



SANDRINGHAM EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE POLICY (To be read in conjunction with Emergency Management Plan)

Rationale:

- Schools as a wide network of community of students, parents and staff may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event. An incident may involve loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance and may occur in the school environment or outside.
- Support within the school community will enable those involved to move forward.

Aims:

- To provide a school environment that takes into consideration the needs of all students, parents and staff when coping with a critical incident.

Implementation:

- This policy will be read and adhered to in conjunction with our Emergency Management Plan.
- It is acknowledged that feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time and both immediate and longer term counselling should be provided for those who need it. This may include many who do not seem to be closely connected to the event or the individuals involved.
- The school may be in a position to help grieving families at difficult times through the school's participation in the funeral service, provision of cook and care as well as support from the school's leadership and staff.
- Our school should continue to operate as normally as possible with some degree of flexibility where required.
- The school community will be given clear, accurate information, taking into account the privacy and confidentiality requested by those involved.

Actions that may need to be taken.

Incidents vary in complexity. The following principles must be followed: -

- * Provision of clear accurate information.
- * Description of action to be followed.
- * Provision of help for all affected.
- * Maintenance of normal school program.

1. Check for dangers and make the area safe
2. Apply First Aid, and call 000 if necessary.
3. Isolate the area, and remove students
4. Obtain accurate information and deal only with substantiated facts.

5. Contact DEECD if necessary. All emergency or criminal activity in which the safety or well-being of staff or students is at risk, or where there is a threat to property, must be reported immediately to the Department's 24 hour Emergency and Security Management Branch **(03) 9589 6266** and/or WorkSafe **13 26 60**
6. As soon as possible accurately inform staff, especially those most directly involved then close friends and family individually. Allow questions and discussion as they arise but dispel rumours. Establish an open line of contact with the family or families directly involved and continue contact with the family to identify their expectations of the school.
7. The Principal will appoint a skilled Support Team to assist in the management of the incident. The team may include staff members, counsellors, DEECD Guidance Officer, DEECD personnel, Media Branch and other relevant support agencies.
8. Provide accurate information to the community and continue to keep staff, students and parents informed especially about what has happened and what the school is doing about it.
9. The Principal and/or School Council President will deal with all media requirements. Advice to be received from Department of Education's Media Unit (96372871) who will help with a written press release if required. Protection of others from contact with the media may be required.
10. Provide out of school hours contact where necessary such as circulating the Principal's telephone number or maintaining telephone contact at the school.
11. Identify those most likely to need reassurance and help - classmates, teacher, special friends, and family. Provide access to counselling in a suitable place which may require flexibility of timetable. The class teacher may be the person to whom students first turn for help.
12. As soon as practicable reassure the student body and provide information about what has happened and what the school is doing about it.
13. Parents will make their own decisions about children attending funerals.
14. The Principal will conduct an Incident Investigation and implement any required controls.
15. Normal routines at school will continue but the effect of incident on the school community will be acknowledged as many people may be deeply affected. An event may cause a person to recall some traumatic event involving them in the past. The anniversary may also be a difficult time.
16. The school and family may wish to plant a memorial tree in the memorial garden at the front of the school.
17. Monitor community with sensitivity and respond to staff and student's needs over a period of time and continue to review this process after any significant incident.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Approved by School Council December 2014

