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## **806 CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Model Crisis Management Policy is to act as a guide for school district and building administrators, school employees, students, school board members, and community members to address a wide range of potential crisis situations in the school district. Each school district should develop tailored building-specific crisis management plans for each school building in the school district, and sections or procedures may be added or deleted in those crisis management plans based on building needs.

The school district will, to the extent possible, engage in ongoing emergency planning within the school district and with first responders and other relevant community organizations. The school district will ensure that relevant first responders in the community have access to their building-specific crisis management plans and will provide training to school district staff to enable them to act appropriately in the event of a crisis.

### **II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **A. The Policy and Plans**

The school district's Crisis Management Policy has been created in consultation with local community response agencies and other appropriate individuals and groups that would likely be involved in the event of a school emergency. It is designed so that each building administrator can tailor a building-specific crisis management plan to meet that building's specific situation and needs.

#### **B. Elements of the District Crisis Management Policy**

1. General Crisis Procedures. The Crisis Management Policy includes general crisis procedures for securing buildings, classroom evacuation, building evacuation, campus evacuation, and sheltering. The Policy designates the individual(s) who will determine when these actions will be taken. These district-wide procedures may be modified by building administrators when creating their building-specific crisis management plans. A communication system will be in place to enable the designated individual to be contacted at all times in the event of a potential crisis,

setting forth the method to contact the designated individual, the provision of at least two designees when the contact person is unavailable, and the method to convey contact information to the appropriate staff persons. The alternative designees may include members of the emergency response team. A secondary method of communication should be included in the plan for use when the primary method of communication is inoperable. Each building in the school district will have access to a copy of the Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools to assist in the development of building-specific crisis management plans. Finally, all general crisis procedures will address specific procedures for children with special needs such as physical, sensory, motor, developmental, and mental health challenges.

- a. Lock-Down Procedures. Lock-down procedures will be used in situations where harm may result to persons inside the school building, such as a shooting, hostage incident, intruder, trespass, disturbance, or when determined to be necessary by the building administrator or his or her designee. The building administrator or designee will announce the lock-down over the public address system or other designated system. Code words will not be used. Provisions for emergency evacuation will be maintained even in the event of a lock-down. Each building administrator will submit lock-down procedures for their building as part of the building-specific crisis management plan.
- b. Evacuation Procedures. Classroom and building evacuations shall be implemented at the discretion of the building administrator or designee. Campus evacuations shall be implemented at the discretion of the superintendent or designee. Each building's crisis management plan will include procedures for transporting students and staff a safe distance from harm to a designated safe area until released by the building administrator or designee. Safe areas may change based upon the specific emergency situation. The evacuation procedures should include specific procedures for children with special needs, including children with limited mobility (wheelchairs, braces, crutches, etc.), visual impairments, hearing impairments, and other sensory, developmental, or mental health needs. The evacuation procedures should also address transporting necessary medications for students that take medications during the school day.
- c. Sheltering Procedures. Sheltering provides refuge for students, staff, and visitors within the school building during an emergency. Shelters are safe areas that maximize the safety of inhabitants. Safe areas may change based upon the specific emergency. The building administrator or his or her designee will announce the need for sheltering over the public address system or other designated system. Each building administrator will submit

sheltering procedures for his or her building as part of the building-specific crisis management plan.

2. Crisis-Specific Procedures. The Crisis Management Policy includes crisis-specific procedures for crisis situations that may occur during the school day or at school-sponsored events and functions. These district-wide procedures are designed to enable building administrators to tailor response procedures when creating building-specific crisis management plans.
3. Crisis Response Teams
  - a. Composition. The building administrator in each school building will select a crisis response team that will be trained to respond in an emergency. Team members should be trained to carry out the building's crisis management plans and will have knowledge of procedures, evacuation routes, and safe areas. Team members must be willing to be actively involved with resolving crises and available to assist when necessary, as determined by the building administrator. Each building will maintain, and update annually, a current list of crisis response team members in a location known by the building administrator and designee(s). A copy of the list also will be kept on file in the school district office.
  - b. Leaders. The building administrator or designee serves as the leader of the crisis response team and the primary contact for emergency response officials. The designee list should include more than one alternative designee and may include members of the emergency response team. When they are present, emergency response officials may take command and control of the crisis. In this situation, school officials must assume a resource role and be available to emergency response officials as necessary.

### **III. PREPARATION BEFORE AN EMERGENCY**

#### **A. Communication**

1. District Employees. Teachers generally have the most direct contact with students on a day-to-day basis. As a result, they must be aware of their role in responding to crisis situations. This also applies to non-teaching school personnel who have direct contact with students. All staff shall be aware of the school district's Crisis Management Policy and their own building's crisis management plan. Each school's building-specific crisis management plan shall include the method and dates of dissemination of the plan to its staff. Employees will receive a copy of the relevant building-specific crisis management plans and shall receive periodic training on plan implementation.

2. Students and Parents. Students and parents shall be made aware of the school district's Crisis Management Policy and relevant tailored crisis management plans for each school building. Each school district's building-specific crisis management plan shall set forth how students and parents are made aware of the district and school-specific plans. Students shall receive specific instruction on plan implementation and shall participate in a required number of drills and practice sessions throughout the school year.

B. Planning and Preparing for Fire Response

1. Designate a safe area at least 50 feet away from the building and away from fire lanes for students and staff to evacuate to. The safe area should not be in an area where evacuated persons are exposed to any products of combustion.
2. Each building's facility diagram and site plan shall be available in appropriate areas of the building showing the most direct evacuation routes to the designated safe areas and the location of the fire alarm control panel, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, hoses, water spigots, and utility shut offs.
3. Teachers and staff will be trained regarding the primary emergency evacuation routes and alternate routes from various points in the building. During fire drills, students and staff will practice evacuations using primary evacuation routes and alternate routes. The school district will develop a universal signal to indicate a blocked entrance. When this signal is used, the responsible adult must immediately identify an alternate route.
4. Certain employees, such as those who work in hazardous areas in the building, will receive training on the locations and proper use of fire extinguishers and protective clothing and equipment.
5. Fire drills will be conducted periodically without warning at various times of the day and under different circumstances, e.g., lunchtime, recess, and during assemblies. State law requires a minimum of five fire drills each school year, consistent with Minn. Stat. § 299F.30. See Minn. Stat. § 121A.035.
6. A record of fire drills conducted at the building will be maintained in the building administrator's office.
7. The school district will have prearranged sites for emergency sheltering and transportation as needed.
8. The school district will determine which staff will remain in the building to perform essential functions if safe to do so. The school district also will designate an administrator or his or her designee to meet local fire or law enforcement agents upon their arrival.

C. Facility Diagrams and Site Plans

All school buildings will have a facility diagram and site plan that includes the location of primary and secondary evacuation routes, exits, designated safe areas inside and outside of the building, and the location of fire alarm control panel, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, hoses, water spigots, and utility shut offs. All facility diagrams and site plans will be updated regularly and whenever a major change is made to a building. Facility diagrams and site plans will be maintained by the building administrator and on file in the school district office. Facility diagrams and site plans will be provided to first responders, such as fire and law enforcement personnel.

D. Emergency Telephone Numbers

Each building will maintain a current list of emergency telephone numbers and the names and addresses of local, county, and state personnel who may be involved in a crisis situation. The list will include telephone numbers for local police, fire, ambulance, hospital, the Poison Control Center, county and state emergency management agencies, local public works departments, local utility companies, the public health nurse, mental health/suicide hotlines, and the county welfare agency. A copy of this list will be kept on file in the school district office, or at a secondary location for single building school districts, and updated annually.

School district employees will receive training on how to make emergency contacts, including 911 calls, when the school district's primary telephone number and location is electronically conveyed to emergency personnel instead of the specific building in need of emergency services.

School district plans will set forth a process to internally communicate an emergency, using telephones in classrooms, intercom systems, or two-way radios, as well as the procedure to enable the staff to rapidly convey emergency information to a building designee. Each plan will identify a primary and secondary method of communication for both internal and secondary use. It is recommended that the plan include several methods of communication because computers, intercoms, telephones, and cell phones may not be operational or may be dangerous to use during an emergency.

E. Warning Systems

The school district shall maintain a warning system designed to inform students, staff, and visitors of a crisis or emergency. This system shall be maintained on a regular basis under the maintenance plan for all school buildings.

The building administrator shall be responsible for informing students and employees about the warning system and the means by which the system is used to identify a specific crisis or emergency situation. Each school's building-

specific crisis management plan will include the method and frequency of dissemination of the warning system information to students and employees.

F. Early School Closure Procedures

The superintendent will make decisions about closing school or buildings as early in the day as possible. The early school closure procedures will set forth the criteria for early school closure (e.g., weather-related, utility failure, or a crisis situation), will specify how closure decisions will be communicated to staff, students, families, and the school community (designated broadcast media, local authorities, e-mail, or district or school building web sites), and will discuss the factors to be considered in closing and reopening a school or building.

Early school closure procedures also will include a reminder to parents and guardians to listen to designated local radio and TV stations for school closing announcements, where possible.

G. Media Procedures

The superintendent has the authority and discretion to notify parents or guardians and the school community in the event of a crisis or early school closure. The superintendent will designate a spokesperson who will notify the media in the event of a crisis or early school closure. The spokesperson shall receive training to ensure that the district is in strict compliance with federal and state law relative to the release of private data when conveying information to the media.

H. Grief-Counseling Procedures

Grief-counseling procedures will set forth the procedure for initiating grief-counseling plans. The procedures will utilize available resources including the school psychologist, counselor, community grief counselors, or others in the community. Grief-counseling procedures will be used whenever the superintendent or the building administrator determines it to be necessary, such as after an assault, a hostage situation, shooting, or suicide. The grief-counseling procedures shall include the following steps:

1. Administrator will meet with relevant persons, including school psychologists and counselors, to determine the level of intervention needed for students and staff.
2. Designate specific rooms as private counseling areas.
3. Escort siblings and close friends of any victims as well as others in need of emotional support to the counseling areas.
4. Prohibit media from interviewing or questioning students or staff.
5. Provide follow-up services to students and staff who receive counseling.

6. Resume normal school routines as soon as possible.

#### IV. MISCELLANEOUS PROCEDURES

##### A. Chemical Accidents

Procedures for reporting chemical accidents shall be posted at key locations such as chemistry labs, art rooms, swimming pool areas, and janitorial closets.

##### B. Visitors

The school district shall implement procedures mandating visitor sign in and visitors in school buildings. See Policy 903-Visitors to School District Property and Facilities.

The school district shall implement procedures to minimize outside entry into school buildings except at designated check-in points and assure that all doors are locked prior to and after regular building hours.

##### C. Student Victims of Criminal Offenses at or on School Property

The school district shall establish procedures allowing student victims of criminal offenses on school property the opportunity to transfer to another school within the school district.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. Ch. 12 (Emergency Management)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.035 (Crisis Management Policy)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.06 (Reports of Dangerous Weapon Incidents in School Zones)  
Minn. Stat. § 299F.30 (Fire Drill in School)  
Minn. Stat. § 609.605, Subd. 4 (Trespasses on School Property)  
Minn. Rules Ch. 7511 (Fire Safety)  
20 U.S.C. § 1681, *et seq.* (Title IX)  
20 U.S.C. § 6301, *et seq.* (No Child Left Behind)  
20 U.S.C. § 7912 (Unsafe School Choice Option)  
42 U.S.C. § 5121 *et seq.* (Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance)

**Cross References:** Policy 407 (Employee Right to Know – Exposure to Hazardous Substances)  
Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)  
Policy 501 (School Weapons Policy)  
Policy 506 (Student Discipline)  
Policy 532 (Use of Peace Officers and Crisis Teams to Remove Students with IEPs from School Grounds)  
Policy 903 (Visitors to School District Property and Facilities)