

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 196
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools
Educating our students to reach their full potential

Series Number 506.5AR Adopted November 1992 Revised September 2017

Title Response to the Death of a Student

1. **If a student dies, school officials will take the following actions:**

- 1.1 The principal will notify school employees, the principal's supervisor, the superintendent and other appropriate people (students' parents, site council, etc.) of the death in a sensitive and timely manner in accordance with the family's permission; give teachers a brief written, factual statement of what occurred to share with their students, and share information about memorial and/or funeral services as soon as it is available. The principal will also notify any co-located services that there's been a death of a student, but will not share any private data with such providers unless there is parental permission. (The superintendent will also issue a brief, factual statement to other district schools and departments to inform them of the situation. The superintendent will determine if siblings attend other district schools and share that information accordingly.)
- 1.2 The school crisis team (homeroom teacher, school psychologist, school nurse, school counselor/social worker and principal) will contact and consult with the district crisis response team and determine whether there is a need to bring in additional professional help from outside agencies (psychologists, counselors/social workers, etc.). The school crisis team, together with any assisting members from the district crisis response team, will work together to implement best practices.
- 1.3 If it appears students have a need to talk about the situation, a plan will be developed to respond to that need. If any students show a need for individual attention, teachers may request help from the school psychologist, school nurse and school counselor/social worker.
- 1.4 The school psychologist, school nurse and school counselor(s)/social worker and employee assistance program will provide support and make referrals for teachers and other school personnel, as needed.
- 1.5 The principal may send a brief note to parents in the student's or employee's class, grade level or school (whichever the principal deems appropriate and is in accordance with the parents' permission) to explain the death. It is suggested that the letter include information on memorial and/or funeral services, the name of a contact person at school (school psychologist, school nurse and/or school counselor) and available resources. If needed, the principal may also schedule a special meeting at school with appropriate resource people for parents and/or teachers who need support in responding to children's needs and may put relevant contact and resources information on the school's webpage or social media pages.
- 1.6 Questions from parents, reporters, lawyers, doctors, etc., will be referred to the principal. Private data on students will not be shared with outside persons or agencies unless there is parental permission or an exception to the data privacy laws applies. (Refer to Administrative Regulation 505.2AR, Protection and Privacy of Student Records, for specific information.)

- 1.7 A school will remain in session after a student death. If students attend the funeral, parents are encouraged to accompany them and should arrange for appropriate transportation. If the funeral takes place during a school day, the principal, after consulting with appropriate staff, will decide which staff members may attend.
- 1.8 If the cause of death is suicide, the school administration will also take the following actions:
 - 1.8.1 The school crisis team (homeroom teacher, school psychologist, school nurse, school counselor/social worker and principal[s]), together with any assisting members from the district's crisis response team, will meet to develop a plan for the school day. If information about a suicide is received from someone other than a family member, a team member will verify the suicide. To help prevent a "copy-cat" suicide, the school crisis team will review the attendance list to check for names of close friends of the deceased student. The school should not normally announce the method of suicide.
 - 1.8.2 The principal will notify his or her supervisor, the superintendent and other district principals about the suicide.
 - 1.8.3 The school crisis team will meet at the end of the day to review the day, discuss students who need further follow-up, determine if there is a need for outside agency help and plan for the next day.
 - 1.8.4 The principal will make sure that appropriate follow-up steps are taken, which may include:
 - 1.8.4.1 The school psychologist and counselors/social workers offering groups for students who request ongoing support;
 - 1.8.4.2 The principal offering an inservice meeting for staff to provide information about the warning signs of depression or suicidal behavior and referral procedures, and/or
 - 1.8.4.3 The principal encouraging staff to maintain a normal routine and normal student expectations during the crisis period. Teachers should be prepared to teach their regular lesson.
- 1.9 If a teacher or staff member dies, the principal will follow the procedures set forth in Policy 406, Section 8.
- 1.10 If a student dies during a vacation period, the principal or designee shall take appropriate action, based on this regulation and the specific circumstances.
- 1.11 The School Board will observe a moment of silence in memory of a student at the next regularly scheduled board meeting after hearing about the death of that student.

2. **If an immediate family member of a student dies, school officials will take the following actions in accordance with the family's permission:**
 - 2.1 The principal will announce the death to other school employees and let them know about memorial service and/or funeral arrangements.
 - 2.2 The principal will decide when it is appropriate for school staff members to attend memorial and/or funeral services.
 - 2.3 The school psychologist, school nurse and school counselor/social worker will be made available to the student, the student's friends and staff, as needed.
3. **Memorials** - Appropriate ways of memorializing the deceased student through donations or memorial scholarships may be considered. This should be implemented only after consulting with the principal's supervisor, the principal and the family. For individuals interested in donating money on behalf of the deceased, the family will be requested to identify those charities and/or organizations to which donations may be sent. Schools may not approve permanent memorials on school or district sites.
4. **Annual Review** – Each school's crisis team will review this regulation annually in order to provide the best support for their school community during times of crisis.

References: - Policy 406, Section 8 (Death of an Employee)