to the Crisis Team. Refer all media personnel to the Chairperson, or the delegated Board member.