CRISIS COUNSELING AND INTERVENTION SERVICES

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE
CRISIS INTERVENTION IN SCHOOLS

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH
STUDENT HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Los Angeles Unified School District
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WHAT IS A SCHOOL CRISIS?

A school crisis is a sudden, unexpected, or unanticipated critical incident that disrupts the school day. A school crisis involves short-term turmoil such as shock, confusion and fear. Although each student, teacher, parent or other school family member experiences each crisis differently, a school crisis can have a broad and immediate impact on many children and adults sufficient to interfere with teaching, learning, attendance and behavior. A school crisis can affect a single building or an entire district.

A school crisis situation might be:

a) An accident on or near the school grounds
b) A violent incident at or near school or involving students or staff
c) A suicide of a student or staff
d) The death of a student, staff or one of their family members
e) The terminal illness of a student or staff member

It makes a difference to a school community how a crisis and its effects are managed. Understanding the psychological consequences of a crisis situation and providing effective interventions can reduce the period of school disruption and restore safety and security to the school learning environment.
Organizing for Crisis Intervention

BUL-962.1

Dan M. Isaacs, Chief Operating Officer
Office of the Chief Operating Officer

December 7, 2005

Crisis response procedures are required under California State Education Code, Section 35294.2 (a)(2)(B).

This bulletin replaces Office of the Chief Operating Officer Bulletin No. 962, dated, May 12, 2004, titled Organizing for Crisis Intervention. It provides direction for the organization and use of crisis intervention teams to help schools respond appropriately to crises.

The following guidelines apply.

I. BACKGROUND

As a result of the sniper attack at 49th Street School in 1984 and the recognition that a variety of crisis situations can and do occur in a district of this size, a task force developed and published, in the 1986 bulletin, the first guidelines for psychological first-aid preparedness.

The necessity of responding to a variety of crises in the District over the past two decades prompted the development of a comprehensive crisis intervention plan. The plan addresses the following concerns: 1) how to respond appropriately to incidents that could precipitate a crisis; 2) how to re-establish the safety and security of the school site; and 3) how to provide appropriate psychological intervention services that can help minimize and perhaps prevent emotional damage to those who are affected.

Since the issuance of the original bulletin, there have been many events and incidents in the District schools which have resulted in a need for intervention services to help students and/or staff deal with psychological trauma. Intervention during crisis situations has become widely recognized as a necessary action in order to prevent or minimize the emotional damage to the persons involved.
This bulletin provides direction to schools in the organization and use of crisis teams and in preparation for appropriate response to threats and crisis situations.

II. NEED FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION FOLLOWING A CRISIS

A. This bulletin primarily emphasizes intervention and subsequent actions for crises that have a major psychological impact on schools and communities, such as an act of violence, the death of a student or staff member, an earthquake or other natural disaster, a serious environmental problem, or ethnic and racial tensions.

B. Crises like those described above usually produce one or more of the following conditions:

1. Temporary disruption of regular school functions and routines.

2. Significant interference with the ability of students and staff to focus on learning.

3. Physical and/or psychological injury to students and staff.

4. Concentrated attention from the community and news media.

C. A crisis has the potential to affect an entire school and community. For example, a depressed or suicidal student might need personal intervention services that can be provided by a single trained professional. However, an attempted or completed suicide by a student potentially will impact others and might require more of an organized team effort.

As a result of a crisis, people have a variety of psychological reactions. As soon as the physical safety of those involved has been insured, attention must turn to meeting their emotional and psychological needs.

III. ORGANIZING FOR CRISIS INTERVENTION AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

A. Every Safe School Plan should include a detailed description of the process that has been established to help students, staff, parents and the community deal with emotional and psychological reactions that might occur as the result of a crisis.
B. School Crisis Team

1. Under the direction of the principal or designee, every school shall establish a crisis team, which has primary responsibility for providing necessary assistance after all types of crises (see section II.B.). The responsibilities of the crisis team shall be included in the Safe Schools Plan.

2. Responsibilities of the school crisis team include:

   a. Initiating the crisis intervention component of the Safe Schools Plan.

   b. Assessing the range of crisis intervention services needed.

   c. Providing direct intervention services.

   d. Determining if there is a need for additional assistance from the Local District Operations Coordinator or the Local District Superintendent.

   e. Advising and assisting the principal or designee to restore regular school functions and routines as efficiently and as quickly as possible.

   f. Limiting exposure to scenes of trauma, injury and death.

   g. Providing ongoing assessment of needs and follow-up services, as required.

3. School crisis team members shall be selected from regular school staff and from Local District personnel assigned to the schools (e.g., administrators, teachers, clerical and support staff, school nurses, psychologists, police officers, PSA counselors, psychiatric social workers, etc.). Schools on multi-track schedules shall include staff from all tracks. All teams shall include at least one school administrator, and one mental health professional (e.g., psychological counselor, psychologist, psychiatric social worker). A School Police officer, if one is regularly assigned to the site, shall also be a member of the team. Composition of the full team will vary by school.

4. School crisis teams shall schedule regular meetings to update their knowledge of crisis intervention materials, procedures and techniques, as well as to improve, refine and upgrade their skills.
5. School crisis teams shall refer to the District’s “Quick Reference Guide for Crisis Intervention” for background information and intervention strategies and shall update the Reference Guide when new information becomes available. Reference Guide materials may be duplicated and distributed to school staff, parents and community members, when necessary.

6. As the effects of a crisis subside, the school site crisis team should assess its intervention strategies. Examples of topics to discuss are:

a. Actions that worked effectively and should be included in future plans.

b. Actions that did not work effectively and should not be included in future plans.

c. Actions that can be improved or modified.

d. Actions that might minimize or prevent another similar crisis.

B. Local District Crisis Team

1. The Operations Coordinator in each Local District shall establish a Local District Crisis Team and is responsible for determining leadership and team member assignments.

2. Local District crisis teams include personnel selected from secondary education, school support staff, School Counseling Services, Nursing Services, Psychological Services, School Mental Health Services, Pupil Services and Attendance, Medical Services and School Police.

3. Responsibilities of Local District crisis teams include:

a. Providing crisis intervention training for school crisis teams in the Local District.

b. Providing the following services, as directed by the Local District Operations Coordinator:

   1) Assist principals/designees with needs assessment when a crisis occurs.
2) Provide support to the school crisis team by offering direct services to students and staff, as needed.

3) Evaluate need for the use of appropriate community agency resources.

4) Assess ongoing need for mental health services.

c. Maintaining effective, ongoing communication among team members in order to better evaluate the ongoing needs of Local District schools.

AUTHORITY: This is a policy of the Chief Operating Officer.

RELATED RESOURCES: For additional information on relevant District policies, procedures and resources, the following offices may be contacted:

- District Crisis Counseling (Director) (213)241-2174
- School Mental Health (Psychiatric Social Worker, Clinical Psychologist or Psychiatric Nurse) (818) 997-2640
- Office of the Chief Operating Officer (213) 241-4133
- School Police Department (Chief) (213) 742-8222
  (Watch Commander) (213) 625-6631
- Office of Environmental Health and Safety (Safe School Plan) (213) 241-3199

ASSISTANCE: For assistance or further information please contact:

Marleen Wong, Director, Crisis Intervention Services. (213) 241-2174; Dan M. Isaacs, Chief Operating Officer. (213) 241-4133; or your Local District Operations Coordinator.
# SCHOOL SITE CRISIS TEAM CHART

This chart provides examples of crisis team positions, roles and responsibilities at the school site. Additional staff should be identified as backups for each position in the event of an absence. It is suggested that this chart be completed by October each year with a copy to team members and to the Local District Operations Coordinator, if requested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incident Commander*</td>
<td>Takes charge of crisis incident, verifies facts, contacts Local District, and coordinates all services below.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(usually Principal or designee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Team Leader*</td>
<td>Coordinates all crisis team responders.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication/Media*</td>
<td>Prepares memos and letters, identifies locations for media, and provides regular updates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Administrator and/or designee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Counseling</td>
<td>Provides crisis response and counseling for students and staff. Encourages students to return and remain at school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Counselors, nurses, psychologists, PSA, PSW)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>Triage and handles medical emergencies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(nurse and assistants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Secures campus and crime scene. Identifies witnesses for police interviews.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(School Police and security)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Manager</td>
<td>Secures school site.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Plant Manager and staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Relations / Support</td>
<td>Organizes and informs parents of reunification procedures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Assign Administrator / designee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Individuals in these positions need to be in constant communication throughout the crisis response.
CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

I. ASSESSMENT/PLANNING

☐ Determine impact, call 911 as needed
☐ Secure campus (Campus Protection if needed)
☐ Activate school crisis team response
☐ Inform Local District Operations Coordinator, School Police* and Office of Communications
☐ Determine bell schedule, if changes are necessary

II. LOGISTICS/OPERATIONS

☐ Determine location and establish sign-in procedures for the following:
   ☐ Command Center
   ☐ Communication Center
   ☐ First Aid Center
   ☐ Police Interview Area
   ☐ Parent Center
   ☐ Media Center
   ☐ Triage/Crisis Counseling Areas
   ☐ Holding Area for witnesses to be interviewed

III. COMMUNICATION/PUBLIC INFORMATION

☐ Determine stakeholders to be informed
   1. ☐ Develop brief fact sheets and/or letters for distribution (Verify all facts before releasing information)
      a. ☐ Faculty & Staff
      b. ☐ Students
      c. ☐ Parents
   2. ☐ Identify spokesperson(s) (Bilingual)

☐ Keep staff and crisis team members informed
   1. ☐ Distribute updated memos to staff for rumor control
   2. ☐ Inform staff/team members of all schedule changes
      a. ☐ Bells (nutrition / lunch / dismissal)
      b. ☐ Buses & after-school activities
   3. ☐ Inform staff of location for crisis counseling and other centers
   4. ☐ Clarify procedures for counseling referrals

☐ Determine potential impact on neighboring schools

IV. REUNION PROCEDURES AND PARENT SUPPORT

☐ Identify and communicate reunion location
   1. ☐ Calm parents, reinforce safety and reunion procedures
   2. ☐ Reinforce parent/student sign in/out procedures
   3. ☐ Inform parents that crisis counseling is available

V. INCIDENT DEBRIEFING & EXIT INTERVIEW (Administrator, Crisis Team, LDOC) – Review actions/identify students who may need additional assistance.

*Please note: Death Notification can only be provided by law enforcement or coroner office officials.

School Mental Health - LAUSD
Crisis Counseling & Intervention Services
Los Angeles Unified School District
LOCAL DISTRICT CRISIS TEAM PROCEDURES

LAUSD crisis intervention teams operate within a two-tier system of response. At the school site, “Under the direction of the principal or designee, every school shall establish a crisis team” (Bulletin 962.1).

At the second tier, the Local District Crisis Teams are comprised of multidisciplinary employee volunteers who, in turn, support school site crisis teams. Led by the Local District Operations Coordinators, the Local District Teams respond to events which overwhelm the resources of the school and provide technical assistance to school-site teams. The Local District Operations Coordinator plays a crucial support role with local schools.

To request Local District assistance, the principal must contact the Local District Operations Coordinator with information about the specific crisis.

ROLE OF LOCAL DISTRICT OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

The Local District Operations Coordinator (LDOC) responds to requests from school site administrators and determines the type of Local District assistance and services needed. The LDOC or District Crisis Team designee will:

- Dispatch a member or members of the District Crisis Team to assess the need for crisis counseling services
- Designate a district team member as a “point person” to remain on-site, coordinate the combined school and district crisis team efforts, and report back to LDOC
- Convene the school site administrators, school and Local District Crisis members for an incident debriefing and exit interview to review actions and make recommendations for follow up
Overview of Crisis Counseling / Support

I. Triage and Assessment
   A. Triage students individually or in small groups
      1. Determine risk factors
         a. Direct exposure (witnesses, victims, suspects, perpetrators)
         b. On-site: students, faculty, staff, and parents
         c. Friends or relatives of victim(s)
         d. Experience of previous trauma or loss
      2. Determine who needs group counseling, individual counseling, outside referral or needs to return to class

II. Provide crisis counseling / support to students in the classroom, group or individual sessions utilizing the Psychological First Aid (PFA) framework
   A. Psychological First Aid Handout (page 11)
   B. Common Reactions to Stress can be discussed in the classroom and as part of the “Teach” component of PFA

III. Provide as requested by site administrator
   A. Staff Support
   B. Participation in parent/community meetings
   C. Information and educational materials about crisis recovery

IV. Exit interview / meeting with site administrators and school support staff
   A. Review actions of the day
   B. Review the status of students, including who may benefit from additional services
   C. Plan for follow-up actions-next day / week / month
   D. Complete and submit school incident report to LDOC
Common Reactions to a Traumatic Event

Individuals may experience a wide range of reactions in response to a traumatic event. Some of these reactions are listed below:

A. Physical Changes

- Pupils dilate
- Saliva thickens
- Startle responses increase
- Eating patterns interrupted
- Heart rate increases
- Sleep patterns interrupted (nightmares)

B. Cognitive Changes

- Difficulty with memory
- Decreased computational skills
- Decreased ability to analyze
- Difficulty following what is said or read
- Intrusive thoughts and images of the event
- Impaired concentration
- Slower learning speed
- Impaired decision-making skills
- Decreased self-awareness

C. Emotional Changes

- Feelings of isolation
- Developmental regression
- Depressive feelings
- Lack of enthusiasm*
- Denial
- Anger
- Anhedonia - an inability to feel pleasure or happiness for experiences that are ordinarily pleasurable.
- Anxiety
- Decreased intimacy
- Lack of trust
- Return to past hurts and trauma
- Guilt
- Fear
TRIAGE AND RISK SCREENING

Triage and risk assessment should occur first with those with the highest level of exposure (1) to those with the lowest level of exposure (4).

BY EXPOSURE

Out of Vicinity (4)
In Neighborhood (3)
On-Site (2)
Direct Exposure (1)

Other risk factors to consider when assessing student needs are:

BY OTHER RISK FACTORS

Students who have Experienced 1 or More Traumatic Event
Familiarity with Victim(s)
Previous Trauma or Loss (especially within the last year)
Worry about Safety of Family Member or Significant Other

Family History of Trauma, Exposure to Violence or Traumatic Incidents or Illness
CRISIS FLOW CHART

CRISIS OCCURS AT THE SCHOOL SITE, the Principal convenes the School Site Crisis Team and Notifies the Local District Operations Coordinator (LDOC)

School Site Crisis Team meets to assess the impact of the crisis and begins the crisis response

If the crisis is beyond the resources of the school site, Principal or site administrator contacts the LDOC to request assistance

The LDOC or Local District Crisis Team designee will further assess the crisis situation and deploy district resources as needed*

School Site Administrator completes and submits the Incident Report form to the LDOC

* Office of Human Relations, Diversity, and Equity and the Office of Youth Relations/Crime Prevention may be called at this time.
WHEN A SCHOOL BECOMES A CRIME SCENE
Guidelines from LAUSD School Police

The goals of law enforcement personnel are to stop criminal acts, to apprehend suspects, to assist victims and to collect and preserve evidence. When a criminal act occurs or is suspected on a school campus or immediately outside the perimeter of a campus, police may designate all or a portion of the campus as a "crime scene" from which evidence must be sought, gathered and properly stored for further use during an investigation or a legal proceeding.

School administrators and staff should not enter a marked or otherwise identified crime scene area or interfere with a police investigation. Likewise, students, parents and community members must not be allowed to enter, interfere with or "contaminate" a crime scene. **Persons not authorized to be within an identified crime scene are themselves subject to arrest.**

1. **Law enforcement personnel will establish a "crime scene" under the following conditions:**
   - Murder or suicide*.
   - Death due to suspicious circumstances.
   - When the victim of a crime may possibly die.
   - For serious crimes with or without injuries to students, staff or others (crimes including but not limited to vandalism, burglary, arson).

2. **Only** authorized law enforcement and fire department personnel are allowed inside a designated crime scene area.

3. The first police officer(s) to arrive on scene will have specific duties to perform to ensure the protection of the crime scene and to make sure that the crime is investigated properly. If officers seem impatient or abrupt toward staff, it is likely due to their attention to these necessary tasks. Despite the sometimes chaotic nature that characterizes many crises, the police must be permitted to do their jobs according to established procedures.

4. A sergeant and/or police officer will serve as the liaison with the school's administration.

5. Depending on the size and the nature of the crime scene, the law enforcement officer in charge will determine if and when crisis team members or other support personnel from outside the school can enter the campus to begin their intervention assessments and follow-up activities. It would thus be useful for school site administrators to identify in advance one or two adjacent locations that could be used on a temporary basis by other crisis team and support personnel to check in and establish contact with school site staff until access to the campus is allowed.

6. School administrators may be asked to provide one or more on-campus locations to isolate witnesses for questioning by law enforcement personnel. Keeping witnesses apart helps to preserve the integrity, clarity and objectivity of each person's account.

*Note: Death notifications to next-of-kin is the responsibility of law enforcement personnel.*
GENERAL STEPS IN LEGAL REPORTING PROCEDURES
Guidelines from the Office of the General Counsel

DUTY TO NOTIFY

While it is important to establish a trusting and supportive relationship with students and their parents/guardians in order to provide an environment for effective intervention after a crisis, it is also important for staff to remember that they have a state-mandated legal duty to make a formal report in the following circumstances (effective January 1, 2001, the duty to report was extended to both certificated and classified personnel):

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (under 18 years of age)

A. Abuse
   • Child reports directly that s/he has been abused.
   • Staff member reasonably suspects from direct observation of child that child has been abused.
   • Staff member sees child being abused.
   • Staff member, from other information received or conclusions drawn, has a reasonable suspicion that child has been abused.
   • For complete discussion of child abuse mandates and reporting procedures, see Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting and Procedures Bulletin No. 1347.1, October 26, 2009.

B. Harm to Self:
   • Child discloses that s/he is thinking of harming himself/herself.
   • Another party discloses to staff member that child is thinking of harming himself/herself. (See Suicide Prevention Bulletin 2637.0, July 1, 2006).

C. Harm to another:
   • Child indicates his/her intent to harm someone else and/or has been involved in or witnessed a crime in which a person was harmed (See Reporting Procedures below).

D. Criminal Activity:
   • Child discloses that s/he has engaged in or intends to engage in a crime likely to cause serious physical injury or significant property damage
   • Staff member observes, or has knowledge that the child has committed or intends to commit a crime likely to cause serious physical injury or significant property damage.

ADULT STUDENTS

A. Someone’s life or physical safety is being threatened or an individual indicates intent to harm self or others.

B. Staff member has observed or has knowledge or suspected child abuse by an adult.

C. Staff member has knowledge of adult student’s involvement in criminal activity.
REPORTING PROCEDURES

When any of the above is indicated, a staff person must take immediate action according to the district’s reporting procedures. Notification of the school administrator is optional when a report is made directly to a children’s protective services agency (Children’s protective services agencies include Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Public Social Services and law enforcement agencies.)

Note: For purposes of child abuse reporting, school police departments are not children’s protective service agencies and should not be the recipients of child abuse reports.

A. Child Abuse - Report to appropriate children’s protective services agency

B. Suicidal Thoughts/Fantasies
   - Children/adolescents - Inform parent or legal guardian and provide referrals to appropriate community mental health agencies.
   - Adults - Contact a third party to assist in helping the adult obtain mental health services; provide referrals to appropriate community agencies.

C. Intent to Harm Another - Contact intended victim to provide notification.*

D. Intent to Commit a Crime - Contact appropriate law enforcement agency.

* Duty to warn refers to the responsibility of a crisis counselor or therapist to breach confidentiality if a client or identifiable person is in clear or imminent danger. In situations where there is clear evidence of danger to the client or other persons, the counselor must determine the degree of seriousness of the threat (see Threat Assessment section) and notify the person in danger and others who are in a position to protect that person from harm.

If the threat is credible and the intended victim is a:

   - Student—school administrator brings student to safe site on campus and notifies parent of threat; school police officer assistance in notification is requested if needed.
   - Faculty/Staff Member—intended victim is called to administrator’s office and is notified of threat; school police officer assistance is requested if needed.
WORKING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA WHEN A CRISIS OCCURS
Guidelines from Office of Communications (213) 241-6766

News media reporters, photographers and camera crews may come to your campus as allowed by state law to gather information for use as “news.” Media persons with legitimate press passes may be on school property with the principal’s (or designee’s) permission if they have checked in with the school office, stated the purpose of their visit and agree to comply with reasonable “ground rules” set by the school. School or law enforcement authorities can establish different ground rules in the aftermath of a crisis than might be in place for a reporter’s visit on a more routine story.

The media can be a quick and effective tool providing post-crisis, emergency information to parents and the community.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Designate the most appropriate spokesperson for the school (principal and/or his designee). A Spanish-speaking spokesperson should also be available.

- Identify a room or an area on campus (or an alternate location adjacent to the campus) as a place where news media can be briefed. Anticipate a large media presence after a serious incident and pre-select your briefing area(s) accordingly.

WHEN A CRISIS OCCURS

- After requesting appropriate assistance from 911, the School Police Department or the Local District office, contact the Office of Communications, (213) 241-6766, as soon as possible. Provide enough information to enable that office to be in contact with the media and thus lessen the communications burden on the school. A communications officer may be assigned to your school to assist with media relations activities.

- Write a brief fact sheet that can be used by persons answering the phone in the school office when parents or news media call in the hours immediately following an incident. The fact sheet can serve to confirm known facts (i.e., “Yes, we did have an explosion in one of our science labs. Two students were injured and have been taken to the hospital.”), and use follow-up phrases such as: “We’re still checking the facts to find out exactly what happened...The police are still investigating...Children are now back in their classes with their teachers...Everyone followed the evacuation plan that we have practiced...School will be dismissed today at ___________ instead of the usual time...Parents with proper I.D. can pick their children up at the Reunion gate on the __________ side of the campus starting at 1 p.m....We will send a letter home to all parents....,” etc.
• Media should be referred to the designated media liaison or the Office of Communications.

• Before group media briefings or an interview with just one or two reporters, jot down some basic chronological notes about the incident to use as your statement of what happened. Make your statement before taking questions. Refer to your notes, if necessary, when speaking to reporters or answering questions. Avoid implications of “blame” or “responsibility” for an incident before the matter has been fully investigated. Be mindful about the type of information about students or staff that can be provided to media and what, by law, must remain confidential.

POST CRISIS

• Students and parents should be asked to refer media questions to the principal.
• If a reporter wants to interview students on campus, the administrator (or media liaison) should select students, however students have the right to decline speaking to the media.
• The liaison or another staff person should be present and should halt the interview if questions to students become inappropriate.
• On-campus interviews with elementary level students after a traumatic incident are not recommended (a parent who is on campus that day may be willing to permit an interview).
• Students waiting to give witness statements to police or school staff should not be permitted to speak with reporters first.
• Media cannot enter classrooms to speak with students without specific permission from the principal. Any interviews with or statements given by faculty members should be voluntary and not conducted during class time.
• Keep the Office of Communications staff (or the communications officer assigned to your school that day) informed of new developments.
• Students waiting to give first hand witness statements are under police authority and should be isolated until released by law enforcement officials.
PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE
This is a form to guide you in preparation for a public information release.

Date: ___________________________ Time: ___________________________

Note: If this is used as a script, read only those items checked. Make no other comments.
(Check off, fill in, and cross off as appropriate)

☐ The (students/employees) [(are being) or (have been)] accounted for.

☐ No further information is available at this time.

☐ Emergency medical services [(are here) or (are on the way) or (are not available to us)]

☐ Police [(are here) or (are on the way) or (are not available to us)].

☐ Fire Dept./Paramedics [(are here) or (are on the way) or (are not available to us)]

________________________________________________________________________

☐ Communication center(s) for parents (is/are) being set up at: ___________________________

________________________________________________________________________ to answer questions about individual employees.

☐ Injuries have been reported at ___________________________ and are being treated at

the site by (staff/professional medical responders). (#) ____________ reported injured.

☐ Students have been taken to a safe area, _________________, and are with [(classroom

teachers/staff) or (______________)]

☐ Students have been taken to the local emergency room for treatment of serious injury.

Parents of injured students should go to the emergency room at __________________________

☐ Structural damage has been reported at the following sites: __________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Release restrictions:  ☐ No  ☐ Yes  If yes, what? __________________________

Released to the public as Public Information Release # __________________________

Date: ___________________________ Time: ___________________________

For further assistance, please contact the LAUSD's Office of Communications (213) 241-6766.
LANGUAGE NEEDS / CULTURAL AWARENESS

Members of the school site and local district crisis teams should reflect the language and cultural diversity of the students. Strong feelings or emotions are often expressed most effectively through the child or adult’s primary language. Bilingual/bicultural personnel have a key role in providing effective intervention and postvention services.
Instructions for Crisis Teams

1. **Supervise the student and assign a “designated reporter.”** Ideally, the chain of supervision begins with the perceptive, trained gatekeeper who escorts the student directly to the attention of a school crisis team member who will serve as the “designated reporter.” This is typically a school psychologist, counselor, social worker or nurse who has been trained to conduct suicide risk assessment. Under no circumstances should the student be allowed to leave school or be alone (even in the restroom) until a risk assessment has been completed and a plan has been generated. It may be appropriate to solicit the aid of collaborators to monitor the child while the crisis team member seeks a phone in private.

2. **Collaborate with administration or crisis team personnel.** Many potentially difficult decisions will have to be made and having the support and consultation from an administrator and one other staff member (perhaps the school psychologist, nurse, counselor, or social worker) is both reassuring and prudent.

3. **Warn parents or protective services.** Whether a child/adolescent is assessed to be low, moderate or high risk, parents or protective services must be notified in a timely fashion by the “designated reporter.”

4. **Provide resources to parents.** Provide parents with “General Guidelines for Parents” handout and with additional school-site and local mental health resources as appropriate.

5. **Utilize law enforcement when appropriate.** All school crisis teams should have a representative from local law enforcement. If a student resists, becomes combative or attempts to flee, law enforcement can be of invaluable assistance. In some cases they can assume responsibility for securing a “72-hour hold” which will place the youth in protective custody up to three days for psychiatric observation.

**Assessing Risk in Suicidal Students**

**Questions to ask students:**
- Has the student thought about suicide (thoughts or threats alone, whether direct or indirect, may indicate LOW risk)?
- Have they tried to hurt themselves before (previous attempts, repetitive self-injury may indicate MODERATE risk)?
- Do they have a plan to harm themselves now (the greater the planning, the greater the risk)?
- What method are they planning to use and do they have access to the means (these questions would indicate HIGH risk)?

**Questions to ask parents, teachers, staff:**
- What warning signs(s) initiated the referral?
- Has the student demonstrated abrupt changes in behaviors?
- What is the support system that surrounds this child (the more the student feels isolated and alone, the greater the risk)?
- Is there a history of mental illness (depression, alcohol and substance abuse, conduct or anxiety disorder, co-morbidity)?
- Is there a history of recent losses, trauma or victimization?

Questions, Indicators, Levels of Risk and Interventions

LOW RISK (Ideation)

- Sample student question: Have you ever thought about suicide (harming yourself)?
- Other Indicators: current or recent thoughts; signs of depression; direct or indirect threats, sudden changes in personality, friends, behaviors; evidence of self harm in written or art work; dark internet websites and chat
- ACTIONS: Reassure and supervise student; warn parent; assist in connecting with school and community resources; suicide-proof environments; mobilize a support system; develop a safety plan that identifies caring adults, appropriate communication and coping skills and resource numbers.
- Document all actions on a Risk Assessment Referral Data form (RARD).

MODERATE RISK (Current ideation and previous behaviors)

- Sample student question: Have you ever tried to kill (hurt yourself) before?
- Other Indicators: previous attempts; recent mental health hospitalizations; recent trauma (losses, victimization); recent medications for mood disorders; alcohol and substance addiction; running into traffic or jumping from high places; repetitive self injury.
- ACTIONS: See high risk.
- Document all actions on a Risk Assessment Referral Data form (RARD).

HIGH RISK (Current plan and access to method)

- Sample student question: Do you have a plan to kill (harm) yourself today?
- Other Indicators: current plan with method/access; finalizing arrangements: giving away prized possessions or written/e-mailed good bye notes; refusal to agree to a safety plan.
- ACTIONS:
  - Supervise student at all times (including rest rooms).
  - Notify and hand off student ONLY to:
    - Parent or guardian who commits to seek an immediate mental health assessment.
    - Law enforcement.
    - Psychiatric mobile responder.
- Document all actions on a Risk Assessment Referral Data form (RARD).
- Prepare a re-entry plan. All students returning from mental health hospitalization should have a re-entry meeting where parents, school and community mental health personnel make appropriate follow up plans.

Crisis Counseling Referral Form

After a critical incident, some students may need extra support and crisis counseling services. To maintain order, crisis counselors will summons students from this list.

Complete the form below and provide as much information as possible in the Comments section, such as:
- They have witnessed community violence involving a death or serious injury
- They had a close relationship to the teacher/staff member
- They have experienced a recent loss of family/friend
- Any other relevant information

Please return this form to ____________________ (designated staff/office).

Thank you for your support and cooperation.

PERSON MAKING THE REFERRAL: ____________________

Room/Office: ______________ Date: ______________

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<tr>
<th>Name &amp; DOB (optional)</th>
<th>Grade/Room #</th>
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**Sample Memo/Template: provided as a guide, please make changes as needed.**

**TO STAFF: ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF STUDENT**

School Interoffice Memo

**TO:** All Faculty and Staff

**FROM:** Principal (Designee)

**SUBJECT:** ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF A STUDENT

This morning, we were informed by ______________ (LDOC, Police Department, etc) that one of our ___(grade) students was killed as s/he crossed the street on her/his way to the bus stop at __________ ______ (intersection/street). The __________ Department is currently investigating the matter. Many students were at the scene or in close proximity of the accident.

We have prepared a statement for you to read. After reading the statement, students may want to talk or write about their feelings.

Some students may need extra support and a referral to the crisis team may be needed, especially if:
- Student witnessing the accident
- Student had a close relationship with the victim
- Student has suffered a recent family/friend loss or illness

We have established a crisis response center in _________(place). *Send the attached referral form to ______(place) for any student who seems to need help dealing with this incident. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.*

Information regarding funeral arrangements will be shared as soon as information becomes available.

*Note: Be sure to attach referral form (see page 30).*
Sample Memo/Template: Provided as a guide, please make changes as needed.

TO STAFF: DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER

School Interoffice Memo

TO: All Faculty and Staff

FROM: Principal (Designee)

SUBJECT: DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER

Staff: Please take a moment to review this memo about the loss of our colleague and friend. I am asking every teacher to read the following statement to students at the beginning of 4th period today.

Class:
We have just been informed that early this morning our teacher/counselor, ____________ (name), died. At this time, Mr./s ___________ family is waiting for the medical report to determine the cause of death. Mr./s. __________ will always be remembered as a warm, caring and nurturing person. S/he made sure that his/her students were taken care of first. We will miss his/her involvement, dedication and the support that s/he provided for our students.

At this time with your permission, students may take ten minutes to write a card, note or letter of sympathy. Please bring the cards to the main office before the end of the school day. We will make sure that the family receives the notes of support.

If any student needs crisis counseling, please send the attached *referral form to ____________ (office) as soon as possible. To avoid a rush of students at any one time, crisis counselors will schedule time to meet with the students sometime during the day using your referral list.

Crisis counselors have told us that some students have a greater need for support and a referral to the crisis team, if:

• They have witnessed community violence involving a death or serious injury
• They had a close relationship to the teacher/staff member
• They have experienced a recent loss of family/friend

Support is also available for staff, as needed.

A letter to parents will be sent home today at ________________ (time/period).

*Note: Be sure to attach referral form (see page 30).
#1 LISTEN to what they say and how they act.
- Just listen and pay attention to the child.
- Observe nonverbal communication. Remember that student(s) may also show their feelings in nonverbal ways, such as increased behavioral problems or increased withdrawal.
  *Caution:* Do not investigate or probe for details; you may trigger trauma reminders or jeopardize a legal investigation if questions are leading.

#2 PROTECT by maintaining structure, stability, and consistency.
- Follow District Guidelines and procedures regarding notification of an administrator.
- Children need to hear that what happened is not their fault and that they did the right thing by telling.
- Conduct the discussion in private and reassure the student that the disclosure enables adults to help and protect.
- Maintain daily routines, activities, and structure with clear expectations, consistent rules.
  *Caution:* Do not express doubt or disbelief.
  *Caution:* Do not make judgmental statements or place blame.

#3 CONNECT through interaction, activities & resources.
- Explain your responsibility to report.
- Explain your duty to protect and keep student(s) safe.
- Consider referring the student to your learning support staff (psychiatric social worker, school psychologists, counselor, nurse) finding resources on campus that can offer support to student(s).
  "Check in" with student(s) on a regular basis.
  *Caution:* Do not make promises or false assurances.

#4 MODEL
- It is good to be aware of your thoughts and feelings, and reactions about the event. This can affect your students. Your students will be watching you for both verbal and nonverbal cues and it will influence how your students cope and behave.
- Monitor conversations that students may hear.
  *Caution:* Do not express shock or anger at the possible perpetrator or event.
  *Caution:* Students often love the person who mistreats them.

#5 TEACH about normal changes that can occur when traumatized
- Student(s) may have different reactions, even to the same event.
- Encourage your students to identify and use positive coping strategies to help them after the event.
- Help your students problem solve to get through each day successfully.
- Help students set small "doable" goals and share in these achievements as "wins."
  *Caution:* With time and support, students generally do better. If they do not, they should be encouraged and taught to seek assistance from a parent or a teacher they know.