

**ISD 192 SPECIFIC POLICIES****1012 MEMORIAL POLICY****I. PURPOSE**

Farmington Area Public Schools recognizes that the loss of a student or staff deeply impacts students, staff, and families, and that these individuals may experience trauma as a result. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Farmington Area Public Schools 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, Farmington Area Public Schools will provide a process for memorial decision-making, as well as this Board-approved policy regarding memorial activities.

II. 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. When responding to a student or staff death, Farmington Area Public Schools will: 1) ensure that school operations function as they normally would, 2) protect the family's preferences as much as possible, 3) consider the developmental age of students and potential impact, 4) create space for all grief responses (normalcy, individual support, and community support), and 5) minimize secondary trauma or re-traumatization to students and/or staff who have low risk of a grief reaction.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Trauma: The psychological, emotional response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness, diminishes their sense of self and their ability to feel a full range of emotions and experiences.
- B. Trauma Response Flight Team (TRFT): 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 traumatic situation needing grief support.
- C. Drop-In Center: A designated space in the school building that allows people to grieve while maintaining normalcy in general spaces of the school.

- D. Memorials: objects or activities meant to remember an event or deceased person(s).
- E. Impact: The magnitude of the potential loss or seriousness of the trauma.

IV. MEMORIAL GUIDELINES

- A. Memorial activities expressed at school need to be coordinated and approved through the Trauma Response Flight Team (TRFT), as well as building administration. The TRFT and building administrator 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 TRFT, to best meet the overall needs of students, staff, parents and community as a whole.
- B. Temporary memorials, as approved by the building administrator and TRFT, may be displayed within the school building or on school grounds until the day of the funeral, or within one week following the death, after which time they will be offered to the family by designated district officials. Allowable temporary memorials include notes, cards, flowers, pictures, and banners and are only allowed in locations designated and monitored by school officials. Memorials that may spontaneously arise on lockers and desks should be transferred to the designated area. Temporary memorials cannot alter district owned property.
- C. Permanent memorials for deceased students and staff will be limited to endowments, scholarships, gifts, donations, 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. Examples of acceptable gifts include donation (tangible or financial) to a program, school, activity, or the Farmington Area Education Foundation. Examples of unacceptable gifts include a picture of the deceased to be displayed in the school, a permanent marker memorializing the deceased person, artwork, benches, trees, plants.
- D. Other possible memorial activities include:
 - 1. Drop-In Center: Students can seek support from classmates, friends, and/or adults. Students may create notes, cards, pictures, posters to be given to the family. Counseling staff will consider expanded age-appropriate activities that allow for individual and collective grieving and healing. Drop-in center is open as long as deemed necessary.
 - 2. Yearbook: A student who has died may be acknowledged in the yearbook the year the death occurred with parent/guardian approval. Information shall be limited to the student's name, photo, dates of birth and death, and

school activities in which the student participated. In the event a student passes away in the summer between school years, the student's picture may be included, with permission of the family, in the next school year's yearbook provided the student was enrolled at that school location at the conclusion of the previous school year. If the current school picture is not available, a picture of similar size will be requested from the family by the school principal. The picture may be placed in the yearbook where it normally would have been, or a memorial page may be considered in consultation with the building administrator and the TRFT.

3. 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 or promotion of commemorative 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.).
4. Graduation Recognition: A flower arrangement will be present at commencement and an acknowledgement will be placed in the graduation program indicating the arrangement is in honor of those who may have previously died. In the event a student died following the completion of their 11th grade year, a diploma will be offered to the family by the school principal.
5. Existing Memorials. 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. 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.
6. Memorials After a Suicide. Farmington Area Public Schools strives to respond to all student deaths in the same way and acknowledges that having a different approach for a student who dies by suicide may reinforce prejudice associated with suicide and may be deeply painful to the student's family and friends. However, Farmington Area Public Schools recognizes that memorials after suicide may glamorize death and communicate suicide as an appropriate or desired response to stress. Therefore, careful and deliberate consideration will be given when determining approved memorial activities.

V. PROHIBITED MEMORIAL ACTIVITIES

- A. Farmington Area Public Schools prohibits public memorial activities during the school day or during school-sponsored activities. Utilizing formal all-school or school-wide events, including activities, sporting events, commencement, homecoming festivities, prom, and other thematic events or weeks to memorialize deceased students or staff are also prohibited (examples include moments of silence, temporary memorials, events dedicated to an individual, etc.).

- B. No school district funds may be spent on memorials or for the maintenance of existing memorials. 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.
- C. School district facilities will not be used for formal memorial services or funerals. However, district administration, in consultation with the TRFT, has the discretion to consider events that utilize district facilities when the traumatic event has a significant impact on a majority of students, staff and community (natural disaster, 9/11, etc.).
- D. 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.

VI. POLICY DISSEMINATION AND RELATED MATERIALS

This policy will be available to the public on the district website. It will be shared annually with school staff including coaches and advisors. This policy will be reviewed every three years by the school board, district and building administration, and the TRFT to ensure it continues to further the stated purpose. Persons who have questions, comments or concerns should contact the District Office, 651-463-5000.

Communication protocols about contacting the family to express condolences and sharing visitation/service information is included in Farmington Area Public Schools' Trauma Response Guide. The Trauma Response Guide is available upon request.

Appeals to the decisions regarding application of the memorial policy made by administration or the Trauma Flight Response Team should be directed to the school board by contacting the district office at 651-463-5013.

Cross References: ISD 192 Policy 706 (Acceptance of Gifts)