

ST. CROIX PREPARATORY ACADEMY

Adopted:

Revised:

606 HONORING DECEASED STUDENTS AND STAFF

I. PURPOSE

No family should have to suffer the death of a loved one. Such a loss, when it comes, is a tragedy or immeasurable proportion and it touches many people beyond the family. It is recognized that the loss of a member of the school community is deeply felt by students, staff and families. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that St. Croix Preparatory Academy supports staff, students, and families impacted by death and assists them with connections to appropriate school and community resources. St. Croix Preparatory Academy strives to treat all deaths in the same way. Having a different approach for death by suicide reinforces prejudice associated with suicide and may be deeply painful to the deceased's family and friends. Schools can play an important role in channeling the energy and passion of the students (and greater community) in a positive direction, balancing the community's need to grieve with the impact that the proposed activity will likely have on students, particularly on those who might be vulnerable to suicide contagion.

During the grieving process, St. Croix Prep's Crisis Response Team works to provide support for everyone. Grief counselors are made available for our students and staff. In recognizing the importance of providing support to a family experiencing such a loss, and while wanting to provide support that is fair, yet meaningful to everyone, the school has established a standard set of practices to honor a child or staff member who dies while actively enrolled or employed at St. Croix Preparatory Academy. Recognizing that schools are designed primarily to support learning, school sites should not serve as the main venue for the memorializing of students or staff. Schools should focus on maintaining the regular schedule, structure, and routine.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. **Moment of Silence Recognition:** A "moment of silence" may be used following the death of a student or staff member to honor their memory. School-wide moments of silence should occur within 2 school days following notification of the death. Moments of silence are also approved for use at Board of Education meetings, co-curricular events in which the deceased participated, and community-based events.
- B. **Memorial activities** expressed at school need to be coordinated and approved through the Building's Crisis Team. The Crisis Team will assist families and students in selecting memorial activities that are appropriate and assist students in healthy bereavement. Participation in memorials must remain optional but be accessible to all. The school district will not be responsible for coordinating or arranging memorial services or funerals. Any use of school facilities will fall under the facility use procedures.
- C. **Temporary school memorials**, as approved by school administration who will consult with the Crisis Team. The temporary memorials may be displayed for one week or until the day of the funeral, whichever is sooner, and will then be offered to the family. Selling of memorabilia items on school grounds is prohibited. Allowable temporary memorials are banners and pictures displayed in an area accessible to all

students but not in an area where all students will have to view the memorial. Viewing of memorials must remain optional but accessible to all. Memorials that may spontaneously arise on lockers and desks should be transferred to the designated area.

D. **Plaque created and gifted** to memorialize the contributions the deceased one has made to enhance our school. This plaque will be placed on display at the school the student attended and will remain on display during the time the child would have attended that building. For staff that pass away during a school year, a plaque will be displayed in their building of employment until that school year, a plaque will be displayed in their building of employment until that school year's graduation ceremony.

E. **Graduation Recognition:** At the graduation of the class of the deceased student, will present the parent, if they so choose, the memorial plaque in lieu of a diploma during the ceremony. If a parent chooses not to receive the plaque as part of the ceremony it will be sent to them as a keepsake in memory of their child. One symbol representing all deceased members of a graduating class, such as a plant or bouquet of flowers, may be present on stage. A member of the school administration can also direct the audience in a moment of silence to collectively recognize deceased members of the graduating class and staff members who passed away during that school year.

F. **Yearbooks:** A student or staff member who has died may be acknowledged in the yearbook the year the death occurred. Information shall be limited to the student's name, photo, date of birth and death, and school activities in which the student participated.

G. **Memorial Scholarships:** Families may work directly with the Educational Foundation in the development of a memorial scholarship in the name of the deceased child or family. Proceeds given and accepted will be in accordance with the Foundation's guidelines and parent wishes in establishing a scholarship award. Scholarship and endowment memorials may be established one time, or in the form of a perpetual award, with a description of the purpose of the endowment or scholarship.

H. **Commemorative Events:** An optional commemorative event may be established and held in the name of the deceased student or staff member. Activities cannot be held during the school day and should be sponsored by a class, club or activity in which the deceased student or staff member participated. Advertisements of events must occur outside the school day. It is recommended that commemorative events utilize community partners (e.g., employers of the deceased, faith communities, etc.).

The district limits permanent memorials for deceased students and staff to endowments and scholarships. We will not accept any other forms of permanent memorials, such as trees or other landscape items. We believe that the proper place for a lasting memorial is in the homes of those who have been lost, at their final resting place, and in the hearts of the many people who were touched by knowing them.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. **Memorials:** Objects, activities, or donations to remember an event or deceased person(s).

B. **Crisis Team:** Designated group of administrators and support staff within the district who plan and implement action plans specific to crises.

C. **Tragedy:** An unexpected event that is perceived as extremely negative, generates feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, and/or entrapment, and may occur suddenly, unexpectedly, and without warning.

Legal References: None

Cross References: None