

# SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE PROCEDURES

If a life-threatening emergency, call 911 and refer to the school safety plan. ***A mental health crisis is a sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects the social and emotional well-being of a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death.*** For example, a classroom of students, an activity/athletic team. etc. If your school community has experienced a mental health crisis, follow the procedures below:

The Mental Health Crisis Response Team (MHCRT) is a vital component of the school and district crisis team. Authorized by school district policies and School Safety Plans, the Mental Health Crisis Response Team provides visible support to address psychological well being of students, teachers, staff, and caregivers.

There are seven distinct phases of a school crisis intervention: Verify Facts, Notify District Staff, Plan Crisis Response with MHCRT Lead, Facilitate Emergency Staff Meeting, Inform Parents, Facilitate Postvention, and Complete Evaluation of Crisis Response

## 1. VERIFY FACTS

- If the crisis involves a possible crime, an ongoing safety concern or threat, contact law enforcement, either the Sacramento Police Department (916-857-1801) or Sacramento Sheriff's Department (916-874-5115) to verify facts.
- Notify the Safe Schools Director, Ray Lozada, (916-549-6899), as soon as possible.
- If appropriate, contact family to verify facts and obtain additional information.
  - Ask the family what information they want shared with teachers and students.
  - Ask the family what support they need.

## 2. NOTIFY DISTRICT STAFF

- Notify one of the Mental Health Crisis Response Team (MHCRT) Administrators listed below.
  - Jacqueline Rodriguez, Coordinator II, Student Support & Health Services  
916-752-3353 (cell- call or text);916-643-9141 (office)
  - Victoria Flores, Director III, Student Support & Health Services  
916-752-3643 (cell- call or text);916-643-9144 (office)
- Provide the MHCRT administrator with the following information
  - Nature of incident (violent or non-violent)
  - Approximate number of staff and students impacted
  - Any previous crisis events in the school or community
  - Safety concerns (perceived threat to students and staff)
  - Other schools that may be affected (i.e. siblings that attend other schools)
  - Any other notable information that would assist in planning an appropriate response
- MHCRT administrator will provide a MHCRT Lead to develop and implement a crisis response plan in collaboration with the site administrator. If school site has a Student Support Center (SSC), SSC staff will also be notified and be part of the MHCRT.

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- MHCRT Administrator will contact your area assistant superintendent and the Chief of Communications, Tara Gallegos, 916-643-9145 (office); 916-752-3705 (cell)
  - Chief of Communications will inform the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.

### 3. PLAN CRISIS RESPONSE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS TEAM (MHCRT) LEAD

- Schedule emergency staff meeting (see [Sample Emergency Staff Meeting Agenda](#)).
  - Inform staff about the meeting, using the most effective means to reach staff (i.e., texting, email, classroom visits, memo) Include all staff (classified, cafeteria, temporary, yard duty, Student Support Center staff, Expanded Learning School Program, other community partners/volunteers, etc.).
- Work with MHCRT Lead to [prepare script for teachers and staff](#) to use in informing students.
- Determine location of Wellness Center/Crisis Counseling spaces and referral procedures. If during Distance Learning, set up Virtual Wellness Center with office hours that can be shared out to school community.
- Do not lead any type of memorialization activities at this time. If a spontaneous memorial begins, consult with MHCRT lead on how to respond. Memorials<sup>1</sup> are best planned several weeks following the crisis event.
- Identify teachers who may be at risk and determine how to support them (see [Indicators of Distress](#)). It is recommended that substitute teachers are available to support teachers who may need to leave, may need some time, or may need to support students and/or families.
- Assign staff to assist MHCRT in locating supplies (paper, markers, water/food, etc.) and places to store personal items.
- Prepare copies of staff roster with emergency numbers, school map and school schedule for MHCRT members.

### 4. FACILITATE EMERGENCY STAFF MEETING

- Staff Meeting Elements (Sample Staff Meeting Agenda):
  - Provide teachers/staff with prepared script to use with students. Reinforce what information the school has permission to share and confirm. Direct staff to not comment on any social media speculation, including not posting information.
  - Provide information about the school's response plan including changes in the school day.
  - Emphasize the importance of maintaining attendance records and knowledge of students' whereabouts.
  - Share location of counseling rooms and procedures for utilization and referrals.

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Schonfeld, Robert Lichtenstein, Marsha Kline Pruett, and Dee Speese-Linehan How to Prepare for and Respond to a Crisis, 2nd Edition (2002)

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- Identify students and/or staff who may need support.
- Provide guidelines for helping students and who are upset.
- Encourage staff to dispel rumors whenever possible and discourage any “glorification” of the event (especially in cases of suicide). Remind staff to not comment on any social media speculation.
- Allow staff opportunities to share reactions and feelings with one another, taking time for mutual support.
- Provide guidelines for helping staff and who are upset. Encourage teachers to allow for expressions of grief, anger, etc.in classes throughout the day. Emphasize the acceptability/normalcy of a range of expressions.
- Determine who is unable to inform students and who needs a crisis team member to assist in informing the students.
- Announce time and location of follow-up staff meeting.

## 5. INFORM PARENTS

- Work with MHCRT Lead and Communication Dept. to prepare any verbal/written communication that will be shared with parents/caregivers. Include in communication any known facts that you have permission to share, crisis response/supports taken, school/community resources, and any future plans.

## 6. FACILITATE POSTVENTION STAFF MEETING WITH MHCRT

- Postvention Staff Meeting Elements
  - Discuss [strengths and weaknesses](#) of how the day went for students and staff. Allow time for staff to share reactions and feelings, provide [resources](#), and emphasize [self-care](#).
  - Determine what other supports and actions, if any, are needed at the school.
  - Identify specific students at risk, plan for tracking them and who to contact.
  - Discuss variety of grief reactions and provide [resources](#) and other useful information.

## 7. COMPLETE [EVALUATION OF CRISIS RESPONSE FORM](#)\*