



TE AWAMUTU COLLEGE



POLICY STATEMENT ON CRITICAL INCIDENT/CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Rationale

We live in a time of increasing stress and danger and are aware of events involving traumatic death of, or injury to, students and staff. Such events include death by drowning, suicide, car crashes, bus accidents involving students/staff and multiple death incidents. Events such as these, impact deeply on a school and its community. The effect of tragedy and/or trauma affects large numbers in an immediate sense and creates significant ongoing trauma that can last for a considerable time. It is very important that when such events occur, that the incident is handled with care, discretion and respect and with consideration for all involved.

Guidelines

A Critical Incident Management team, consisting of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellor, Deans or other staff where appropriate, would follow the steps or procedures as outlined in the Critical Incident Response Plan or Emergency Management Plan. These may include but are not limited to:

1. To contact Trauma Incident Team at Group Special Education, Hamilton.
2. To respond to the media – the Principal will be the only person to make media statements on behalf of the school.
3. To be responsible for overall co-ordination and liaison with official services.
4. To establish contact with parents/caregivers (families and whānau) and maintain support.
5. To set up support services for:
 - Factual information to staff
 - Contact with students
 - Setting up of “safe room/time out room”
 - Arranging staff relief
 - Ensuring counselling and support is available as required
 - Setting up ongoing responses, e.g. school memorial assembly, representation at funeral
 - Providing for student/staff grief needs to be met appropriately
 - Setting up, as required, a critical incident debriefing for those intimately involved in the trauma.
6. Grief counselling needs to be available as an ongoing provision for students and staff over whatever time is appropriate.
7. Staff will be made aware that adolescents respond very deeply and emotionally to the stress of death and bereavement. Such grief can persist over long periods and disrupt usual performance, affect health and well-being and involve psychological trauma that affects their work and behaviour.

CHAIRPERSON _____ DATE _____

PRINCIPAL _____ DATE _____