



CRISIS RESPONSE POLICY

Sussex Montessori School (SMS), in accordance with **Nolan's Law 14 Del. Code, Chapter 38**, Subchapter 2, will establish and maintain a crisis response plan for all school-connected traumatic events. SMS will identify and establish a crisis response team (CRT) on campus. The Crisis team will meet at minimum annually to address the need for maintaining the requirements and training standards per best practices for crisis response.

DEFINITIONS:

School-connected traumatic event: defined in Nolan's Law as the death of any student, educator, administrator, or other building employee of a public school.

Critical Incident: Powerful, traumatic events that initiate the crisis response in a person. A critical incident may overwhelm the coping ability of individuals or groups exposed to the incident. (International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.).

Crisis: An acute emotional, cognitive, and physical reaction to a powerful, horrible, awful, terrifying, or grotesque stimulus or to an overwhelming demand or circumstance (International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.).

VERIFICATION OF A SCHOOL-CONNECTED TRAUMATIC EVENT OR CRITICAL INCIDENT:

The CRT will work with local law enforcement and first responders to verify a school-connected traumatic event. The CRTs will utilize the *PREPaRE Crisis Fact Sheet: Crisis Facts That Inform Psychological Triage* (APPENDIX A) to determine the level of response needed after the traumatic event has been verified, so an overreaction/response doesn't occur.

PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION:

The CRT will use all information gathered to determine the appropriate amount of information to release about the event. The CRT will collaborate with local law enforcement and Administrators as to how/when to disseminate the information to students, staff, and the community if necessary.

PROCEDURES FOR CRITICAL INCIDENT RECOVERY:

SMS will have a two-pronged critical incident recovery plan in place for any school-connected traumatic events, critical incidents, crises, tragedies, or emergencies that occur on and off our school grounds that have a psychological and/or physical effect on our staff and/or students.

The first prong will support student needs and the identification and referral of the students that are most impacted by the event. Members of the building CRT will utilize the *PREPaRE Crisis Fact Sheet* to determine the level of student support needed and refer students to school counselors and state-provided grief and trauma counselors as needed.

The second prong will support staff member needs. Members of the CRT will refer staff members in need of support to school counselors and state-provided grief and trauma counselors as needed.

Both student and staff support will be offered by internal and external professionals. External mental health providers, community organizations, and Department of Education resources will be accessed for supportive measures.

CRT RESPONSE LEVELS:

SMS Charter School will identify levels of crisis response for organizational and planning purposes. The response levels may be increased or decreased. The level of crisis will determine the level of response from internal and external providers.

- Level 1 (highest level of need): minimum activation timeline – 5-7 days on site
- Level 2 (moderate level of need): minimum activation timeline – 3-5 days on site
- Level 3 (lowest level of need): minimum activation timeline – 1-3 days on site

STAFF DEBRIEFINGS:

SMS Charter School will offer voluntary debriefings to staff following a crisis incident. At the conclusion of a critical incident, event staff will be brought together for a crisis management briefing. This meeting will be conducted with school leaders, the CRT, and school counselors/social workers. This meeting will provide information regarding the incident and supports in place for both students and staff, guidance and instructions for recovery, and reflection on the process to maintain best practices. An additional goal of this meeting will be to mitigate the impact of the traumatic event, reduce cognitive emotional and physiological symptoms, accelerate the recovery process, assess the need for additional services, and identify any individuals who may need additional assistance.

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM:

The CRT will include the Head of School, the Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Finance and Operations, The Facility Manager, School Support Staff, School Nurse and members of the Emergency Preparedness team, as appropriate. The role of Incident Commander will be assumed by the Head of School or his/her designee.

- **The Incident Commander** is solely responsible for school related traumatic event response operations and shall remain at the school command post to observe and direct all operations. The IC will ensure the safety of the students, staff members and others on school grounds. The IC shall assess the type and scope of the event, and assign functions and positions as needed. The IC will work with members of the CRT to determine if additional resources and support are necessary beyond the initial 30-days of grief counseling funded by the Department of Education.
- **School Counselors/Social Workers** play a vital role in promoting positive mental health practices in schools and should assist with school-wide crisis preparedness, prevention, intervention, and response. They should also take an active role in outlining responsibilities and best practices in the school crisis planning and response. When there are multiple school counselors/social workers at the school, the school crisis response planning team will discuss and divide appropriate tasks or responsibilities with other

counselors. One counselor/social worker will be designated as the Mental Health Crisis Response Team Lead. Other Support staff will assist with prevention, interventions, training, referrals, follow-up, etc. with their own caseload of students.

- **The School Nurse** is responsible for the medical care of members of the school community involved in a crisis event. He/she plays a vital role during an emergency by taking control of medical operations, setting up triage and treating those who are injured or who become ill.
- **Facilities Manager:** A crime or other situation in or near a school may require the school staff take steps to quickly secure the school from internal or external threats. The facilities manager will work in conjunction with the Incident Commander to develop specific assignments for school personnel during such an emergency and creating a system to make sure the school is secure. The facilities manager will act as a liaison with the law enforcement agency handling the situation.
- **Members of the CRT** will conduct other tasks, as assigned by the Incident Commander, to ensure the safety, security, and emotional well-being of members of the school community.

APPENDIX A

PREPaRE Crisis Facts That Inform Psychological Triage

	Sources
<p><i>Basic Information</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What happened?2. When did the event occur?3. Where did the event occur?4. Is law enforcement involved (did a criminal activity take place)?5. Who was involved (i.e., who are the crisis victims)?6. What is the prognosis for those involved?7. Was anyone injured or killed? YES NO<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. If YES, who was killed?	
<p><i>Physical Proximity</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who witnessed the event?2. Who was exposed to the aftermath of the event (e.g., saw victims being medically treated)	
<p><i>Emotional Proximity</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who knew the crisis victim(s)?2. Who is considered close friends of the crisis victim(s)?3. What classroom(s) was(were) the crisis victim(s) a part of?4. What activities (e.g., clubs, athletics, organizations) did the crisis victim(s) participate in?	

Personal Vulnerability

1. Have there been other crisis events that have affected students/staff this past year?
2. Have any of the staff or students been affected by an event similar to the current crisis?
3. Has anyone experienced a sudden loss of a loved one over the past year?
4. Are there staff or students who have any mental health concerns that may affect their ability to cope with the crisis?
5. Have staff and/or students already learned of the event? YES NO
 - a. If YES, how were staff and students informed (e.g., media, social media, pictures, videos)?

Note. Brock, Sandoval, & Lewis (2001); Conolly-Wilson (2009).

Note. Schools using the PREPaRE Third Edition Curriculum may recreate and/or adapt content from this handout on school or district letterhead as part of the school or district crisis preparedness process. The integrity of the core content must be maintained and the PREPaRE curriculum properly cited and credited. Schools *may not* alter content on the PREPaRE branded document. No other use is permitted unless otherwise expressly permitted by NASP.

Copyright © 2019 Stephen E. Brock and Melissa A. Louvar Reeves. All rights reserved. Published by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). NASP owns the