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STRAIT REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD <i>Excellence in Lifelong Learning</i> POLICIES AND GUIDELINES	Student Activities and Welfare CRISIS INTERVENTION				
	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Adopted:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">February 5, 1997</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revised:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">October 4, 2006</td> </tr> </table>	Adopted:	February 5, 1997	Revised:	October 4, 2006
	Adopted:	February 5, 1997			
Revised:	October 4, 2006				
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Page:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1 of 3</td> </tr> </table>	Page:	1 of 3			
Page:	1 of 3				

CRISIS INTERVENTION

POLICY STATEMENT

The Strait Regional School Board requires schools to establish a School Crisis Intervention Team and develop a School Crisis Response Plan. The Plan must be updated annually. An official copy of the Plan must be maintained at the school and made available upon request.

When a crisis occurs, the school principal or principal-designate shall initiate immediate and predetermined intervention for the benefit of all students, staff members, and their immediate families.

DEFINITIONS

Crisis The Strait Regional School Board defines a crisis as an event of emotional significance which can have a traumatizing impact on the school or community to such an extent that the school's mandate of education may be compromised.

Intervention: An intervention refers to a measure taken to alleviate the impact of a crisis on an individual or group.

1. RATIONALE

The objectives of this policy are:

- to prevent affected individuals from struggling in isolation with the perceptions of tragedy, life and death that are characteristic to their ages;
- to provide affected individuals the opportunity to explore their reactions in the comfort and safety of the school community;
- to reduce confusion, provide factual information, offer counselling, and stem the spread of anxiety resulting from the crisis;
- to provide coping strategies designed to minimize both immediate and long-range mental health problems triggered by such events; and
- to liaise with community agencies to establish a support network.

STRAIT REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD <i>Excellence in Lifelong Learning</i> POLICIES AND GUIDELINES	Students IV-B-1					
	Student Activities and Welfare CRISIS INTERVENTION					
	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Adopted:</td> <td style="width: 50%;">February 5, 1997</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revised:</td> <td>October 4, 2006</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Page:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2 of 3</td> </tr> </table>	Adopted:	February 5, 1997	Revised:	October 4, 2006	Page:
Adopted:	February 5, 1997					
Revised:	October 4, 2006					
Page:	2 of 3					

2. PLANNING AND RESPONSE CONTEXT FOR CRISIS

Crisis intervention planning will occur on two levels:

- at the school(s) level, through a School Crisis Intervention Team and staff; and
- at the Regional level through a multidisciplinary Regional Crisis Intervention Team

Each team has several functions divided into three time frames:

- pre-crisis (preparation)
- crisis (action)
- post-crisis (debriefing and review)

The teams will be responding to the needs of:

- students, their immediate families and the community
- school personnel within the schools affected

3. SCHOOL CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

The school principal will ensure that a School Crisis Intervention Team (SCIT) is developed. Membership will include representatives of teaching and support staff, parents and the school community (for example, local clergy and service providers). SCIT membership must include the principal and the principal-designate. The SCIT will develop the procedures for their operations which are consistent with guidelines provided under this policy. Procedures shall be reviewed and updated annually.

4. REGIONAL CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

The Regional Crisis Intervention Team (RCIT) will support the School Crisis Intervention Team. Membership in the RCIT will include the psychologists working for the Strait Regional School Board, selected guidance counsellors from the schools, and the Regional Co-ordinator.

The Regional Co-ordinator will be responsible for developing interagency links which extend beyond the local school community. The RCIT will become involved in a school crisis at the request of the principal, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools/designate and the Regional Co-ordinator.

	<p>Students IV-B-1</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STRAIT REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD <i>Excellence in Lifelong Learning</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>POLICIES AND GUIDELINES</i></p>	<p>Student Activities and Welfare CRISIS INTERVENTION</p>
	<p>Adopted: February 5, 1997 Revised: October 4, 2006</p>
	<p>Page: 3 of 3</p>

5. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

School Principals, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools and regional administrative staff, will be responsible for the development of procedures, guidelines and processes for the implementation of this policy.

It is recognized that specific attention should be directed towards the:

- processes for disseminating information concerning a crisis to students, parents, staff, and public; and
- delineation of staff roles and responsibilities in times of crisis.

Note:

To assist in responding to crisis situations in school communities, the Strait Regional School Board has developed the following resources:

1. Crisis Intervention Manual
2. Zero to 30: A School Principal's Response Guide for the First 30 Minutes of a Serious Incident
3. Emergency Codes Poster

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