

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 district and school crisis team. Authorized by school district policies and School Safety Plans, the Mental Health Crisis Response Team provides visible support for the psychological well-being of students, teachers, staff, and caregivers immediately following a mental health crisis event.

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 Staff Meeting, 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, Director I, Student Support & Health Services; 916-752-3353
 - Victoria Flores, Executive Director, Student Support & Health Services; 916-752-3643
- 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 the response
- MHCRT administrator will identify a MHCRT Lead who will collaborate with the site administrator to develop and implement a crisis response plan. If school site has a Student Support Center (SSC), SSC staff will also be notified and be part of the MHCRT.
- MHCRT Administrator will contact the assigned area assistant superintendent and Chief of Communications, Brian Heap, 916-643-9145 (office); 916-752-3705 (cell).
- Chief of Communications will inform the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.

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

- Schedule emergency staff meeting (see [MHCR Information Staff Meeting Agenda template](#)). Inform staff about the meeting, using the most effective means to reach staff (i.e. texting, email, classroom visits, memo) Include all staff and persons who (classified, cafeteria, temporary, yard duty, Student Support Center staff, Expanded Learning School Program, other community partners/volunteers, etc.).
- Identify all MHCR team members including school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and Student Support Center staff who serve at the school. All MHCR Team members will be assigned and provide crisis, social-emotional interventions as needed.
- 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. Memorials¹ are best planned several weeks following the crisis event.
- Identify teachers/staff who may be more directly impacted by the crisis event and determine how to support them. It is recommended that substitute teachers are available to support teachers who may need to leave, take a break from their classroom, and/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 INFORMATIONAL STAFF MEETING

- Informational Staff Meeting Elements ([Informational Staff Meeting Agenda Template](#)):
- Provide teachers/staff with prepared guide/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 Wellness Center/Counseling spaces for staff/students and procedures for referring and utilizing.
- 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

¹ 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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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 any teachers/staff who need support with a crisis team member to assist in informing the student/class.
- Announce time and location of Post Crisis Response Staff meeting (recommend scheduling at end of the school day on first day of crisis response).

5. INFORM PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

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

6. FACILITATE POSTVENTION STAFF MEETING WITH MHCRT

- Postvention Staff Meeting Elements (see [Post Crisis Response Staff Meeting Template](#)):
 - Discuss strengths and weaknesses of how the day went for students and staff. Allow time for staff to share thoughts and feelings.
 - Discuss common emotional/grief reactions- provide resources, and emphasize self-care.
 - Identify additional supports and actions, if any, are needed.
 - Identify specific students at risk, plan for follow up care and referrals for ongoing support as needed.

7. COMPLETE FEEDBACK OF CRISIS RESPONSE FORM*

- Complete Mental health crisis response feedback [form](#) (If unable to access google form, MHCR Team Lead will provide paper copy).