

NLSchools refers to all public K-12 English schools and school-related facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, Education Operations Branch and all employees working therein providing services and supports to such schools, including those who work in the areas of school facilities, student transportation, program implementation, student services, and procurement.

Policy Name

Traumatic/Critical Incidents

Policy Statement

The Department of Education is committed to supporting students and staff during traumatic incidents or crises and recognizes the need to provide for both their physical and emotional needs during those times. School-based crisis response teams will be established to assist students and staff in the event of a serious injury to, or in the death of, a member of the school community.

Background

Traumatic incidents or crises can have a profound impact on the school community. Such incidents can lead to grief, a breakdown of normal coping mechanisms and other complex reactions. Schools can and do play a critical role during and after a traumatic incident. In many cases the school becomes the focal point for students, staff and other members of the school community and school staff must be prepared to respond effectively during a crisis. As such, it is essential that all schools develop a pre-planned, systematic organizational model to provide appropriate supports and resources, to direct decisions, and to ensure a stable and orderly environment.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff within NLSchools.

Definitions

Critical Incident

A sudden, unexpected, often incomprehensible event that may be personally upsetting and could potentially result in emotional and physical distress. For example: an accident

or injury, death of a student or staff member, a missing student, etc.

Crisis

A situation that is unpredictable and traumatic.

NLSchools Crisis Response Team

A group of employees within NLSchools who provide support to schools in the event of a crisis.

School Community

The school community refers to the students, parents and other family members, and staff who are all directly connected to the school system.

School Crisis Response Team

A subcommittee of the Safe & Caring Schools Committee that is formed at the beginning of each school year and is responsible for responding to a crisis at the school level.

School Crisis Response Kit

A compilation of resources, information and recommended items used by a school in the event of a crisis.

Policy Directives

1. Student Services staff shall ensure that an NLSchools Crisis Response Team is in place to support schools.
2. The School Administrator shall ensure this policy and the associated Administrative Procedures are shared and discussed with staff as early as possible, but not later than October 15th in each school year.
3. The School Administrator shall ensure the formation of a School Crisis Response Team as early as possible but not later than October 15th in each school year.
4. The School Administrator shall ensure that a crisis response plan is in place and reviewed no later than October 15th in each year.
5. In the event of a crisis, the School Administrator will make contact with NLSchools Crisis Response Team to engage support as deemed necessary by the School Crisis Response Team.

6. The School Administrator shall ensure that a School Crisis Response Kit is established and equipped as per the Administrative Procedures outlined for this policy.
7. The School Administrator shall be responsible for notifying the Director of Schools for the school who will, in turn, notify the Superintendent of Schools and any other designated personnel of the incident. The School Administrator shall submit the required documentation.

Administrative Procedures

1. The Student Support Division shall ensure that a Regional Crisis Response Team is in place to support schools.
 - 1.1 The Student Support Division will communicate the Regional Crisis Response Team members and their contact information to school principals. Team members shall include:
 - Director of Schools for the school
 - Designated staff person(s) from Student Services
 - Other staff, as deemed necessary.
 - 1.2 The Senior Management Official (Student Support) or designate will communicate the Regional Crisis Response Team members to the Senior Management Official (School Systems).
2. The Principal shall ensure policy directives and these Administrative Procedures are shared and discussed with staff as early as possible, but not later than October 15th in each school year.
 - 2.1 The Principal will ensure that staff members have an opportunity to review this policy and procedures at a staff meeting.
 - 2.2 The Principal will ensure that staff members are given the opportunity to seek clarification on their roles and responsibilities.
 - 2.3 The School Crisis Response Team shall be responsible for:
 - Preparing and informing staff members on an annual basis about the School Crisis Response Plan.
 - Annually reviewing the School Crisis Response Plan.
 - Compiling a School Crisis Response Kit (see [School Crisis Response Kit](#)).

- Ensuring the School Crisis Response Kit is updated and operational on an annual basis.
 - Assessing the event, identifying the appropriate level of response, and implementing the School Crisis Response Plan.
 - Coordinating efforts at the school level to deliver support to students and staff on a group or individual basis during and following a crisis.
 - Contacting appropriate personnel and community resources for support.
 - Respecting privacy and confidentiality as it pertains to sharing information of the crisis.
 - Ensuring that all aspects of the response plan are deployed.
 - Discussing and evaluating the crisis and planning any further actions.
 - Leading a debriefing session with the school staff and students to address any personal, emotional, or other concerns.
 - Consulting with NLSchools staff with regards to debriefing for the team.
 - Completing and submitting an incident report to the Director of Schools for the school.
 - Forwarding a letter of recognition/appreciation to groups or individuals thanking them for their support and involvement during the crisis.
3. The Principal shall ensure the formation of a School Crisis Response Team as early as possible, but not later than October 15th in each school year.
- 3.1 The Principal shall ensure that a member of the School Administration is on the School Crisis Response Team.
- 3.2 The Principal shall ensure that a staff member with current First Aid and CPR certification is a member of the School Crisis Response Team.
- 3.3 During the formation of the School Crisis Response Team, the Principal shall give careful consideration of the composition of the team. In addition to Administration, team members may include:
- Guidance Counsellor and/or Educational Psychologist;
 - member(s) of the Safe and Caring Schools Committee; and
 - other staff members.

4. The Principal shall ensure that a School Crisis Response Plan is in place and reviewed no later than October 15th each year.
 - 4.1 The Principal shall ensure all decisions and actions are taken in consultation with the School Crisis Response Team, where possible.
 - 4.2 The Principal shall inform all staff members of the crisis.
 - 4.3 The Principal shall, in consultation with the School Crisis Response Team, determine if additional NLSchools/community support is required.
 - 4.4 The Principal shall ensure that any other impacted schools are informed.
 - 4.5 The Principal shall ensure the School Crisis Response Plan is updated and communicated annually to staff and the School Council.
 - 4.6 The Principal shall ensure, following a traumatic/critical incident, that staff and students are informed of available supports.
 - 4.7 The Principal shall ensure, following a traumatic/critical incident, that staff have an opportunity to reflect on the response plan and revise if necessary.
 - 4.8 The Principal shall consult with the Director of School Communications, prior to notifying the school community of a traumatic/critical incident.
5. In the event of a crisis, the Principal/designate will make contact with the Regional Crisis Response Team to engage support as deemed necessary by the School Crisis Response Team.
 - 5.1 The Principal shall ensure that the Director of Schools for the school is notified.
 - 5.2 The Director of Schools will notify the Senior Management Official (Student Services), Senior Management Official (School Systems), Director of School Communications and Superintendent of Schools.
 - 5.3 The Senior Management Official (Student Services) or designate will notify relevant Student Services staff.
6. The Principal shall ensure that a School Crisis Response Kit is established and equipped.
 - 6.1 **The School Crisis Response Kit** may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - School Emergency Telephone Tree with home and cell numbers for all staff.
 - Emergency Contact List which may include personnel, emergency personnel, retired teachers, clergy, volunteers, substitutes, community

support groups, local businesses, etc.

- List of students, addresses and phone contacts.
 - Master Schedule.
 - School Floor Plan.
 - First Aid Kit/List of staff with First Aid/CPR and other related training, e.g., Non- violent Crisis Intervention (CPI).
 - Designated areas for counselling and/or supportive services for students and staff.
 - Designated alternate site and accessibility plan in the event that the school needs to be evacuated.
 - Information on responding to grief.
 - List of students and staff with medical conditions and emergency response protocols.
 - Other elements, as deemed appropriate.
7. The Principal shall be responsible for notifying the Director of Schools for the school who will, in turn, notify the Superintendent of Schools and other designated personnel of the critical incident.
- 7.1 The Principal shall ensure an incident report is completed and forwarded to the Director of Schools for the school.