

Students

Crisis Response

Crisis Management Plan

The Role of Personnel in an Emergency Situation

For the health and safety of the students and staff, and for communication with parents and other necessary personnel in an emergency, the Board of Education recognizes the importance of acting quickly and responsibly. The primary function of the district is to communicate accurately and quickly in response to an emergency, a crisis or trauma resulting from a crisis.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedure.

Policy adopted: January 12, 1999
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HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Hamden, Connecticut

Students

Crisis Response

Crisis Management Plan

Procedures of Handling Crises, Emergencies and Its After Effects

The following guidelines are designed to ensure the health and safety of all Hamden Public School students during an emergency and/or crisis. The health and safety of students during a crisis require:

1. The immediate and effective response to the actual emergency if such an emergency has occurred on or near school property during school hours (i.e., violent intruder, disruptive demonstration).
2. The immediate and effective response to the psychological trauma resulting from such an emergency.

Communicating of accurate information is critical to effectively responding to a crisis or the trauma resulting from a crisis. There are five groups of people that require accurate information: Superintendent/central administration, principal/building administration, staff, students, and parents. If the Superintendent/central administration first become aware of the emergency, they will then advise building administration. If the principal/building administration first become aware they are to advise central administration. If staff first become aware, they will inform the principal who will, in turn, advise the Superintendent/central administration. Staff, students and parents will need to have accurate and timely information.

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is an advisory team to the principal/building administration. The CIT is composed of a nurse, psychologist, social worker and other staff as appointed by the principal.

The Role of School Personnel

The principal of each school is responsible for developing a plan of action to be used in the event of an emergency and for providing the Superintendent with a copy of such plan. The plan should specify which members of the school staff will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrators, if required, and to designate which members will be assigned supervision of key areas of the school plant.

As part of the overall plan, the principal should become acquainted with police department personnel who may serve the school for the purpose of developing effective communication and working relationships with the police department prior to an emergency occurring.

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The Role of School Personnel (continued)

If an emergency and/or crisis should occur on or near the school site, the principal or his/her designee must take the following action immediately:

1. Request emergency medical assistance if required.
2. If the situation in the principal's judgment is serious enough to warrant police assistance, report the incident to the police and then to the Superintendent/designee.
3. The principal should be prepared to answer factual questions regarding the incident (e.g., who, when, where, how, etc.) to the police and news media. The principal should not make statements to the news media unless he/she has had adequate time to assess the situation **and has checked with the Superintendent or his/her designee.**

If an emergency and/or crisis is in progress, faculty and staff should make every effort to retain students under their immediate control. Movement of classes should cease until the situation permits the orderly movement of the students from class to class. Selected teachers and other key personnel should be assigned to supervise areas of major concern.

Additionally, the principal should take the following steps:

1. Discourage students from using the school telephone and instruct office personnel to make calls to homes to report any emergencies which students may have.
2. Designate one person to answer all incoming calls and relate to callers the facts of the incident as the principal instructs.
3. Prepare a written report of the incident as soon as possible. The report should be forwarded to the Superintendent as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the incident has occurred.
4. Take the necessary follow-up action to carry out any administrative directives.

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The Role of School Personnel (continued)

In situations where the nature of a complaint by school personnel to police is trespassing (not to be confused with disturbing the peace, property damage, etc.), it is the prior responsibility of the school principal to advise the trespasser that he/she is in violation of Board Policy and that he/she must immediately leave school property or the administrator will request police assistance. Police assistance should be summoned if the principal's warning fails to cause the trespasser to leave or if the principal is in doubt that the person so warned intends to leave the premises peacefully.

Upon the arrival of the police officer(s), a suspended or expelled student who is found to be trespassing will be arrested, and the name of the principal or his/her designee will be used as the complainant in the offense report prepared by the investigating officer.

Action Plan Format

1. The person in charge during a crisis event is the school principal/or head teacher if the principal is not present. The CIT will be activated.
2. The Superintendent, Police Department, or Fire Department, as needed, will be alerted to the problem by the principal and/or secretary.
3. The school office will serve as command post for the crisis situation. The school secretary will log the events.
4. The school management safety team will meet biannually to review procedures to follow the case of a crisis.

Implementation of Procedures During A Crisis

1. Mobilize team immediately.
2. Notify Superintendent and other agencies as needed.

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Implementation of Procedures During A Crisis (continued)

3. Once assembled:
 - a. Collect/compare facts;
 - b. Make early assessment of situation;
 - c. Designate one person to answer all incoming calls and relate to callers the facts of the incident as the principal or designee instructs;
 - d. Develop time schedule from available information;
 - e. Be supportive;
 - f. Maintain calm; and
 - g. Encourage flexibility

4. The principal will announce an appropriate message over the public address system. This message will set in motion the following crisis procedures:
 - a. All classes stay in their room until an all clear is indicated;
 - b. All teachers who do not have any classes assigned to them at the time immediately report to the main office;
 - c. Whenever possible, all exterior doors will be locked in the event of a crisis;
 - d. The principal will assign personnel to notify classes meeting outside of the building to return to a specified secure area,
 - e. All students/staff will remain in place until an "all clear" message is given; and
 - f. Prepare a written report of the incident immediately. The report should be forwarded to the Superintendent within 24 hours of the incident.

5. Should the crisis occur during lunch and/or recess period the following will occur:

Follow steps 1-4 as listed immediately above.

If the students are at lunch

If a situation occurs during lunch time and/or noon recess:

- a. Students eating would remain in the cafeteria;
- b. Their regular classroom teacher would report to the cafeteria to assist in their supervision as long as the emergency remains;
- c. A regular classroom teacher, who may be on duty, will then report to his class at this time;
- d. Any ideas on duty are to remain there, and
- e. No other lunch shifts will begin until the emergency has passed.

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Procedure for Handling Psychological Trauma Subsequent to a Crisis or Emergency

Subsequent to an emergency or crisis, the building principal convenes the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). The CIT acts as an advisory panel to the principal. The initial objective of the CIT is to gather all factual information relating to the emergency. The team then evaluates the impact of the crisis on staff and students and generates corrective strategies. The Psychology Chairperson or either of the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Special Education, will provide additional psychologists, social workers, nurses or other specialists to the affected schools as needed and/or requested.

The steps taken by the CIT will depend upon the emergency. The following are provided as examples of CIT activities, this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Suggested CIT Procedures

- Delegate appropriate responsibilities among team members.
- Prepare and distribute a factual written statement for staff.
- Decide where and when to share information with students.
- Develop special plans for classes directly affected.
- Meet with identified classes by room or in assembly to review facts, inform them of crisis counseling centers, discuss feelings, encourage them to be supportive of each other and discuss feelings with parents.
- Develop appropriate support systems within the school (e.g., counseling crisis centers, groups for students, staff).
- Prepare and distribute letter to send home to parents to let them know what is being done at school.
- Decide when it is appropriate to contact certain parents individually.

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Suggested CIT Procedures (continued)

- Identify students who may be at risk.
- In case of deaths, obtain funeral information and share it; plan memorial services. (It is suggested that, in the case of suicide, memorial services not be held in the school building.)
- Assess long-term effects on school.
- Schedule faculty meetings before and after school day. Guidelines for initial and follow-up faculty meetings are provided below.

It is important that staff receive accurate and timely information about the emergency or crisis. While a written statement of facts may be prepared for staff and distributed during the day, a faculty meeting should be held as quickly as possible. Additional faculty meetings should be held as needed.

Guidelines For An Initial Faculty Meeting

1. Distribute written statements of facts. Dispel rumors if necessary.
2. Inform faculty that all police and media contact concerning the crisis should be directed to the building administrator.
3. Announce funeral arrangements if applicable.
4. Give faculty an opportunity to react, ask questions, and express feelings.
5. Give staff support, if needed. Encourage staff to be supportive of one another.
6. Discuss when and where students will be presented with the information. Address how the particularly affected classes will be handled.
7. Communication of factual information to parents is essential.

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Guidelines For An Initial Faculty Meeting (continued)

8. Review warning signs.
9. Review how to access which students may be more at risk at the time of crisis.
10. Discuss the support systems that have been developed.
11. Let staff know the plan for the school day.
12. Arrange for a follow-up faculty meeting.

Guidelines For a Follow-Up Faculty Meeting

1. Review the day, get feedback from staff.
2. Give staff an opportunity to share and express feelings.
3. Set up staff support group, if appropriate.
4. Gather names of students or classes needing additional support.
5. Discuss next steps to be taken.

Procedures for Handling School Bus Accidents

Subsequent to a school bus accident, the building principal or his/her designee must take the following action immediately:

1. Notify the Superintendent of Schools/or designee
2. Call parents of student on bus/van

The bus driver will call the Bus Company and the police will be notified.

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Procedures for Handling School Bus Accidents (continued)

If the severity of the accident warrants, the building principal/designee will convene the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). The CIT acts as an advisory panel to the principal. The initial objective of the CIT is to gather all factual information relating to the bus accident and evaluate the impact of the accident on students and staff and generate corrective strategies.

The building principal/designee will follow steps and procedures set forth under CIT procedures.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of Education to prescribe rules

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