







Contents

4 Policy E-20 – Response to Tragic Events

6 Procedure APE035 – Response to Tragic Events

8 Responding to the Death of a Student

11 Responding to the Death of a Staff Member

14 Responding to the Death Within a Student's Family

16 Responding to the Death Within a Staff Member's Family

18 Responding to a Death When Schools Are Closed

19 Appendix A – External Resources

21 Appendix B – Sample Letter to Parents

22 Appendix C – Sample School Announcement

23 Appendix D – Do's and Don'ts



RESPONSE TO TRAGIC EVENTS

Policy Number: E-20

Authority: 06-155/14-05/17-219/20-112

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeastern Catholic District School (NCDSB) is committed to assisting our school communities touched by a traumatic event or crisis that occurs in a family, in the local area or in the broader global environment. As a Catholic community of believers we are called to show empathy and compassion to our students and staff members who may be affected emotionally by tragedy or crisis. The NCDSB believes that our response to tragedy must reflect our Catholic beliefs, values, and traditions, while respecting the increasing diversity of our community.

REFERENCES

NCDSB Administrative Procedure APE035
NCDSB Tragic Events Protocol

DEFINITIONS

Crisis

An unexpected event that cannot be prevented and which causes deep emotional reactions within the school or community.

Tragic Event

A serious illness, accident, death, or traumatic event that affects more than one student or staff member, and that goes beyond the school resources in terms of coping and responding.

POLICY REGULATIONS

- 1.0 The Northeastern Catholic District School Board's Tragic Events Protocol and attendant administrative procedures will help to ensure that there is consistency in our response and actions to tragedy and/or crisis.
- 2.0 The Tragic Events Protocol and attendant administrative procedures shall include suggestions on ways to deal with grief, including ~~but not~~ limited resources, as well as appropriate communication strategies to consider.
- 3.0 In the instance of a tragic event, the Principal or Administrator shall consult with the Superintendent of Education and refer to the Tragic Events Protocol.
- 4.0 The Superintendent of Education will communicate the tragic event to the Director of Education as soon as possible, who will then share the information with the NCDSB community accordingly.



5.0





- vi) direct office staff to make necessary adjustments in the student information system;
- vii) work in collaboration with staff to set up a prayer table in honour of the tragic event.

1.2 Superintendent of Education

- i) shall advise the Director of Education of a tragic event upon learning of the situation;
- ii) coordinate the response in a particular school with the school principal or designate;
- iii) maintain active lines of communication with all stakeholders as necessary.

1.3 Director of Education

- i) communicate the tragic event to the Board of Trustees and NCDSB community as promptly as possible;
- ii)





21. Determine if further recognition is needed in yearbook or graduation ceremony (if applicable).
22. At the end of day one, meet with staff to allow them to share about the day, ~~review~~ what was done and prepare for the next day, next week, etc.
23. Be prepared to provide further support to students and staff at significant points in the



RESPONDING TO THE DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER

Possible Actions/Requirements

1. Upon learning of the death of a staff member, the Principal should immediately notify the Superintendent of Education. The Superintendent of Education should notify the Director of Education.
2. The Principal should contact the family and determine their wishes regarding:

- x Facts of the death
- x Details about funeral arrangements
- x Visitation to home and funeral home
- x Wishes about donations or flowers
- x Wishes about phone calls home
- x Details concerning letter to be sent to class and/or school
- x Schools

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8. Keep the day as normal as possible.
9. If the staff member who has died was a classroom teacher, ensure that there is a “familiar face” in the classroom to notify the students about the death.
10. Determine the names of the students who were close to the deceased and offer counselling.
11. Where needed, provide support for staff by the most appropriate person. Ensure that staff are given time and a place where they can go when needed.
12. If desired, set up a visible memorial to remember the deceased.
13. If desired, send flowers and/or donation to the funeral home.
14. Send sympathy card to the family of the deceased.
15. Send letter home to school community outlining the school response to the death.
16. Arrange for students who wish to attend Funeral Mass/Service. Normally, students from the class (grade three and up) would attend the Funeral Mass/Service. Prior to the Funeral Mass/Service a letter should be sent home advising parents that their child will be attending the Mass/Service unless the parents make other arrangements. See Appendix B for sample letter.
17. Arrange for staff who wish to:
 - x Visit the funeral home
 - x Attend the Funeral Mass/Service
 - x Ensure some staff representation at each

Teachers and support staff with immediate contact with the staff member as well as the Principal should attend the funeral home and the Funeral Mass/Services to support the grieving family and staff member.

18. Plan to have a brief prayer at school on the day of the funeral. See Appendix E.



22. At the end of day one, meet with staff to allow them to share about the day, review what was done and prepare for the next day, next week, etc.

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RESPONDING TO THE DEATH WITHIN A STUDENT'S FAMILY

(Immediate Family – mother, father, brother, sister)

Possible Actions/Requirements

1. Upon learning of the death within a student's family, the Principal should immediately notify the Superintendent of Education.
2. The Principal should contact the family and determine their wishes regarding:
 - x Facts of the death
 - x Details about funeral arrangements
 - x Visitation to home and funeral home
 - x Wishes about donations or flowers
 - x Wishes about phone calls home
 - x



10. Where needed, provide support for staff by the most appropriate person. Ensure that staff are given time and a place where they can go when needed.
- 11.



RESPONDING TO THE DEATH WITHIN A STAFF MEMBER'S FAMILY
(Immediate Family – spouse, mother, father, brother, sister, child)

Possible Actions/Requirements

1. Upon learning of the death within a staff member's family, the Principal should immediately notify the Superintendent of Education.
2. The Principal should contact the family and determine their wishes regarding:
 - x Facts of the death
 - x Details about funeral arrangements
 - x Visitation to home and funeral home
 - x Wishes about donations or flowers
 - x Wishes about phone calls home
 - x Details concerning letter to be sent to class and/or school
 - x Schools plan of response
 - x Calls from the media
3. The Principal conducts a staff meeting as soon as possible to deal with:
 - x Facts of death
 - x Family's wishes
 - x Funeral arrangement details
 - x Staff response to death (how they are feeling)
 - x Review of the grief process
 - x Outline plan of action to notify students of death and how to support them



| NEW LISKEARD/COBALT | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Temiskaming Hospital | 705-647-1088 |
| Ontario Provincial Police | 705-647-8400 |
| NEOFACS | 705-647-1200 |
| Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish | 705-647-5035 |
| St. Patrick Parish | 705-647-5035 |
| Perrin Funeral Chapel Ltd | 705-647-5020 |
| Buffam Leveille Funeral Home | 705-672-3122 |
| MOOSONEE | |
| Weeneebayko General Hospital | 705-658-4544 |
| Moosonee Health Centre | 705-336-2341 |
| Ontario Provincial Police | 705-336-2320 |
| Nishnawbe | |



APPENDIX B – LETTER TO PARENTS

Date

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

It is with great regret that I inform you of some very sad news concerning the death of ____ (name) on ____ (date). ____ (name) was a student/staff member in grade ____.

Words cannot express the depth of our sympathy for his/her family at this time. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the ____ (family/last name) family at this time.

The news of ____ (name) death was shared with your child at school today. In the midst of this, students were able to share their thoughts and feelings, not only about ____ (name) death, but many also shared stories and memories about loved ones they have known who have died. It was a very rich and profound experience. However, as a result, your child may come home with some questions or unresolved feelings and thoughts about life and death. I invite you to continue this dialogue and sharing with your child should he/she desire to.

Visitation will be at ____ (name of funeral home) on ____ (date and time). The Funeral Mass/Service will be celebrated at ____ (name of church/funeral home) on ____ (date and time).

In accordance with our Board policy and procedure, Response to Tragic Events, students (grade 4 (e)2.3 (r e)2.2 (am3 (ra2ill b)2.2))TJ 1.00-11 1.0 -1I6.6 (u)o)2.0.00gm.2y9.6 50 Tc9 T a(s)-3 (h)a.4 (5-6.6



APPENDIX C – SAMPLE SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT

Guidelines

The method used to inform students will vary according to the situation.

- 1.



APPENDIX D – DO'S AND DON'TS

| Do's | Don'ts |
|---|---|
| Do acknowledge that all people grieve differently; affirm and support individual expressions of grief, including the absence of grief | Don't disclose any information other than the |



APPENDIX E – SAMPLE PRAYERS AND LITURGIES

Suitable Prayer Following the Initial Announcement of a Death

(Suitable Song)

Let us begin ... In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray ...

Loving God, You are the source of all life and the font of compassion. It is with truly heavy hearts that we gather here today as we mourn the sudden death of our friend ____ (name). In our grief we are at a loss to understand how someone with so much to give could be taken so suddenly from us. We wonder at the justice of leaving a family without a (son/daughter; mother/father).

So Lord, we know that You will understand that for us, right here and right now, our sense of loss may seem bigger than Your gift of life; our questions may seem to echo louder in our hearts than any words of consolation. Yet the comfort of Your words sustains us:

Insert suitable scripture reading.

God of compassion, to whom can we go? Sustain us as we struggle to come to grips with this tragedy. For those of us who believe in Your love, we know that death is not an end, nor does it destroy the bonds that You have forged between ____ (name) and ourselves. We share the faith of Your Son's disciples and the hope of the children of God. Bring the light of Christ's resurrection to this time of pain as we pray for ____ (name), his/her family, and his/her friends.

And so it is with confidence in Your sustaining grace that we pray together... Our Father

We offer our prayers this morning in the name of Jesus, our brother and first born from the dead, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

(Suitable Song)



Prayer of Loss

Merciful God, this morning we grieve the loss of our friend____ (name) whose (sudden) death has caused us all to experience a sense of loss.

Tender as a parent with a child, You are gracious to us, O Lord. We know how we are fashioned and sustained by Your love; each of our names are written on the palm of Your hand. Continue to care for3.4 e





Prayer for The Dead

(Book of Blessings, CCCB)

Lord Jesus, have mercy on all who have died.

Bring them into the fullness of your joy and let them live with you in heaven.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer, for you are our Saviour and our Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, listen to our prayer for _____ (name).

Have mercy on him/her, and in your love lead him/her to the unending joys of the kingdom.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer. Amen.

Heavenly Father, be merciful to _____ (name) whom you have called into eternity.

Forgive all his/her sins, and let him/her live with you in joy.

Father, we ask this grace through Christ our Lord. Amen.





Memorial Celebration (#2)

Introduction:

Leader: Welcome everyone, to this special celebration to remember _____. We honour her/his memory today, and entrust her/him to be with God, our Father. We gather here in faith, to pray for _____ and for her/his family, and for those who mourn her/his passing. As believers in Jesus, who know the power, light, and triumph of the Resurrection, let us stand and sing together:

Be Not Afraid (Rise up and Sing, #214)

Opening Prayer:

Leader: We begin ...

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray ...

Heavenly Father, Lord and Giver of life, thank you for the gift of _____. His presence among us will always be treasured. We praise you, Lord Jesus, and give you thanks, through Christ our Saviour, in the love and unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

(Please be seated.)

First Reading: (Phil 1. 37, 9-11)

A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians: I thank my God whenever I think of you and every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes... My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening it. Help you.



3. For those among us who are suffering in any way...whether through illness, sadness, rejection, or loneliness...that the healing power of God working through us will bring strength and comfort, we pray to the Lord. R.

4. In particular, we remember____, who has been called from this world. May the power and victory of the Resurrection bring hope and healing to her/his family and to all of us who grieve her/his loss, we pray to the Lord. R.

5. Christ Jesus, You promised to be with us always. Guide us in being Your faithful witnesses. Increase our faith and cradle us in Your love, we pray to the Lord. R.

Leader: We make these petitions and all those that echo in the silence of our hearts, with confidence in the name of Jesus, our risen brother.
(Please be seated.)

Gesture: Lighting of the Tapers

Leader: ____ is no longer with us. She/he remains, however, in our memories, as a friend, and a person of faith and light. As we reflect on and remember her/him today, perhaps we are inspired to be people of light and faith ourselves. We are challenged to be the "light of Christ" to others.



Memorial Celebration (#3)

(Reflective background music as everyone enters the school gymnasium.)

Introduction: Welcome everyone to this celebration as we honour our friend/classmate _____. Christ is our light and promises to be with us where two or more are gathered in His name, Jesus, our friend and saviour, is there with us. The light of Christ takes away our darkness, sadness, and fear. He is our comfort and our strength. The light of Christ is our hope and our promise of new life.

Children of the Light (Come and See: Year 4, #12) is sung while the Christ candle is lit.

(Invite the assembly to stand and join in the singing.)

Opening Prayer:

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Leader: Let us pray...

We are the light of Jesus and we choose, through the gift of our faith, to believe in the power of Jesus in our lives. _



APPENDIX G

