



5.25 Traumatic Incidents

Rationale

The impact of sudden death, suicide or traumatic event will trigger intense feelings of shock, guilt, denial, anger and grief. To facilitate a recovery process, staff and students need support structures in place at the appropriate time.

Purpose

- To provide appropriate support for those involved in a crisis/ traumatic incident.
- To have clear guidelines in place for dealing with traumatic incidents.
- To protect the safety of everyone in the school community and the reputation of the school.
- To reduce the likelihood of risk to other students or staff.

Guidelines

- The school will have a Traumatic Incident Response plan (TIRP) and a core committee consisting of the Principal, DP, AP, School secretary, relevant classroom teacher, Chairperson, and such members as Principal/ Chair deem appropriate given the particular circumstances (e.g. public health nurse, kaumatua, counsellors, or a person with knowledge of particular cultural issues).
- The principal will declare an incident to be traumatic on the basis of the alert or detail received, and will call together the TIRP team best suited to managed this specific emergency.
- The team will work closely with whatever emergency services might become involved. All events and communications will be logged.
- The principal or person in charge will ring the MOE Traumatic response unit and work with them on a plan to manage the situation.
- Media contact is only by the Principal or Chairperson.
- Staff will be given clear instructions by the principal or senior staff member on site to guide staff responses and actions in relation to any specific traumatic event.
- In seeking an early return to normal routines, the team shall initiate whatever restorative activities are required by staff, students and parents. There will be a full debriefing at the end of the affair, when this management plan shall be closely evaluated and updated.
- The school will be used by Civil Defence in an emergency as a refuge for residents living in the low lying areas of Parnell affected by a tsunami. In other emergencies Civil Defence will deploy the site in other ways deemed appropriate by the authorities.

List of Appendices

- A. Traumatic Incident standard operating procedures
- B Types of Traumatic incidents needing management
- C. Initial TI management committee considerations
- D. On-going TIRP considerations
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Appendix A. Traumatic Incident Standard Operating Procedures

Sizing up the situation :-

Look at the big picture first ...make sure fools don't rush in

Is the situation likely to get worse? Timeframes and distances?

What situation will this incident effect or create?

Are people entering danger and are they prepared – safety gear & procedures

Assistance required:-

Is there enough manpower and resource on site?

What hazards might change the situation?

What, when and how long will the resources be required for?

What support teams and relief teams are needed?

Lives at Immediate Risk

Time, distance and protection- control of exposure?

Type of hazard (s) and special characteristics?

Site Control

Getting early control – exerting discipline and order deploying systems and support ASAP!

Appendix B Types of Traumatic Incidents Needing Management

- Death, critical injury, impairment of student, teacher, prominent community member.
- Destruction of school property by fire, flood, earthquake.
- Major vandalism
- Students witnessing serious injury/ death
- Suicide
- Major incident on a school excursion
- Unfavourable media attention
- Public allegations of sexual assault/ physical violence
- Community disaster (earthquake, flood, tornado etc)

Appendix C Initial Management Team Considerations

- Firstly, verification that initial information of traumatic incident is correct.
- Consultation and communication with family/ families.
- Communication with media (Principal/BOT Chair –not staff or pupils).
- Dissemination of information to staff (key points in writing).
- Action plan for staff (Inform absent staff).
- Day 2 TIRP team met 7.45a.m. Staff meeting 8.15a.m.
- Giving information to pupils.
- Ongoing communication with staff (avoid pupil- generated rumours).
- Counselling for students in the school and in the community.
- “Borrowing” counsellors from local Colleges, high school and other agencies.
- School routines – appropriateness?
- Location of a crisis room for students to “drop in”.
- Effect on other local schools where there are possible siblings.
- Preparation of a notice home to parents (Principal).
- In the case of a death – funeral arrangements (when known).
- Preparation of staff for talking with pupils about suicide/ death if necessary.

Appendix D Ongoing TIRP Considerations

- Normal School routines where possible – up date via email.
- Identification of best friends/ siblings of any deceased.
- The deceased’s classroom desk – discuss with the class teacher. (Often is left in the room). The deceased’s exercise books and property. (Return to family after funeral personally –follow up visit)
- Staff preparedness to listen – lighten up on minor behavioural issues temporarily.
- More staff on duty-senior staff at the gates-parents may wish to talk to them.
- Time for staff to share their feelings.
- Intensive work in the deceased’s class (counsellor).
- Memorial service at school?
- Pupil messages to the family - must be vetted for appropriateness.
- Training for staff to recognise early warning signs in children (suicide).
- Over reactions or inappropriate reactions by children (e.g. a fascination with the gory details of an occurrence/ inappropriate laughter in the presence of the bereaved- refer to parents with SMT support).

Appendix E. TIRPS Teams Roles

<p>TIRP Team Convenor: Principal Secretary: Minutes kept Duties allocated through an agreed action plan developed and as per pages attached. Consideration to inclusion of other people on TIRP's team (Class Teacher of child involved, PH Nurse, kuamatua, or some other cultural representation as considered appropriate)</p>		
<p>Principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of truth of TI • Convene TI team • Decision about extent of TI • Brief PH Nurse and counsellors • Liaison with deceased's family • Media liaison • Prepared statement for staff • Daily statements to staff – squash any rumours • Funeral presence and possible participation 	<p>Deputy Principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascertain which staff can take their classes • Cancel unessential events • Detail any daily arrangements on whiteboard. (e. g. Day 2 procedures) • Reallocate staff duties for duration of crisis • Authorise very upset children to go home with parents 	<p>Associate Principal /HOD Int</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate a phone tree to inform staff of events and of 8.15 staff meeting next day • Ongoing liaison with team leaders • Set up physical arrangements for counselling (library) • Inform parents of close friends by phone • Funeral leave for pupils • Permission notices from parents or consent to attend funeral without parents as part of a school group.
<p>School Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of TIRP team • Takes daily briefing from Principal and only conveys this information • In case of fire takes bollard key with her • First point of contact for most parents 	<p>Team Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching brief on emotional state of team members • Keeping watch on friendship groups particularly those closest to victim. • Supply DP with names of children at the funeral 	<p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform children using principal's prepared notes • Identify close friends/ siblings/ neighbours/ friend's parents • Class teacher is member of TIRP's team
<p>BOT Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of TIRP team • Informs other BOT members • Liaison daily with principal • Media contact 	<p>Executive Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Day relief * Arrange funeral cover for key staff 	<p>In the event of one of these people being involved in the incident – alternate people will be asked to step up into their role.</p>