

Students

Crisis Response

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While it is difficult to prescribe an all-purpose plan of action to be used in addressing crises of every conceivable sort, the Board of Education recommends the following broad guidelines to be followed when facing the challenges of a crisis situation. The intent of this protocol is to present a set of steps to be used when necessary, and to suggest as well an implied authorization to be flexible in responding to the specifics of a given situation.

1. When the situation is site or school-focused, the principal shall be the leader on the scene. That individual shall immediately inform the Superintendent of the circumstances which constitute a crisis or a potential crisis. The Superintendent or designee shall be the spokesperson for the system in addressing the media or other individuals. The Superintendent shall determine which individuals beyond the immediate school community shall be consulted and/or informed of the situation.
2. In case of a site or building specific crisis, the Principal shall create a crisis response team that shall include such individuals as the school psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker, faculty members, school nurse and/or school physician, specialized personnel from the counseling center, and others who can contribute to a determination of what specific actions and follow-up will occur. When the crisis involves all of the schools or affects the school community as a whole, the Superintendent shall be responsible for taking similar action.
3. The crisis response team, under the leadership of the building principal or the Superintendent, shall determine, either in anticipation of a crisis or in the aftermath of one, the specific details of the situation, what information will be shared with students and staff regarding the events, what type of intervention is required, the scope of that intervention, and who shall be responsible for delivering the intervention.
4. Should a tragic event occur which constitutes crisis in the school community when school is in session, information shall be shared in a fashion that guarantees consistency of the message and sufficient detail to prepare staff to take whatever action might be required. If school is not in session, a telephone chain shall be implemented and a brief meeting shall be called to share details. Be sure to share information with all staff.
5. Staff shall be prepared to address student questions and to be able to identify student reactions that cause concern.

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6. The Crisis Response Team shall receive referrals from staff when they have concerns about specific student reactions. This group shall serve as a general resource to staff in dealing with the crisis. The Team shall support teachers who are affected by the crisis, as well as students.
7. Crisis intervention plans may involve staff members from other schools or agencies in town when there are circumstances requiring more personnel.
8. In the aftermath of a crisis, the Crisis Response Team shall offer recommendations about follow-up actions and/events including commemorations, welcoming back students or staff who have suffered a loss, or memorials.
9. The Crisis Response Team shall convene after the crisis to assess how well the plan of action worked and to record recommendations for additions or deletions to this protocol.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

10-221(e) Boards of Education to prescribe rules.