



**FOREST LAKE AREA SCHOOLS
FOREST LAKE, MN 55025**

May 3, 2018

AGENDA ITEM: 9.1

TOPIC: Memorials for Deceased Students and Staff Policy 511

BACKGROUND: Forest Lake Area Schools recognizes that the loss of a student or staff member deeply impacts students, staff and families.

PROCESS: The Forest Lake Area Schools will provide a process for memorial decision-making and memorial activities. The School Board Policy Committee has reviewed this policy, and they are recommending it to the School Board with the changes noted.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of this policy.

I. PURPOSE

Forest Lake Area Schools recognizes that the loss of a student or staff member deeply impacts students, staff and families. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the district support staff, students and families impacted from a death by assisting them with connections to appropriate school and community resources. Because it is recognized that memorial decisions made immediately in the aftermath of a crisis or death may be made without full consideration of the potential implications for students, staff, families and the community, Forest Lake Area Schools will provide a process for memorial decision-making, as well as Board-approved policies regarding memorial activities. This policy also recognizes that memorials after suicide may glamorize death and communicate suicide as an appropriate or desired response to stress; therefore, careful and deliberate consideration was given in determining approved memorial activities. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by district and building administration to ensure it continues to further the stated purpose.

II. DEFINITIONS

Memorials: Objects or activities to remember an event or deceased person(s).

Living Memorials: A non-tangible memorial intended to be sustained over time.

Postvention Team (PVT): An appointed group of staff members who develop and execute district-wide procedures for the handling of mental health needs in the recovery phase of a crisis situation needing grief support.

Crisis: Any natural disaster or unexpected event that negatively affects a student, a staff member or a significant group of the school population and usually involves serious emotional, psychological and/or physical injury or death.

Impact: The magnitude of the potential loss or seriousness of the crisis.

III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

In recognition that schools are designed primarily to support learning, school sites should not serve as the main venue for the memorializing of students or staff. Memorial activities expressed at school need to be coordinated and approved through the Postvention Team (PVT), as well as building administration. The PVT will assist families and students in selecting memorial activities that are appropriate for school and assist students and staff in healthy bereavement. It is further recognized that building administration should have a certain amount of discretion in these situations to make professional judgments -- in consultation with the Superintendent and PVT -- to best meet the overall needs of students, staff, parents and the community as a whole.

IV. MEMORIAL POLICY

Living memorials for deceased students and staff will be limited to endowments, scholarships, or items with educational significance. 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. Memorials may not include the retirement, alteration, or discontinued use of school property. Other recommended memorial activities include:

Yearbooks: A student who has died may be acknowledged in a school yearbook (if there is a yearbook for the school at which the student was enrolled) the year of the student's death, and in the yearbook their senior year of high school if the student's surviving parent, guardian, or designated representative so requests. While there is no established time limitation on such a request, the request must be made with enough advance notice that such information can be included in the yearbook. Information about the student will be included on a memorial page representing all students in the graduation year. Information shall be limited to the student's name, photo, dates of birth and death, and school activities in which the student participated.

Commemorative Events: A 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. Advertisement 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.).

Graduation Recognition: 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.

Moment of Silence Recognition: Upon request or permission of the deceased student's or staff member's family, 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 ISD 831 Board of Education meetings, co-curricular events in which the deceased participated, and community based events.

Existing memorials established prior to the implementation of this policy will remain intact. Existing memorials are generally the sole responsibility of the entity providing the memorial; district staff and/or finances may only be used to maintain current memorials as part of regular maintenance processes and/or to ensure safe conditions. The district reserves the right to remove a memorial if it is not or cannot be maintained or is contrary to the overall educational needs of students.

V. PROHIBITED MEMORIAL ACTIVITIES

Selling and/or fundraising of memorial items during the school day is prohibited. District student activity accounts cannot be used to support, finance, or fundraise for memorialization. Proceeds from district co-curricular events or contests cannot be donated to agencies for memorialization. Utilizing formal all-school or school-wide events, including Commencement, Homecoming festivities, Prom, and other thematic events or weeks to memorialize deceased students or staff is prohibited. Commemorative items or events can be sponsored by community based agencies and promoted outside the school day.

The Superintendent, in consultation with the PVT, has the discretion to consider memorial events that utilize district facilities when the death of a student, staff member, or community member has a significant impact on a majority of students, staff and community.

Formal, school-wide recognition of anniversary dates will not occur. If the death of a student or staff member occurred in a public location accessible by community members, such as a crash site, district staff will not provide memorial monitoring.

ADOPTED: 06/23/16