



POLICY TITLE:

Acknowledgement of School Community Deaths and Bereavements

Initial Board Approval: November 29, 2022

Board Review:

OBJECTIVE:

To ensure that in the event of the death of a student, staff, or community member (current or former) appropriate acknowledgement is made on behalf of the Independent School Authority Board.

To ensure that, when the learning or working environment is impacted by a death, support is available for students and staff affected by the loss.

DEFINITIONS:

Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) is comprised of our school counsellor, Occupational Health and Safety Representative, and an administrative team member who provide assistance in supporting students and staff dealing with grief and loss resulting from a traumatic incident such as a death of a member of the school or work place.

Close family member includes spouse/partner, son/in-law or daughter/in-law, parent/in-law, and siblings/step-siblings/half-siblings.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Principal shall be responsible for:

1. acknowledging and responding to the death of a student or staff member in accordance with this administrative regulation;
2. responding to any inquiries from students, staff, parents or the media; and
3. acknowledging the bereavement of a student or staff member suffering the loss of a close relative accordance with this regulation.

The Chief Operations Officers shall be responsible for acknowledging:

1. the death of a current or former Board Member; and
2. the bereavement of a board member suffering the loss of a close family member, in accordance with this regulation.

REGULATION

A. DEATH OF A CURRENT OR FORMER STUDENT

1. The principal or a designate, on notice of the death of a student attending the school shall:
 - a. contact the school counsellor and Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) designate for advice and assistance on protocol for acknowledging and responding to the death of a student;
 - b. determine what information is appropriate to be shared with the school community in consultation with and the permission of the deceased's family;
 - c. coordinate the extension of condolences on behalf of the school community and School Board with consideration for the wishes of the family regarding the school's involvement;
 - d. ensure that all student information systems and administrative processes are updated to reflect the student's status in a timely manner.

2. The principal shall consult with the administrative team for acknowledging and responding to the death of a student and prepare a memorandum to inform the Board of Directors of a student death.

B. DEATH OF A CURRENT OR FORMER STAFF MEMBER OR BOARD MEMBER

1. The Chief Operations Officer shall on notice of the death of a board member:
 - a. arrange for an appropriate acknowledgment to the bereaved family on behalf of the school community; and
 - b. prepare and issue a notice of bereavement to all Board Members and School Community.
2. Staff Members who become aware of the death of a former staff member or board member are encouraged to notify an administrative team member to assist in ensuring proper acknowledgement.

C. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A STAFF MEMBER OR BOARD MEMBER BEREAVEMENT

1. Any school member who is aware of a staff member or board member who has suffered the loss of a close family member shall, when appropriate, inform the Principal who will facilitate a condolence message from the school community and Board of Directors.

D. IMPACT OF A STUDENT OR STAFF DEATH ON THE LEARNING OR WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The death of a student or staff member can have a significant impact on the learning and working environment.

1. The principal shall coordinate an appropriate response to support students and staff impacted by a death within their school or work community.
2. The principal may activate CIRT (critical incident response team) who will provide support in responding to a student or staff member death such as:
 - a communication plan and strategies to inform staff and students;
 - provision of grief counselling for affected students or staff;
 - provide information about supports through the Alberta Health Services Grief Support Program to staff members;
 - considerations for any contemplated school or work place memorial service; and
 - offering assistance to parents and other members of the school community by referring them to the appropriate community agencies.



Date: _____

To: All Staff

From: Brad Masterson

Re: _____

The recent death of [INSERT NAME] has made a significant impact on our entire school community. Our critical incident response team has been mobilized to respond to this tragic event.

We expect a variety of reactions to this loss from our students, parents, and members of our staff. Some of these reactions may be mild, others may be more intense.

To effectively assist all members of our school community, an emergency staff meeting will be held at [TIME] on [DATE]. At that time, our critical incident response team will provide further details and answer questions. We will also discuss how to present the information to our students. In the meantime, please refer all inquiries from outside sources to Brad Masterson.

With students, you can acknowledge that this death has occurred. However, please avoid discussion of any details; simply tell students that the school staff will provide information to everyone shortly. Please refer any student who appears to be in crisis or having significant difficulty to Keeli Francis, our Director of Student Well-being and Success. As this tragedy has also effected our staff, we encourage you to also seek assistance from Keeli Francis, if desired.

Emergency Staff Meeting

Time:

Date:

Location:

If you have any questions or concerns before the meeting, please contact Brad Masterson.

Sincerely,

Brad Masterson

Principal

Summit West Independent School



Date: _____

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is with deep regret that we inform you about a recent loss to our school community. On [DATE], [NAME OF DECEASED] passed away [INSERT BRIEF DETAILS BASED ON THE WISHES OF FAMILY MEMBERS]. This loss is sure to raise many emotions, concerns, and questions for our entire school, especially our students.

Our school has a Critical Incident Response Team made up of professionals trained to help with the needs of students, parents, and school personnel at difficult times such as this. At our school, we have counsellors available for any student who may need or want help or any type of assistance surrounding this loss. We encourage you, as parents, to also feel free to use our resources.

The Children's Grief Centre has resources and provides counselling for children, teens, and adults. If you, your child, or someone you know needs support during this difficult time, please visit their website and reach out for additional support <https://www.hospicecalgary.ca/childrensgriefcentre/resources/families>. If you would like additional information or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Keeli Francis, our Director of Student Success and Well-being at kfrancis@summitwestschool.ca.

We are saddened by the loss to our school community and will make every effort to help you and your child as you need.

Sincerely,

Brad Masterson
Principal
Summit West Independent School