

Critical Incident Response

Policy 5450

Date: November 4, 2014

Revision Date: May 30, 2017

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of ensuring a compassionate and timely response to critical incidents of a traumatic nature that affect the normal functioning of a school. A critical incident may involve, but is not limited to, a death of a student or staff member by accident, illness, injury, or suicide, school fires, natural disasters, disturbing or threatening behavior, or criminal investigations. The Board expects that critical response plans and procedures will be developed, implemented, and maintained for all schools.

Note: For threats involving weapons, bomb threats, and threats of violence to staff, the Principal and/or designate will immediately notify the RCMP to assess risk and access to weapons.

Administrative Procedures

1. In September:

- 1.1 Principals and/or designate will ensure that a Critical Response Team is in place for the school year.
- 1.2 At the first staff and PAC meetings of the year, the Critical Response Plan will be introduced and reviewed. A “telephone tree” will be created/updated to ensure that students, staff, the PAC President, as well as others involved with the school will be informed and supported in an emergency situation. Others include staff from Strong Start, on-site Daycare, TTOC’s, cafeteria, bussing, janitorial and after-school user-groups, etc.
- 1.3 The Superintendent will develop a ‘telephone tree for the Board of Education and District staff.
- 1.4 A staff “buddy system” will be in place to ensure that staff members are supported throughout an emergency situation.
- 1.5 A copy of the school’s “telephone tree” will be sent to the School Board Office.
- 1.6 This protocol will be reviewed with Principals/Vice Principals at the first Principals’ meeting of the school year and thereafter as needed.

2. Ongoing:

- 2.1 Principals and/or designate will ensure that the Critical Response Plan and “telephone tree” are up to date, (make adjustments for staff additions/deletions, etc.).

- 2.2 Updated copies of the school's "telephone tree" will be sent to the School Board Office.
- 2.3 The Superintendent and/or designate will ensure that the District and Board of Education "telephone trees" are up to date.

3. In a Critical Incident:

If a staff member learns of a critical incident or potential critical incident, the staff member will contact the school Principal or designate.

3.1 STEP 1 – Gather the Facts

- 3.1.1 The Principal and/or designate confirms the critical incident with appropriate sources of reliable information:
 - RCMP,
 - Immediate family,
 - School district personnel, and/or community resource personnel such as a mental health worker.
- 3.1.2 The Principal and/or delegate collects information on the critical incident including:
 - Verification of the details
 - Identification of the individuals involved, and/or
 - Evaluation of the emotional status of school and, if necessary, respond to the immediate safety needs of students and staff.

3.2 STEP 2 – Contact the District

- 3.2.1 The Principal and/or delegate telephones the Superintendent or designate to report the critical incident, who in turn will call the other members on the Board of Education and District "telephone trees".
- 3.2.2 The Principal and/or delegate will ensure that the Superintendent or designate is provided with ongoing detailed information necessary to effectively carry out their role.

3.3 STEP 3 – Activate the School's Critical Response Team

4. In the event of an Out of School Emergency:

- 4.1 In the event of an emergency/tragedy affecting students or staff outside of school hours, staff will immediately contact the Critical Response Coordinator (Principal or designate).
- 4.2 Upon notification of the emergency, the Critical Response Coordinator (Principal or designate) will contact the members of the Critical Response Team. A meeting, if necessary, will be held to discuss School Based Actions and other issues surrounding the emergency.

4.3 Staff members, PAC Presidents and others will be contacted through a “telephone tree”. Others include staff from Strong Start, on-site daycare, TTOC’s, cafeteria, bussing, janitorial, after-school user-groups and absent teachers.

4.3.1 When staffs are contacted, they will be notified of a staff meeting prior to classes on the morning of the next school day.

4.4 At the staff meeting, the following items will be discussed:

4.4.1 Staff will be informed of the facts of the emergency situation.

4.4.2 Expectations for the day will be outlined.

4.4.3 A brief written statement will be provided for use in public/telephone inquiries and in classes as necessary.

4.4.4 A grief room may be established. The Counselor’s office and/or Student Services are the preferable locations. The designated locations(s) will be closed to regular activities for the day.

4.4.5 Teachers are to compile a list of “high risk” students attending school that day and send this list to the office shortly after class begins. The counseling staff can assist with making assessments.

4.4.6 There will be a “business as usual” approach for the day; however, there will be an opportunity for students in need to access counselors, other school supports, or be released to parents.

4.4.7 During the last period of the day, teachers are to check on the emotional state of their students and note any students who may still need emotional support. It is the responsibility of the teacher to contact the student(s) parents to make notification of any concerns. The counseling staff can assist with making assessments and providing suggestions/support in making telephone calls. Forward the list of students to the office.

4.4.8 Remind staff to check on their ‘buddy’ throughout the day.

5. In the event of an In School Emergency:

If Staff should come upon an emergency situation in the course of a school day:

5.1 At the Emergency Site

5.1.1 Do not leave the area. Take charge of the situation. Give specific orders to specific individuals.

5.1.2 Deal with any first aid need immediately to the best of your ability.

5.1.3 Contact the Principal and/or Vice Principal. Send a responsible student if necessary.

5.1.4 Isolate the emergency from the student population. If necessary, ask for assistance to clear the emergency area.

5.2 Office Responsibilities

- 5.2.1 The Principal and/or designate will send the First Aid Attendant to the emergency area immediately.
- 5.2.2 The Principal and/or designate will contact necessary emergency personnel
- 5.2.3 The Principal and/or designate will contact the parents/guardians of student(s) involved and request them to attend.
- 5.2.4 If there is a danger to the school population, the Principal and/or designate will implement a school evacuation as per the school's Evacuation Procedure or the school's Lockdown Procedure (Appendix Seven).

5.3 Follow Up

- 5.3.1 Staff should make notes of the incident and file a copy with the school office and if appropriate, complete a Staff Threat and Violence Report.
- 5.3.2 At the earliest opportunity, the staff will be debriefed about the emergency.
- 5.3.3 At a staff meeting, it will be determined if circumstances warrant implementing a plan of action as outlined in Out of School Emergency.

District Responsibilities

- 1. The Superintendent or designate will inform trustees, district staff and other school principals of the critical incident through the use of district "telephone trees".
- 2. The Superintendent or designate will handle/authorize all public responses and media request for information including press releases; information distributed through the district webpage; "Facebook" and/or other electronic forms; and letters home.

School Evacuation and Closure

- 1. The school will be evacuated as outlined in the Emergency Evacuation.
- 2. The Superintendent or designate, will contact local media to notify parents that students will be arriving home early or that schools will be closed.