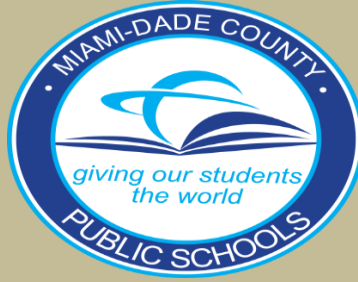


Miami-Dade County Public Schools Crisis Management Resource Manual



Revised, June 2016



Division of Student Services Crisis Management Program

The School Board of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Florida

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	X
Prevention /Mitigation	2
• Crisis Prevention/Mitigation Strategies	3
• Programs that Support a Safe Learning Environment	4
Preparedness	16
• School Critical Incident Response Teams: Guidelines/Responsibilities	17
○ Team Profile Form: Access Information	19
○ Self-Care Tips	20
Response	21
<u>Resources for Responding to an Accidental or Illness- Related Death of a Student</u>	22
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist	
○ Off Campus Fatality	23
○ On Campus Fatality	24
• Crisis Response Worksheet	25
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	26
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	27
○ On Campus Fatality	28
• Sample PA Announcement	
○ Off Campus Fatality	29
○ On Campus Fatality	30
• Sample Connect Ed Message to Parents	
○ English	31
○ Spanish	32
○ Creole	33
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre-K to Grade 2)	
○ English	34
○ Spanish	36
○ Creole	38
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 3-12)	
○ English	40

- Spanish 42
- Creole 44
- Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K to Grade 2) 46
- Sample Classroom Script (Grades 3-5) 47
- Sample Classroom Script (Secondary) 48
- Crisis Counseling Professionals' Log 49
- Crisis Counseling Students' Log 50

Resources for Responding to an Accidental or Illness-Related Death of a Staff Member 51

- Principal's Crisis Response Checklist
 - Off Campus Fatality 52
 - On Campus Fatality 53
- Crisis Response Worksheet 54
- Sample Staff Meeting Agenda 55
- Sample Email to Staff
 - Off Campus Fatality 56
 - On Campus Fatality 57
- Sample PA Announcement
 - Off Campus Fatality 58
 - On Campus Fatality 59
- Sample Connect Ed Message to Parents
 - English 60
 - Spanish 61
 - Creole 62
- Sample Letter to Parents (Pre-K to Grade 2)
 - English 63
 - Spanish 65
 - Creole 67
- Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 3-12)
 - English 69
 - Spanish 71
 - Creole 73
- Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K to Grade 2) 75
- Sample Classroom Script (Grades 3-5) 76

• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	77
• Crisis Counseling Professionals’ Log	78
• Crisis Counseling Students’ Log	79
<u>Resources for Responding to the Suicide of a Student</u>	80
• Student Suicide: Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist	
○ Off Campus Suicide	81
○ On Campus Suicide	82
• Crisis Response Worksheet	83
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	84
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	85
○ On Campus Fatality	86
• Sample PA Announcement	
○ Off Campus Fatality	87
○ On Campus Fatality	88
• Sample Connect Ed Message to Parent/Guardian	
○ English	89
○ Spanish	90
○ Creole	91
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre-K to Grade 2)	
○ English	92
○ Spanish	94
○ Creole	96
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 3-12)	
○ English	98
○ Spanish	100
○ Creole	102
• Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K-2)	104
• Sample Classroom Script (Grades 3-5)	105
• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	106
• Crisis Counseling Professionals’ Log	107
• Crisis Counseling Student Log	108

<u>Resources for Responding to the Suicide of a Staff Member</u>	109
• Staff Suicide: Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist	
○ Off Campus Suicide	110
○ On Campus Suicide	111
• Crisis Response Worksheet	112
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	113
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	114
○ On Campus Fatality	115
• Sample PA Announcement	
○ Off Campus Fatality	116
○ On Campus Fatality	117
• Sample Connect Ed Message to Parents	
○ English	118
○ Spanish	119
○ Creole	120
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre-K to Grade 2)	
○ English	121
○ Spanish	123
○ Creole	125
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 3-12)	
○ English	127
○ Spanish	129
○ Creole	131
• Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K to Grade 2)	133
• Sample Classroom Script (Grades 3-5)	134
• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	135
• Crisis Counseling Professionals’ Log	136
• Crisis Counseling Student Log	137
• Stages of Grief Following a Suicide	138
• Talking Points for Students and Staff after a Suicide	139
• Memorial Guidelines Following a Suicide	140
• Crisis Hotline Reporting	141

• Suicide Warning Signs	142
• Suicide Risk and Protective Factors	143
• What to do if a Student is Suicidal: Recommendations for Staff	144
• Mutual Consent for the Release of Information Form	145
○ English	146
○ Spanish	147
○ Creole	148
<u>Resources for Responding to Self-Injurious Behavior</u>	149
• Definition and Methods	150
• Symptoms and Warning Signs	151
• Reasons for Self-Injurious Behavior	152
• Working with Students who Self-Injure	153
<u>Resources for Responding to the Homicide of a Student</u>	154
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist: Off - Campus Homicide	155
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist: On- Campus Homicide	156
• Crisis Response Worksheet	157
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	158
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	159
○ On Campus Fatality	160
• Sample Announcements	
○ Off Campus Fatality	161
○ On Campus Fatality	162
• Sample Connect-Ed Message	
○ English	163
○ Spanish	164
○ Creole	165
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre- K to 2 nd Grade)	
○ English	166
○ Spanish	168
○ Creole	170
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 3-12)	

○ English	172
○ Spanish	174
○ Creole	176
• Sample Classroom Script: (Pre-K to Grade 2)	178
• Sample Classroom Script: (Grades 3- 5)	179
• Sample Classroom Script: (Secondary)	180
• Crisis Counseling Professionals’ Log	181
• Crisis Counseling Student Log	182
<u>Resources for Responding to the Homicide of a Staff Member</u>	183
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist: Off - Campus Homicide	184
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist: On- Campus Homicide	185
• Crisis Response Worksheet	186
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	187
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	188
○ On Campus Fatality	189
• Sample PA Announcement	190
• Sample Connect-Ed Message	
○ English	191
○ Spanish	192
○ Creole	193
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre- K to Grade 2)	
• English	194
• Spanish	196
• Creole	198
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 3-12)	
○ English	200
○ Spanish	202
○ Creole	204
• Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K to Grade 2)	206
• Sample Classroom Script (Grades 3- 5)	207
• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	208

• Crisis Counseling Professionals' Log	209
• Crisis Counseling Student Log	210
• Talking to Children about Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers	211
Recovery	213
<u>Natural Disasters</u>	214
• Helping Children Cope after a Natural Disaster: Information for Parents and Teachers	215
• Supporting Children's Recovery after a Hurricane	219
• Global Disasters: Helping Children Cope	222
• Factors to Consider when Working with Students who are Victims of Natural Disasters	224
• Recommendations for Helping Children Cope after a Disaster: Tips For Teachers	225
• Psychological First Aid	226
<u>Supporting Student Recovery: Handouts</u>	227
• Crisis Reactions: Developmental Factors	228
• Grief Reactions	230
• Stages of Grief	231
• Working with a Grieving Child: Recommendations for Teachers	232
<u>Support Activities</u>	233
• Safe Box	235
• Memory Box	236
• Drawing Activity	237
• Writing Exercise	238
<u>Memorial Activities</u>	240

PREFACE

Critical incidents and disasters have the potential to create widespread impact on children, families and school staff. Emotional reactions range from shock and disbelief, fear, anger, anxiety, and resounding sadness. A child's ability to learn and behave appropriately may also be compromised based on exposure to these events.

This manual is designed to provide Miami-Dade County Public Schools administrators, counseling professionals, teachers, and members of critical incident response teams with information and guidance for preventing and mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from critical incidents and disasters. Information contained in this document will support school administrators and their staffs in preparing a comprehensive approach directed at creating and maintaining school- site safety and security; it is also intended to supplement the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Emergency Operations Plan.

CRISIS IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

A state of crisis is achieved through the occurrence of a sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively impacts an individual, institution or a community's ability to function effectively. Crisis may also be a result of long term or chronic exposure to dysfunctional or threatening environments or situations; or attributed to temporary developmental challenges. Youths exposed to such critical situations are at increased risk for posttraumatic reactions that may have significant impact on functioning. While most children who have experienced a critical incident or disaster will not be traumatized, they may still be in need of intervention services.

Examples of Critical Incidents or Disasters

Events or circumstances, such as those listed below, may lead to serious and profound difficulties. Whether they occur on school campus, in the home, or in the community, they may have significant impact on the entire school community. Actions taken prior to and following an incident or disaster can save lives, prevent injuries, and enhance student resiliency.

- Abduction
- Automobile Accident
- Drowning
- Homicide
- National or International Crisis
- Shooting
- Bullying/Harassment
- School Bus Accident
- Fire/Explosion
- Contagious Disease: Hepatitis, Meningitis, etc.
- Hostage Situation
- Natural Disaster
- School Invasion
- Suicide
- Terrorism

PREVENTION/ MITIGATION

Crisis Prevention/Mitigation Strategies

Prevention/mitigation efforts must include strategies and programs that ensure both physical and psychological safety.

- Physical safety includes strategies and programs that are focused on physical aspects of the school environment and personal safety (See Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Emergency Operations Plan for guidance).
- Psychological safety includes strategies and programs that are focused on the emotional and behavioral well-being of students and staff.

Recommendations for Creating and Maintaining Safe Schools that Foster Social-emotional, Behavioral and Physical Wellness:

- Create a welcoming and nurturing school climate
- Enforce positive behavior and discipline for all students
- Support student mental health and wellness
- Develop, review and practice crisis response procedures
- Train staff in crisis prevention and response procedures
- Develop collaborative relationships with law enforcement and community service organizations
- Strengthen home-school connections
- Implement school and personal safety curricula and programs

PROGRAMS AND CURRICULA THAT SUPPORT A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Miami-Dade County Public Schools offers a variety of programs and curricula created to improve student and staff safety by reducing the number of incidents of violence, suicide, weapons possession, drug use, vandalism, homelessness and truancy. Prevention efforts also focus upon the maintenance of optimal physical, mental and emotional well-being. A brief description of the programs and curricula designed to meet the aforementioned goals are described in this section.

Program: Alternative to Suspension Program

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: The Alternative to Suspension Program (ASP) is implemented in all K-12 schools, providing counseling support in an effort to reduce the number of student suspensions; thereby increasing instructional time. The Program disrupts the cycle of destructive behaviors that result in suspensions by helping students and parents recognize problems, understand the need for change and secure assistance through community resources. In conjunction with The Parent Academy, ASP is comprised of two components: daytime counseling sessions for students and evening counseling sessions with students and their parent / guardian participating. The evening component (Parent Empowerment Strategies) requires the participation of the referred student and their parent in two consecutive, two-hour psycho-educational counseling sessions.

Program: Anti-Defamation League-No Place for Hate

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: This initiative provides educators and students with the resources to ensure that anti-bias and diversity education is included in the school curriculum. No Place for Hate helps to create and sustain inclusive school environments where all students feel valued and have the opportunity to succeed by promoting respect for individual differences while challenging bigotry and prejudice.

Program: Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy and Curriculum

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to the creation and maintenance of a learning environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity and provided with fair and equitable treatment with freedom from bullying and harassment. To this end, M-DCPS is dedicated to eradicating bullying and harassment in its schools by providing awareness, prevention and education in promoting a school atmosphere in which bullying, harassment and intimidation will not be tolerated by students, school board employees, visitors or volunteers. The District's policy prohibits bullying and harassment of students and staff on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and through school computer networks.

The Division of Student Services developed a comprehensive Bullying Prevention curriculum for all students in grades Pre-K through grade 12. As a result of this curriculum, each student will receive five bullying prevention lessons per year throughout their educational career in M-DCPS.

Program: **Character Education**

Contact: Division of Social Sciences, 305 992-1982.

Description: Miami-Dade County Public Schools adopted nine core values thought to be universally accepted by all segments of society, to serve as the basis of the district's character education program. These values are Citizenship, Cooperation, Fairness, Honesty, Kindness, Integrity, Pursuit of Excellence, Respect, and Responsibility. In keeping with the Board's action, the district's Student Progression Plan was amended to require character education instruction for all students, K-12. Instructional materials were developed to support the district's character education requirements and were provided to all schools. Workshops and special ethics-based programs have also been offered to schools through partnerships with organizations and community partners; e.g., Institute for Global Ethics, Living Values, Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics.

Program: **Comprehensive Health Services**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: The mission of the Division of Comprehensive Health Services is to protect, promote, and preserve the health of Miami-Dade County Public Schools' students through the following endeavors:

1. Focused vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings.
2. Medication Administration trainings.
3. Immunization evaluations and consultations.
4. The reduction of communicable disease through surveillance, reporting, educating, and training.
5. Linking students and school site employees with health resources in the community.

Program: Comprehensive Student Services Program PK-Adult

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305 995-7338.

Description: The Comprehensive Student Services Program, PK-Adult, established policy for the implementation of a program centered around student skill development and delivered by an integrated team of student services professionals who are uniquely trained to address the academic, personal/social, career/community awareness and health development needs of all students. This is a systemic approach which delivers services to students and their families. The program structure supports educational reform initiatives and takes into consideration current social climate and the unique issues faced by the multicultural/multi-linguistic populations enrolled in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. It is an integral and central part of the district's total educational program.

The Student Services team members available to schools as resources and program delivery agents are school counselors, CAP advisors, TRUST specialists, school psychologists, school social workers and crisis management specialists.

Program: Crisis Management Program

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: The Crisis Management Team, through training, consultation and direct services, assists schools in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from critical incidents and disasters.

Historically, critical incidents and disasters have taken a heavy toll on communities across the nation and within our own community. These events have caused the educational community to closely examine many aspects of school safety and security, and to focus on the psychological well-being of students and staff.

In response to these occurrences, and in unison with Federal and State efforts, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has developed an Emergency Operations Plan and a multi-disciplinary District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) to address four areas of crisis management: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

An integral part of DCIRT is the Crisis Management Team. This district-based team consists of counseling professionals who provide a comprehensive array of crisis management services to schools.

The Crisis Management Team is available to provide the following services:

- Provide crisis management training to Critical Incident Response Teams based at school sites and Region Centers.
- Consult with administrators, counselors, and school-site Critical Incident Response Teams to develop a plan for their particular school that will ensure efficiency in handling a school crisis.
- Provide appropriate consultation, resource materials, professional development and presentations for school staff and parents on topics such as: youth suicide, self-injurious behavior, bullying/harassment and bereavement.
- Respond to schools that may be experiencing a crisis as a result of traumatic events, including the loss of life.
- Assist in coordinating and providing crisis intervention services.
- Provide consultative services for M-DCPS counseling professionals regarding student suicidal and self-injurious behavior.
- Network with outside agencies.

Program: **Drug-Free Youth in Town (D-FY-IT)**

Contact: Division of Student Services

Description: This organization provides youth with drug information; assists in the development of leadership skills; organizes community service opportunities; facilitates club meetings and coordinates special activities for students and parents.

Program: **Health Connect in Our Schools (HCiOS)**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7337

Description:

Health Connect in Our Schools was developed by the Children’s Trust in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Miami-Dade County Health Department, and key community stakeholders.

HCiOS provides improved access to quality health care services for school-aged children through the provision of health and behavioral care services.

The HCiOS School Health Team consists of a nurse (ARNP or RN), school social worker, and two school health aides. Each HCiOS school is assigned a school health team and each nurse and school social worker serves two schools. The school health aides are assigned to one school.

HIV/ AIDS Education Program

Program:

Contact:

Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description:

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), HIV/AIDS Education Program is funded through a cooperative agreement with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC/DASH). The fundamental mission of the HIV/AIDS education program is to decrease the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unintended pregnancy among youth by fostering an increased awareness of healthy behaviors and practices that can help them become healthy adults. Program goals are in alignment with those of the [National HIV/AIDS Strategy](#) and includes: 1) reducing the number of people who become infected with HIV; 2) increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for people living with HIV; and, 3) reducing HIV-related health disparities.

The HIV/AIDS Education program implements and monitors state, district and school health policies and practices that address HIV prevention by:

- Ensuring schools provide quality HIV prevention education
- Encouraging positive communication and decision-making skills related to sexual risk behaviors
- Providing professional development trainings on HIV,STD and pregnancy prevention to school administration and faculty responsible for teaching health education
- Facilitating the opportunity for students with AIDS or HIV infection to attend classes and participate in school sports and other activities
- Creating a safe learning environment for impacted youth to seek assistance and comfort

Program: **Homeless Education Program (Project Up-Start)**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: Project Up-Start assists schools with the identification, enrollment, and attendance of students in homeless situations. The project's after school tutorial component is designed to supplement the learning taking place in shelter and school sites. Upon enrollment, school supplies and educational materials are provided to each student. Activities to promote a healthy sense of self and to strengthen academic competence are part of the tutorial sessions. The parental component brings participants into the tutorial sessions to learn ways to help their children with homework, to read, or to observe the learning taking place. Weekly parental involvement days are scheduled on a regular basis and parent resource kits are distributed to incoming families. The resource kits contain school supplies (pens, pencils, notebook paper, rulers, etc.) that will enable parents to assist students with homework projects.

Efforts are made to expedite psycho-educational evaluations for children who may be gifted or who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties. Due to the high transiency rate among this student population, many are not diagnosed for learning problems as they move from school to school. Project Up-Start also works to increase advocacy on behalf of students through dissemination of information to school-based personnel on homeless issues and available community resources.

Program: **MCCJ'S Student Voices (formally known as Heritage Panel)**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: This is a unique youth leadership and prejudice-reduction program that empowers high school and middle school students to explore cultural diversity and develop self-esteem, while fostering values that support the understanding of individual differences.

Program: **Peer Mediation Program**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: Peer mediation is a negotiation-based strategy that teaches student mediators alternative strategies to help resolve conflict among their peers. In peer mediation, students trained as conflict managers apply problem-solving strategies to assist their peers in settling disputes in a manner satisfying to all parties. Such a strategy may help keep many minor incidents from escalating over time into more serious incidents. More importantly, peer mediation teaches students an alternative set of skills that they can apply in conflict situations.

Program: Psychological Services

Contact: Division of Psychological Services, 305-995-1735

Description: Psychological Services is committed to ensuring that policies and procedures for programs/services are the highest quality available for the children of Miami-Dade County. Psychological Services equips its school psychologists to assist in providing multiple services for students who experience academic, behavioral and emotional difficulties, including:

- Response to intervention, assessment and consultation
- Clinical services for students with an emotional or behavioral disability
- Diagnostic services
- Support services for alternative education programs
- Crisis intervention support

Program: Safer, Smarter Kids

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: *Safer, Smarter Kids* is an abuse prevention education curriculum for kindergarteners created by Lauren's Kids in consultation with child psychologist, Tara Zuckerman. After years of implementation in the Miami-Dade school system, the 2011 Florida Legislature directed Lauren's Kids to develop and expand the curriculum to be sent to every public kindergarten classroom and guidance office in Florida.

The curriculum is divided into six, 30-minute micro-lessons and designed to fit easily into any classroom schedule. Each lesson includes a video component, in-classroom exercises and take-home materials to involve parents in this important education. The curriculum satisfies more than 22 Sunshine State Standards and numerous ESOL standards.

The topics covered include:

- Safety awareness
- Respect for yourself and others
- Self-esteem development
- Body boundaries
- Listening to your guiding voice
- Accessing help
- It's OK to tell (secrets)

Program: School Counseling Programs

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: School counseling services are provided at every school, PK- 12 and adult/vocational/technical education centers. School counselors assist students in the developmental acquisition of knowledge and skills that will help them reach their academic, personal/social and career/community potential. Additional services include the following:

- Provide activities that support a comprehensive program based on standards and benchmarks for student skill development in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social growth, career/community awareness, and health and wellness.
- Provide individual and small group counseling for students with special needs. Special needs include, but are not limited to, students: with counseling on their Individual Educational Plan, who have been retained, with poor attendance, dealing with a crisis, with discipline referrals or difficulty with peer relationships.
- Conduct guidance sessions in the classroom to assist students at various developmental stages in developing life long skills, e.g., problem solving, decision making, goal setting.
- Provide individual counseling sessions to help students deal with crises, transitional issues, and personal/ and family concerns.
- Support and implement required retention procedures stipulated in the Student Progression Plan. Counselors provide individual and small group counseling activities designed to address the needs of students who have been retained or are in danger of being retained, e.g., study skills, decision-making skills, and/or self-concept issues.
- Consult with parents/guardians and teachers, to assist in developing appropriate strategies for improved student behavior and to promote academic achievement.
- Consult with students and parents/guardians to help them understand test information and options. Parent conferences are held to provide test interpretation.

Program:

School Police Program

Contact:

School Police, 305-757-7708

Description:

The Division of Student Services collaborates with the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department on many violence prevention initiatives including professional development activities for students, parents, school staff/administrators, and community members. The Miami-Dade Schools Police Department is currently the seventh largest law enforcement agency in Miami-Dade County with 153 sworn personnel. Utilizing a philosophy of prevention, intervention and enforcement, the role of the School Resource Officer is comprised of a multitude of functions that exist in the diverse school environments that they serve. These highly trained officers ultimately support school safety in conjunction with the academic and social / emotional success of every student.

School Social Work Program

Description:

The mission of the School Social Work Programs office is to promote school social work best practices that enhance the delivery and quality of social work services to all students and/or their families. The School Social Work Program provides programmatic supervision and technical support for all M-DCPS school social workers. This support extends to staff assigned to District, Region Centers, Health Connect in Our Schools (HCiOS), Alternative Education, Special Education (SPED) and/or **other specialized programs**.

Method

School Social Work Programs participates in ongoing collaboration with District, Region Center, and school administration as well as with its School Social Work Program chairpersons to derive policy, monitor procedures and measure the delivery and quality of social work service delivery. Program information is shared with school social worker staff via regularly scheduled meetings and ongoing communication (via phone and/or e-mail). Professional development workshops are also provided to all school social worker staff on a continual basis with an emphasis on mental health or social service topics.

Objectives

- Improve attendance / reduce truancy
- Increase graduation rates
- Reduce drop-out rates
- Increase school safety
- Improve student participation in the classroom
- Increase parental involvement
- Improve student academic performance
- Promote student wellness
- Enhance school crisis response efforts

Vision

- Promote best practice standards
- Encourage a systemic approach to prevention/intervention services
- Link students and families to needed community resources
- Encourage collaborative relationships between parents and teachers
- Advocate for student's rights
- Promote cultural diversity
- Promote understanding of the relationship between student behavior and academic achievement

Curriculum: **Sexting: Empowering Students to Engage in Positive Communication Curriculum**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: This curriculum helps students develop and practice positive communication skills via the electronic/web medium and also helps them to avoid negative implications.

Program: **Sexual Minority Network**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: Designated counseling professionals from each secondary school responsible for the coordination of support services that promote a safe learning environment for all students. Professional development is offered throughout the school year to provide technical assistance in establishing effective programs.

Curriculum: **Teen Dating Violence and Abuse Prevention Curriculum**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV), in partnership with member-certified domestic violence centers and with support from the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), has finalized FREE resource curricula for addressing teen dating violence in grades 7 through 12 to satisfy the statutory requirements in Florida law. Additional resources and web-based educator trainings are also available to support educators who choose to implement the curriculum. These may be found at www.fcadv.org/educators

Program: **T.R.U.S.T. (To Reach Ultimate Success Together)**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305 995-7338

Description: TRUST is a comprehensive program designed to provide prevention, intervention, referral, and follow-up services to students and their families who may be at risk of experiencing problems with substance abuse and maladaptive behaviors. A component of TRUST is a curriculum for students for grades K-12.

TRUST Specialists, located in most secondary schools, provide school sites with information on community agencies to assist with students' personal/social challenges. TRUST Specialists receive professional development throughout the school year regarding substance abuse, violence prevention and mental health issues in order to assist students and their families with these issues.

Program: **Youth Crime Watch**

Contact: Division of Student Services, 305-995-7338

Description: The Youth Crime Watch program relies on the principle of good citizenship, where youth take an active role in addressing the problems around them. They are a part of their community and must be a part of the solution to their school's and community's needs. The program provides youth with the tools, guidance and self-confidence to prevent crime, violence and drug abuse.

PREPAREDNESS

School-Based Critical Incident Response Team: Guidelines and Responsibilities

Build on what is already in place.

- Identify staff who are trained counseling professionals at your school
- Identify what itinerant counseling professionals are assigned to your school, their availability and contact information (School Social Worker or School Psychologist)
- Identify school staff with strong student rapport (e.g., activities director or football coach)
- In the event of a crisis, what preliminary arrangements need to be made for crisis team members to be released from his or her routine duties?

Assess the Team's Preparedness

- Are all members of the School-based Critical Incident Response Team trained in Crisis Response?
- Are all members of the School-based Critical Incident Response Team knowledgeable of available community resources?
- Has the school identified a resource center or counseling space in the event of a crisis?
- To whom does the team report to?
- Are all members of the team aware of the critical incident response plan for your school?
- Is your team comfortable speaking to children regarding death, suicide, homicide, etc?

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal's Role

- Take immediate action to ensure the safety of students and staff
- Contact 911 in the event of an emergency
- Contact the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995 COPS (2677)
- Activate the School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Implement School's Critical Incident Response Plan
- Make appropriate notifications
- Maintain communication with staff, students and parents

The Counselor's Role

- Assist in the notification of parents, students, community and faculty
- Organize and prioritize delivery of counseling services: those who were victimized or injured during the event, those who witnessed the event, those emotionally close to the victim, and those who have suffered a recent loss or are otherwise at risk

- Provide individual and group crisis counseling services
- Make yourself visible and available
- Establish a self-referral system for students and staff
- Maintain records of students and staff receiving counseling services and provide follow up
- Support and assist in classroom activities, student information sharing and school memorial activities

Faculty Role

- Make necessary adjustments to classroom schedule to address the emotional needs of students
- Facilitate classroom discussions and activities with students to help process the crisis and provide a safe and supportive environment, when appropriate
- Provide relevant class activities for students such as: research assignments, reading assignments and art projects
- Identify and refer students who may need additional counseling services
- Work closely with administration and counseling staff to address the needs of students

Clerical and Support Staff

- Assist school administration in making necessary phone contacts
- Refer incoming family members to an administrator or a designated member of the School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Prepare and make copies of appropriate communications to be distributed to parents, faculty and students
- Identify and refer students who may need additional counseling services
- Work closely with administration and counseling staff to address the needs of students

School Security Monitors

- Assist in securing/containing incident site
- Meet and direct incoming emergency personnel
- Monitor activity occurring along the school perimeter
- Screen individuals attempting to enter/exit building/campus
- Monitor parking areas
- Report concerns to school administrators/resource officer
- Fully cooperate with emergency personnel and investigators
- During building/campus evacuation, check all rooms to assure they are unoccupied
- Assist in search/rescue of students/staff following a major incident

School-Based Critical Incident Response Team Profile

Access FM-5092. Complete the document and forward to appropriate locations, as indicated on form.

Form No: 5092

Location No: 9913

Form Title: School-Based Critical Incident Response Team Profile

Form Description: In order for schools to be better prepared to manage critical incidents, school-site administrators are required to identify faculty and staff members who would serve as a Critical Incident Response Team. The District Crisis Management Team is available to provide training workshops, presentations and resource materials, which serve to help prevent and/or manage critical incidents or events that impact the school community.

School-Based Critical Incident Response Team

Self Care Tips

- **Increase your skill set:** Attending trainings and workshops will increase your skill set and enhance confidence and comfort when dealing with crises.
- **Peer Support:** share your stories and experiences with other members of the team. This provides an opportunity to debrief and decompress stress related to crisis and responding to the demands of parents, students and staff.
- **Meet as a team regularly:** This provides time to debrief and review crisis plans and procedures as well as roles within the school; make the team a priority.
- **Know your school's Critical Incident Response Plan:** understanding your role in the critical incident response process will increase your confidence and improve efficiency.
- **Self-awareness:** know your strengths and deficits; understanding that you may sometimes be too close to the crisis to help is a source of strength and courage.
- **Balance:** Maintaining a healthy diet and exercise promotes a positive and healthy lifestyle. Participate in activities that you enjoy in and out of school; make time for special interests and hobbies.

RESPONSE

**Resources for Responding to an Accidental or
Illness- Related Death of a Student**

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Fatality

- Verify that the incident occurred
- Notify District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS
- Contact the family of the deceased student and offer support services. Identify information family is willing to disclose about the loss
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Schedule emergency faculty meeting, if time permits
- Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed
- Prepare and facilitate the dissemination of crisis notification information and additional resources for staff, students and parents
- Refer media requests to Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 305-995-7111, for employees needing additional support services
- Arrange for staff debriefing time and location
- Designate staff to help coordinate memorial services
- Determine if additional assistance is needed

Principal's Response Checklist: On Campus Fatality

- Call 911
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2277)
- Implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures to ensure student and staff safety, if needed
- Secure/contain the incident site
- Do not tamper with any evidence or attempt to clean the area until the police have given clearance to do so
- Meet with the family of the deceased to offer support
- Determine what information will be shared with students and faculty
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting, if time permits
- Prepare and facilitate dissemination of crisis notification and additional resources to staff, students and parents
- Designate location(s) where information and counseling support may be accessed
- Determine alternative student pick up locations for parents and bus drivers, if necessary
- Refer media requests to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 305-995-7111, to assist staff that may need additional support services
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel
- Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days



Miami Dade County Public Schools

Division of Student Services Crisis Management Program Crisis Response Worksheet

Crisis Team Meeting Date _____ Time _____

1. Crisis Team Member Coordinator _____

Team Member Name	Title	School

2. Crisis Details

Victim Name:	ID:
Age:	Grade:
Contact Information :	
Other details:	

3. Identified students who may be at risk

4. Counseling Centers

Staffed By

5. Announcement of Crisis

<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Email to Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Connect Ed to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Staff Meeting

<input type="checkbox"/> Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Time
<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers

7. Debrief Date _____ Time _____

Team Member Name	Contact

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

- Share factual information about the loss
- Identify staff who are significantly impacted by the loss and may need support services
- Review crisis response plan
- Review behaviors and common grief reactions that may be displayed by students
- Discuss resources that are available today for students and staff
- Remind staff to discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information
- Instruct staff to refer students to counselors, as necessary
- Inform teachers that they may request a counselor to visit the classroom
- Remind staff of the availability of EAP services
- Introduce Crisis Management Team members
- Q/A

Sample Email to Staff Death of a Student off Campus

Staff, we have been informed of the tragic loss of a student. The student, **(Name of Student)** died as a result of **(state cause of death, if known)**. Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to **(designated location)**. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner

Thank you,

Principal's Name

Sample Email to Staff Death of a Student on Campus

Staff as you already know, we have experienced the tragic loss of a student today on campus. **(Name of student)** died as a result of **(cause of death, if known)**. Please do not discuss this with your students unless you are instructed to do so. Please be aware that **(fill in day of the week)** may be a difficult day, drawing upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classrooms and in the hallways. Students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of their trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to **(designated location)**. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal will be to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of the class needs attention, please notify the main office, and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.]

Please reassure students that their safety is our main priority.

Every effort should be made to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage **(fill in day of the week)** activities in a safe and sensitive manner.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Student off Campus
Secondary Students

Good Morning, **(School Mascot)** family, it is with great sadness that I greet all of you today. As many of you may already know, the **(Name of School)** has suffered the loss of one of our students, **(Name of Student)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your feelings and thoughts with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us now have a moment of silence for **(Name of Student)**.

Thank you.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of Student on Campus
Secondary Students

Our **(Insert school or mascot's name)** has suffered a tremendous loss of one of our students today. **(Name of student)** a ___ grade student, died today on campus. Like you, we are greatly saddened by this event. We want to assure our faculty and students that safety is our greatest concern. Every effort is being made to assure your safety and respond to any of your concerns. During difficult times, it can be very helpful to talk about your feelings and thoughts. For this reason, extra counselors will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with an available counselor. Let us now have a moment of silence for **(Name of Student)**.

Thank you.

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
English

Our **(Insert school or mascot's name)** family has experienced the loss of a student today on campus. The student's parents have been informed of the loss. The death of a student on campus is a very rare and tragic event. As always, Miami-Dade County Public Schools and **(Insert school name)** are committed to providing a safe learning environment to all students and staff in our care. We take this responsibility very seriously. As a school community, we have all been impacted by this loss. For this reason, extra counselors will be available to speak with students and parents as the need arises. School will be in session tomorrow and we strongly encourage your child's attendance. We have all been moved to come together as a family during this difficult time. We send our heartfelt condolences to the family of the student and I thank you for your continued support. If you should require additional support or information, please contact the school at (_____).

Sincerely,

Principal

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
Spanish

Nuestra familia de (**Our school or mascot's name**) ha sufrido la pérdida de un estudiante que falleció hoy en el recinto escolar. A los padres del estudiante se les ha informado de la pérdida. Es un hecho poco común que fallezca un estudiante en un recinto escolar. Como siempre, las Escuelas Públicas del Condado Miami-Dade y (**Insert school name**) están comprometidas a proporcionar a todos los estudiantes que están a nuestro cuidado y al personal un ambiente de aprendizaje donde todos estén seguros y protegidos. Tomamos esta responsabilidad muy en serio. Como escuela comunitaria, a todos nos ha impactado esta pérdida. Por este motivo, habrá más consejeros disponibles para que hablen con los estudiantes y los padres de familia, según sea necesario. La escuela funcionará mañana como de costumbre y los animamos encarecidamente a que sus hijos asistan a clases. Estamos conmovidos y nos hemos unido como una familia durante estos tiempos difíciles. Nuestra condolencia más sincera a la familia del estudiante y a ustedes les agradecemos su continuo apoyo. Si necesitasen más apoyo o información, por favor, comuníquense con la escuela al (_____).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
Creole

Fanmi **(Insert school or mascot's name)** nou an ap fè eksperyans pèt yon elèv sou kanpous la jodi a. Nou deja enfòmè paran elèv la sou lanmò a. Lanmò yon elèv sou kanpous la se yon evènman ki trè ra e trajik. Kòm toujou, Lekòl Leta Miami-Dade County ak **(Insert school name)** detèmine pou ofri yon anviwònman aprantisaj ki gen sekirite pou tout elèv ak anplwaye ki nan swen nou. Nou pran responsablite sa a trè serye. Kòm yon kominote lekòl, nou tout sibi efè pèt sa a. Se pou rezon sa a, ap gen plis konseye disponib pou pale avèk elèv ak paran lè li nesèsè. Ap gen lekòl demen e nou ankouraje pitit ou a anpil pou li vini. Nou tout santi nou bezwen met tèt nou ansanm kòm yon fanmi nan moman difisil sa a. Nou voye kondoleyans sensè nou bay fanmi elèv la e mwen remèsye w pou sipò kontinyèl ou. Si w bezwen plis sipò oubyen enfòmasyon, silvouplè kontakte lekòl la nan (_____).

Sensèman,

Direktè (tris)

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of Student
Pre-K to 2nd Grade
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved **(Student's Grade Level)** grade student, **(Name of student)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, and teachers.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of a loved one or friend for the first time will often be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance. Due to the age of your child, we feel that it would be best for you to inform him/her of this loss in the comfort of your home environment.

In an effort to assist you in helping your child during the difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. Members of the District Crisis Management Team and our counselor will be available to assist students impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a recent loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal reaction.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor, **(Counselor's Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Young children especially may display regressive behavior, e.g., bedwetting, thumb sucking or tantrums.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime, and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Pre-K to Grade 2
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido estudiante de **(student's grade level)** grado. Su familia, amigos y maestros le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren por primera vez la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo, a menudo se sentirán atemorizados o abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Debido a la edad de su hijo, nos parece que sería mejor que usted le informase de esta pérdida en la comodidad de su hogar.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjele saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido recientemente una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una reacción normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Pre-K to Grade 2
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of student)**, yon elèv **(Student's Grade Level)** nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, ak pwofesè li ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi pou premye fwa, ap souvan pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote ou pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans. Akòz laj pitit ou a, nou santi li ta pi bon pou enfòmè li oumenm sou lanmò sa a nan konfò anviwònman kay ou.

Nan yon efò pou asiste w nan ede pitit ou pandan peryòd difisil la, nou prepare lis machasuiv ki nan atachman an. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak konseye nou an ap disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt sa a.

Silvoulplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon kèlkonk lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon reyaksyon ki nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmasyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapè.
- Mò sibat, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of Student
Grades 3-12
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved **(Grade Level)** student, **(Name of Student)**.

He/she will be greatly missed by his family, friends and teachers.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of someone may be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance.

We have prepared the attached list of guidelines for parents/guardians to help their children through the grieving process. Members of the District Crisis Management Team along with your school's counseling staff are available to assist students who are impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor(s), **(Counselor's Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal's Name

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bed time, and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 3-12
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido estudiante de **(student's grade level)** grado. Su familia, amigos y maestros le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido, a menudo sienten miedo o se sienten abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjenle saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una experiencia normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 3-12
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of student)**, yon elèv **(Student's Grade Level)**

nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, ak pwofesè li ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun ka pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman sa a. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote w pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans.

Nou prepare lis machasuiv ki nan atachman an pou paran/gadyen ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis lapenn nan.

Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak anplwaye konseye lekòl la disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Silvouplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans ki nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvouplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:

Guidelines for Parents

Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesesè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen teraplis.
- Mò sibat, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.

Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Pre- K – 2nd Grade

Good morning boys and girls. My name is **(Name)**. I am here today to talk to you about something important. First, I would like to know how many of you have or had a pet? What kind of pet(s) do/did you have? Pets are a very important part of a family. How many of you have had a pet that died? How did you feel when your pet died? How many of you know a person who has died? Who is that person? How did you feel when that person died?

There are a lot of important people in your life. Your friends are also important people in your life. He/she is someone who you see each day at school.

Today, I am here to tell you some sad news about one of your friends. Unfortunately, **(Name of student)** died. When someone dies, they are no longer breathing and their heart is no longer working. They can no longer walk, talk, eat or sleep. That is what happened to **(Name of student)**. It is very hard when someone you care about dies.

You may feel very sad and miss them. It isn't always easy to talk about sad feelings; by talking to someone you love can help you feel better. You might want to talk about it with your parents, other people in your family or maybe another adult at school. No matter how sad you feel today, one thing you can be sure of is that you will not always feel this way. There will come a time when you don't feel as sad anymore and you will feel happy again remembering your friend. Happy times and sad times are a part of everyone's life. Let's talk about some nice things about your friend. You can also draw a nice picture about him/her and we can give it to his/her family who will also miss him/her.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Grades 3-5

Introduction

Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here today to give you some information and talk with you. Students, as a class and as a school, you are a family. You spend five days a week together and attend school 180 days a year. During that time, you have many happy moments and celebrate many occasions. However, like any family, you also have experiences that are not fun. Sometimes things happen that make you sad. Today, we must tell you about something that is quite sad. One of the students in your class has died. **(Name of Student)** died yesterday (only state the cause of death with the permission of the family or if the information is publicly known). **(Name of Student)** will be missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.

When these types of things happen to people we know, new feelings and thoughts can happen inside of us. Some of these are new feelings we've never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just don't want to think that it happened. It is OK to feel sad and cry. It is not OK to make fun of anyone who is sad, scared or cries. We all have different feelings and they should be respected. It is also very important to talk about what happened, because talking will help us to feel better.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/ staff that are in need of additional counseling services.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Secondary Students

Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. One of your fellow classmate's, **(Name of Deceased)** died as a result of (Cause of Death – Shared only with the permission of family, or if information has been released by a reliable public source).

When things like this happen some people may feel angry, upset, scared, sad, in shock, or all of these emotions all wrapped in one. You may see that someone may cry a lot and others don't to cry at all. Maybe some of you just want to stay quiet for a while, and some of you have to talk about what happened and want to get as much information as possible.

There is no "right" way to react to death, the important thing is to recognize how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling.

In your school you have (list counselors) that are here every day for you.

Today the **(Designated Counseling Area)** is the space that we have designated as your spot to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor please ask your teachers for a pass, if you feel that someone you know may need to talk to someone about how they feel, inform a teacher so that he/she can connect him/her with the counselor.

This is going to be a difficult day for many of you, please know that your administrators, teachers and counselors are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced loss in the past and so this may trigger some other feelings. Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way.

Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with you about the loss of your classmate and friend, **(Name of Deceased)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.



Miami Dade County Public Schools

Division of Student Services

Crisis Management Program

Crisis Counseling Professional's Log

Complete this form if any M-DCPS counseling professionals respond to assist your school in the event of a school wide crisis. Provide your administrator with a completed copy of this form.

School Name:

Date:

Name	Title	Region/Schools	Mail Code

**Resources for Responding to an Accidental or
Illness-Related Death of a Staff Member**

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist
Staff Fatality –Off Campus

- Verify that the incident occurred
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995 COPS (2677)
- Contact the family of the deceased staff member and offer condolences and support
- Determine what information the family would like to disclose about the loss
- Mobilized School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting
- Prepare and facilitate the dissemination of crisis notification information and additional resources to staff, students and parents
- Designate location(s) where information and counseling support may be accessed
- Refer media requests to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 305-995-7111 to assist staff that may additional support services
- Schedule a time and location for a debriefing with all crisis response personnel

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist:
Staff Fatality – On Campus

- Call 911
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2277)
- Implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures to ensure student and staff safety
- Secure/control the incident site

- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Meet with the family of the deceased to offer support
- Determine what information will be shared with students and faculty
- Prepare and facilitate dissemination of crisis notification and additional resources to staff, students and parents
- Determine alternative student pick up locations for parents and bus drivers
- Refer media requests to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting, if possible
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 305-995-7111, to assist staff that may need additional support services
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel
- Determine what, if any, additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days



Miami Dade County Public Schools

Division of Student Services

Crisis Management Program

Crisis Response Worksheet

Crisis Team Meeting Date _____ Time _____

1. Crisis Team Member Coordinator _____

Team Member Name	Contact Number

2. Crisis Details

Victim Name:	ID:
Age:	Grade:
Contact Information :	
Other details:	

3. Identified students who may be at risk

4. Counseling Centers Staffed By

5. Announcement of Crisis

<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Email to Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Connect Ed to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Staff Meeting

<input type="checkbox"/> Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Time
<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers

7. Debrief Date _____ Time _____

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

- Share factual information about the loss
- Identify staff who are significantly impacted by the loss and may need support services
- Review crisis response plan
- Review behaviors and common grief reactions that may be displayed by students
- Discuss resources that are available today for students and staff
- Remind staff to discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information
- Instruct staff to refer students to counselors, as necessary
- Teachers may request a counselor to visit the classroom
- Remind staff of the availability of EAP services
- Introduce Crisis Management Team members
- Q/A

Sample Email to Staff
Death of a Staff Member off Campus

Staff, we have been informed of the tragic loss of a staff member. **(Name of Staff Member)** died this morning/ or yesterday. Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss. Support for staff will be available in _____.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety.

Thank you,

Principal's Name

Sample Email to Staff
Death of a Staff Member on Campus

Staff, we have experienced the loss of a teacher/ staff member. **(Name of Staff Member)** died today on campus. Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss. Support for staff will be available in_____.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed. Please reassure students that their safety is our main priority.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal's Name

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Staff Member off Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I greet you today. We have received word that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our teachers/staff, **(Name of Staff Member)**. He/she has been a member of our staff for _____years and will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students and colleagues. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Staff Member)**.

Thank you.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I inform you that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our teachers/staff today. **(Name of Staff Member)** died this morning on campus.. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students and colleagues. We want to assure all of our faculty and students that safety is our greatest concern and we take this responsibility very seriously. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Staff Member)**.

Thank you.

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
English

Our school has experienced the loss of a staff member. **(Name of Staff Member)** died today on campus. The death of a staff member on campus is a very rare event. As always, Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff in our care. We take this responsibility very seriously. As a school community, we all have been impacted by this loss. For this reason, extra counselors will be available to speak with students, staff and parents, as the need arises. School will be in session tomorrow and we strongly encourage your child's attendance. Students will benefit from the support and structure provided by the school's staff and their classmates. We have all been moved to come together as a family during this difficult time. We send our sincere condolences to the family of the **(Name of Staff Member)** and thank the community for your continued support. If you should require additional support or information, please contact the school at (_____).

Sincerely,

Principal

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Spanish

Nuestra escuela ha sufrido la pérdida de un miembro del personal (**Name of Staff Member**) que falleció hoy en el recinto escolar. Es un hecho poco común que fallezca un miembro del personal en un recinto escolar. Como siempre, las Escuelas Públicas del Condado Miami-Dade están comprometidas a proporcionar a todos los estudiantes que están a nuestro cuidado y al personal un ambiente de aprendizaje donde todos estén seguros y protegidos. Tomamos esta responsabilidad muy en serio. Como escuela comunitaria, a todos nos ha impactado esta pérdida. Por este motivo, habrá más consejeros disponibles para que hablen con los estudiantes, el personal y los padres de familia, según sea necesario. La escuela funcionará mañana como de costumbre y los animamos encarecidamente a que sus hijos asistan a clases. Los estudiantes se beneficiarán del apoyo y de la estructura que brindarán miembros del personal de la escuela y otros compañeros de clases. Estamos conmovidos y nos hemos unidos como una familia durante estos tiempos difíciles. Nuestra condolencia más sincera a la familia de (**Name of Staff Member**) y agradecemos el continuo apoyo de la comunidad. Si necesitasen más apoyo o información, por favor, comuníquense con la escuela al (_____).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Creole

Lekòl nou an ap fè eksperyans pèt yon anplwaye. **(Name of Staff Member)** mouri sou kanpous la jodi a. Lanmò yon anplwaye sou kanpous la se yon evènman ki trè ra. Kòm toujou, Lekòl Leta Miami-Dade County detèmine pou ofri yon anviwònman aprantisaj pou elèv ak anplwaye ki gen sekirite. Nou pran responsablite sa a trè serye. Kòm yon kominote lekòl, nou tout sibi efè pèt sa a. Se pou rezon sa a, ap gen plis konseye disponib pou pale avèk elèv ak paran lè li nesèsè. Ap gen lekòl demen e nou ankouraje pitit ou a anpil pou li vini. Elèv yo ap benefisye sipò ak ankadreman anplwaye lekòl la ak kondisip yo. Nou tout santi nou bezwen met tèt nou ansanm kòm yon fanmi nan moman difisil sa a. Nou voye kondoleyans sensè nou bay fanmi **(Name of Staff Member)** e nou remèsye kominote a pou sipò kontinyèl yo. Si w bezwen plis sipò oubyen enfòmasyon, silvouplè kontakte lekòl la nan (_____).

Sensèman,

Direktè (tris)

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to 2nd Grade
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(Name of School)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved staff member **(Name of Staff Member)**.

He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students, staff and parents.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of a loved one or friend for the first time will often be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance. Due to the age of your child, we feel that it would be best for you to inform him/her of this loss in the comfort of your home environment.

In an effort to assist you in helping your child during this difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. Members of the District Crisis Management Team, along with your school's counselor will be available to assist students impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings of that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor, **(Counselor's Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Young children especially may display regressive behavior, e.g., bedwetting, thumb sucking or tantrums.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to Grade 2
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido miembro del personal **(Name of Staff Member)**. Su familia, amigos, estudiantes, compañeros y padres de familia le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren por primera vez la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo, a menudo se sentirán atemorizados o abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Debido a la edad de su hijo, nos parece que sería mejor que usted le informase de esta pérdida en la comodidad de su hogar.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Team*) junto a nuestros consejeros estará disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjele saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido recientemente una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una reacción normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K-Grade 2
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of Staff Member)**, yon anplwaye nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, elèv, anplwaye ak paran ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi pou premye fwa, ap souvan pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote ou pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans. Akòz laj pitit ou a, nou santi li ta pi bon pou enfòmè li oumenm sou lanmò sa a nan konfò anviwònman kay ou.

Nan yon efò pou asiste w nan ede pitit ou pandan peryòd difisil sa a, nou prepare lis machasuiv ki tache a.

Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak konseye lekòl nou an ap disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt sa a.

Silvoulè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan

(School Phone Number).

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapè.
- Mò sibit, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3 -12
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved member of our staff, **(Name of Staff Member)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, colleagues and students.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of someone may be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance.

We have prepared the attached list of guidelines for parents/guardians to help their children through the grieving process. Members of the District Crisis Management Team along with your school's counseling staff are available to assist students who are impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor(s), **(Counselor's Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal's Name

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime, and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3-12
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido miembro de nuestro personal, **(Name of Staff Member)**. Su familia, amigos, compañeros y estudiantes le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido, puede que sientan miedo o se sientan abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjenle saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una experiencia normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3-12
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of a Staff Member)**, yon anplwaye nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi, kolèg ak elèv ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun ka pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote w pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans.

Nou prepare lis machasuiv ki tache a pou paran/gadyen ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis lapenn nan. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak anplwaye konseye lekòl ou a disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Silvoulplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapis.
- Mò sibat, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of Teacher
Pre-K to 2nd Grade

Good morning boys and girls. My name is **(Name)**. I am here today to talk to you about something important. First, I would like to know how many of you have or had a pet? What kind of pet(s) do you have? Pets are a very important part of a family. How many of you have had a pet that died? How did you feel when your pet died? How many of you know a person who has died? Who is that person? How did you feel when that person died?

There are a lot of important people in your life. Your teacher is also an important person in your life. He/she is someone who you see each day at school.

Today, I am here to tell you some sad news about your teacher. Unfortunately, **(Name of teacher)** died. When someone dies, they are no longer breathing and their heart is no longer working. They can no longer walk, talk, eat or sleep. That is what happened to **(Name of teacher)**. It is very hard when someone you care about dies.

You may feel very sad and miss them. It isn't always easy to talk about sad feelings; by talking to someone you love can help you feel better. You might want to talk about it with your parents, other people in your family or maybe another adult at school. No matter how sad you feel today, one thing you can be sure of is that you will not always feel this way. There will come a time when you don't feel as sad anymore and you will feel happy again remembering your teacher. Happy times and sad times are a part of everyone's life. Let's talk about some nice things about your teacher. You can also draw a nice picture about him/her and we can give it to his/her family who will also miss him/her.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Teacher
Grades 3-5

Introduction

Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here today to give you some information and talk with you. Students, as a class and as a school, you are a family. You spend five days a week together and attend school 180 days a year. During that time, you have many happy moments and celebrate many occasions. However, like any family, you also have experiences that are not fun. Sometimes things happen that make you sad. Today, we must tell you about something that is quite sad. Your teacher, **(Name of Teacher)**, has died. He/she died yesterday (only state the cause of death with the permission of the family or if the information is publicly known). **(Name of Teacher)** will be missed by his/her family, friends, students and other teachers.

When these types of things happen to people we know, new feelings and thoughts can happen inside of us. Some of these are new feelings we've never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just don't want to think that it happened. It is OK to feel sad and cry. It is not OK to make fun of anyone who is sad, scared or cries. We all have different feelings and they should be respected. It is also very important to talk about what happened, because talking will help us to feel better.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/ staff that are in need of additional counseling services.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Teacher
Secondary Students

Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. Your teacher, **(Name of Deceased)**, died as a result of (Cause of death can be mentioned with family approval or if information has been made public from a reliable source).

When things like this happen some people may feel angry, upset, scared, sad, in shock or all of these emotions all wrapped into one. You may see that someone may cry a lot and others don't cry at all. Maybe some of you just want to stay quiet for a while, and some of you have to talk about what happened and want to get as much information as possible.

There is no "right" way to react to death, the important thing to recognize is how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling.

In your school you have **(list counselors)** who are here every day for you.

Today the **(designated counseling area)** is the space that we have designated as your spot to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor please ask you teacher for a pass, if you have a friend that may need to talk to someone about how they feel, inform a teacher so that he/she can connect him/her with a counselor.

This may be a difficult day for many of you, please know that your administrators, other teachers and counselors are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced a loss in the past and so this may trigger some other feelings. Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way.

Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with you about the loss of your teacher, **(Name of Deceased)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, colleagues and students.

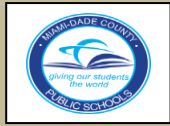
Resources for Responding to the Suicide of a Student

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Suicide

- Verify that incident occurred
- Notify District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2677)
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting, if time permits
- Distribute the Suicide Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors handout to staff
- Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed
- Contact the family of the deceased student and offer support services. Identify information family is willing to disclose about the loss
- Determine if the deceased has other siblings attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools. If so, contact the principals of those sites to inform them of the loss
- Prepare and facilitate the dissemination of crisis notification information and additional resources for staff, students and parents
- Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss and those who may be considered at-risk for self-harm
- Refer media requests to Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact Miami-Dade County Public Schools Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 305-995-7111, for staff that may need additional support
- Designate staff to help coordinate memorial activities
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel and staff
- Determine if additional assistance is needed
 - Closely monitor student and staff attendance in the days following the suicide
 - Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist List: On Campus Suicide

- Call 911
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2277)
- Implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures to ensure student and staff safety, if appropriate
- Secure/contain the incident site
- Following notification of family by law enforcement, contact the family of the deceased student and offer support services. Identify information family is willing to disclose about the loss
- Determine if the deceased has other siblings attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools. If so, contact the principals of those sites to inform them of the loss
- Determine what information will be shared with students and faculty
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting, if time permits
- Distribute the Suicide Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors handout to staff
- Prepare and facilitate dissemination of crisis notification and additional resources to staff, students, and parents, as appropriate
- Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss and those who may be considered at-risk for self-harm
- Refer media requests to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 305-995-7111, to assist staff that may need additional support services
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel and staff
- Closely monitor student and staff attendance in the days following the suicide
- Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days



Miami Dade County Public Schools

Division of Student Services

Crisis Management Program

Crisis Response Worksheet

Crisis Team Meeting Date _____ Time _____

1. Crisis Team Member Coordinator _____

Team Member Name	Title	Contact Number

2. Crisis Details

Victim Name:	ID:
Age:	Grade:
Contact Information :	
Other details:	

3. Identified students who may be at risk

4. Counseling Centers Staffed By

5. Announcement of Crisis

<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Email to Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Connect Ed to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Staff Meeting

<input type="checkbox"/> Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Time
<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers

7. Debrief Date _____ **Time** _____

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

- Share factual information about the loss
- Identify staff who are significantly impacted by the loss and may need support services
- Review crisis response plan
- Review and distribute handouts covering the risk factors, warning signs and protective factors for suicide and common grief reactions that may be displayed by students
- Remind staff to discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information
- Discuss procedures for referring students to counselors
- Inform teachers that they may request a counselor to visit the classroom
- Remind staff of the availability of EAP services
- Introduce Crisis Management Team members
- Allow time for staff to ask questions and express feelings

Sample Email to Staff Death of a Student off Campus

Staff, we have been informed of the tragic loss of a student. The student **(Name of Student)** died as a result of suicide (Only give this information if the parents of the deceased have given permission to do so, or if the suicide is public knowledge). Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the loss and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample Email to Staff Death of a Student on Campus

Staff, we have experienced the tragic loss of a student today on campus. The student **(Name of Student)** died as a result of suicide. (Only give this information if the parents of the deceased have given permission to do so, or if the suicide is public knowledge). Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the loss and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed. Please reassure students that their safety is our main priority.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Student off Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I greet you today. We have received word that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our students, (Name of Student). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Student)**.

Thank you.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Student on Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I inform you that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our students today. (Name of Student) a grade student, died this morning on campus. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers. We want to assure all of our faculty and students that safety is our greatest concern and we take this responsibility very seriously. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Student)**.

Thank you.

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
English

Our school has experienced the loss of a student today on campus. The student's parents have been notified of the loss. The death of a student on campus is a very rare and tragic event. As always, Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff in our care. We take this responsibility very seriously. As a school community, we all have been impacted by this loss. For this reason, extra counselors will be available to speak with students, staff and parents, as the need arises. School will be in session tomorrow and we strongly encourage your child's attendance. Students will benefit from the support and structure provided by the school's staff and their classmates. We have all been moved to come together as a family during this difficult time. We send our sincere condolences to the family of the student and thank the community for your continued support. If you should require additional support or information, please contact the school at _____ .

Sincerely,

Principal

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
Spanish

Nuestra familia de (**Our school or mascot's name**) ha sufrido la pérdida de un estudiante que falleció hoy en el recinto escolar. A los padres del estudiante se les ha informado de la pérdida. Es un hecho poco común que fallezca un estudiante en un recinto escolar. Como siempre, las Escuelas Públicas del Condado Miami-Dade y (**Insert school name**) están comprometidas a proporcionar a todos los estudiantes que están a nuestro cuidado y al personal un ambiente de aprendizaje donde todos estén seguros y protegidos. Tomamos esta responsabilidad muy en serio. Como escuela comunitaria, a todos nos ha impactado esta pérdida. Por este motivo, habrá más consejeros disponibles para que hablen con los estudiantes y los padres de familia, según sea necesario. La escuela funcionará mañana como de costumbre y los animamos encarecidamente a que sus hijos asistan a clases. Estamos conmovidos y nos hemos unido como una familia durante estos tiempos difíciles. Nuestra condolencia más sincera a la familia del estudiante y a ustedes les agradecemos su continuo apoyo. Si necesitasen más apoyo o información, por favor, comuníquense con la escuela al (_____).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
Creole

Fanmi **(Insert school or mascot's name)** nou an ap fè eksperyans pèt yon elèv sou kanpous la jodi a. Nou deja enfòmè paran elèv la sou lanmò a. Lanmò yon elèv sou kanpous la se yon evènman ki trè ra e trajik. Kòm toujou, Lekòl Leta Miami-Dade County ak **(Insert school name)** detèmine pou ofri yon anviwònman aprantisaj ki gen sekirite pou tout elèv ak anplwaye ki nan swen nou. Nou pran responsablite sa a trè serye. Kòm yon kominote lekòl, nou tout sibi efè pèt sa a. Se pou rezon sa a, ap gen plis konseye disponib pou pale avèk elèv ak paran lè li nesesè. Ap gen lekòl demen e nou ankouraje pitit ou a anpil pou li vini. Nou tout santi nou bezwen met tèt nou ansanm kòm yon fanmi nan moman difisil sa a. Nou voye kondoleyans sensè nou bay fanmi elèv la e mwen remèsye w pou sipò kontinyèl ou. Si w bezwen plis sipò oubyen enfòmasyon, silvouplè kontakte lekòl la nan (_____).

Sensèman,

Direktè (tris)

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Pre-K to Grade 2
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved **(Student's Grade Level)** grade student, **(Student's name)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of a loved one or friend for the first time will often be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance. Due to the age of your child, we feel that it would be best for you to inform him/her of this loss in the comfort of your home environment.

In an effort to assist you in helping your child during the difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings connected to that loss. This is a normal experience.

We will have members of the District Crisis Management team, along with our school's counselor available to assist students impacted by the loss. If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor, **(Counselor's Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime, and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Pre-K to Grade 2
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido estudiante de **(student's grade level)** grado. Su familia, amigos y maestros le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren por primera vez la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo, a menudo se sentirán atemorizados o abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Debido a la edad de su hijo, nos parece que sería mejor que usted le informase de esta pérdida en la comodidad de su hogar.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjele saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido recientemente una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una reacción normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Pre-K to Grade 2
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of student)**, yon elèv **(Student's Grade Level)** nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, ak pwofesè li ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi pou premye fwa, ap souvan pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote ou pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans. Akòz laj pitit ou a, nou santi li ta pi bon pou enfòmè li oumenm sou lanmò sa a nan konfò anviwònman kay ou.

Nan yon efò pou asiste w nan ede pitit ou pandan peryòd difisil la, nou prepare lis machasuiv ki nan atachman an. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak konseye nou an ap disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt sa a.

Silvoulè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon kèlkonk lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon reyaksyon ki nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesesè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapè.
- Mò sibat, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.

Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 3-12
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved **(Grade Level)** student, **(Student's name)**.

He/she will be greatly missed by his family, friends and teachers.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of someone may be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance.

We have prepared the attached list of guidelines for parents/guardians to help their children through the grieving process. Members of the District Crisis Management Team along with your school's counseling staff are available to assist students who are impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. If your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor(s), **(Counselor Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal's Name

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime, and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 3-12
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido estudiante de **(student's grade level)** grado. Su familia, amigos y maestros le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido, a menudo sienten miedo o se sienten abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjenle saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una experiencia normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Director

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 3-12
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of student)**, yon elèv **(Student's Grade Level)** nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, ak pwofesè li ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun ka pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman sa a. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote w pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans.

Nou prepare lis machasuiv ki nan atachman an pou paran/gadyen ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis lapenn nan.

Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak anplwaye konseye lekòl la disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Silvouplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans ki nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvouplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

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- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmasyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapè.
- Mò sibit, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Pre- K to Grade 2

Good morning boys and girls. My name is **(Name)**. I am here today to talk to you about something important. First, I would like to know how many of you have or had a pet? What kind of pet(s) do/did you have? Pets are a very important part of a family. How many of you have had a pet that died? How did you feel when your pet died? How many of you know a person who has died? Who is that person? How did you feel when that person died?

There are a lot of important people in your life. Your friends are also important people in your life. He/she is someone who you see each day at school.

Today, I am here to tell you some sad news about one of your friends. Unfortunately, **(Name of student)** died. When someone dies, they are no longer breathing and their heart is no longer working. They can no longer walk, talk, eat or sleep. That is what happened to **(Name of student)**. It is very hard when someone you care about dies.

You may feel very sad and miss them. It isn't always easy to talk about sad feelings; by talking to someone you love can help you feel better. You might want to talk about it with your parents, other people in your family or maybe another adult at school. No matter how sad you feel today, one thing you can be sure of is that you will not always feel this way. There will come a time when you don't feel as sad anymore and you will feel happy again remembering your friend. Happy times and sad times are a part of everyone's life. Let's talk about some nice things about your friend. You can also draw a nice picture about him/her and we can give it to his/her family who will also miss him/her **(Ask the children if they would like to share their pictures with the class)**.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Grades 3-5

Introduction

Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here today to give you some information and talk with you. Students, as a class and as a school, you are a family. You spend five days a week together and attend school 180 days a year. During that time, you have many happy moments and celebrate many occasions. However, like any family, you also have experiences that are not fun. Sometimes things happen that make you sad. Today, we must tell you about something that is quite sad. One of the students in your class has died. **(Name of Student)** died yesterday. **(Do not state cause of death as suicide; if asked, state that you do not know).** **(Name of Student)** will be missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.

If the students are aware of the death as being the result of a suicide use the following passage.

(Name of Student) died as a result of suicide. When someone chooses to take his/her life, we call it suicide. We don't always know why a person chooses to take his/her life, but we do know that suicide is never the answer to any problems. It is important to remember that the suicide is not your fault. Only the person who made the choice to take their life is responsible for his/her actions. If you know anyone talking about wanting to hurt themselves, please tell your teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately. We want everyone to be safe.

You can also anonymously contact the BE SAFE-Tip Reporting System at 305-995-2677; provide information online at <http://besafe.dadeschools.net>; or text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Besafe.

When these types of things happen to people we know, new feelings and thoughts can happen inside of us. Some of these are new feelings we've never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just don't want to think that it happened. It is OK to feel sad and cry. It is not OK to make fun of anyone who is sad, scared or cries. We all have different feelings and they should be respected. It is also very important to talk about what happened, because talking will help us to feel better.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/ staff that are in need of additional counseling services.

Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student Secondary Students

Hello. Our Names are _____ and _____. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. Yesterday one of your classmates, **(Name of Student)** died as a result of suicide **(Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).**

You may be feeling a variety of things right now: confusion, asking yourself 'why' questions that can never be fully answered, maybe feeling angry that he/she took his/her life. Some of you may feel very sad, while others may feel numb, not wanting to believe that this really happened. You may be asking yourself if you should have known; could I have stopped him/her. These thoughts and feelings are normal.

We don't always know why a person chooses to take his/her life, but we do know that suicide is never the answer to any problems. It is important to remember that the suicide is not your fault. Only the person who made the choice to take their life is responsible for his/her actions. Suicide is a tragedy that leaves many victims behind-family and friends. Most people who are suicidal really don't want to die. They just want to end the pain they are experiencing and unfortunately lose sight of the choices that are available to them. There are always other choices. Suicide is never an acceptable choice. We can help prevent future tragedies like this by realizing that we have the power to get help for ourselves and others who are feeling suicidal. Therefore, if you or anyone you know is thinking or talking about wanting to hurt themselves, please tell your teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately. We want everyone to be safe. You can also anonymously contact the BE SAFE-Tip Reporting System at 305-995-2677; provide information online at <http://besafe.dadeschools.net>; or text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Besafe. You can contact Switchboard of Miami (305-358-HELP) for confidential counseling and community resources.

There is no "right" way to react to death, the important thing to recognize is how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling.

In your school you have **(List Counselors)** who are here every day for you.

Today the **(Designated Counseling Area)** is the space that we have designated as a place to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor please ask you teacher for a pass.

This may be a difficult day for many of you, please know that your administrators, teachers and counselor are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced loss in the past and so this may trigger some other feelings. Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way.

Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with your about the loss of your classmate, **(Name of Deceased)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.

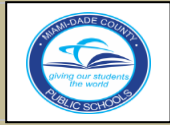
**Resources for Responding to the Suicide of a Staff
Member**

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Suicide

- Verify that incident occurred
- Notify District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2677)
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting, if time permits
- Distribute the Suicide Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors handout to staff
- Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed
- Contact the family of the deceased and offer support services. Identify information family is willing to disclose about the loss
- Prepare and facilitate the dissemination of crisis notification information and additional resources for staff, students and parents
- Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss and those who may be considered at-risk for self-harm
- Refer media requests to Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact Miami-Dade County Public Schools Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 305-995-7111, for staff that may need additional support
- Designate staff to help coordinate memorial activities
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel and staff
- Determine if additional assistance is needed
- Closely monitor student and staff attendance in the days following the suicide
- Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist List: On Campus Suicide

- Call 911
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2277)
- Implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures to ensure student and staff safety, if appropriate
- Secure/contain the incident site
- Following notification of family by law enforcement, contact the family of the deceased and offer support services. Identify information family is willing to disclose about the loss
- Determine what information will be shared with students and faculty
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting, if time permits
- Distribute the Suicide Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors handout to staff
- Prepare and facilitate dissemination of crisis notification and additional resources to staff, students, and parents, as appropriate
- Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss and those who may be considered at-risk for self-harm
- Refer media requests to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 305-995-7111, to assist staff that may need additional support services
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel and staff
- Closely monitor student and staff attendance in the days following the suicide
- Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days



Miami Dade County Public Schools

Division of Student Services

Crisis Management Program

Crisis Response Worksheet

Crisis Team Meeting Date _____ Time _____

1. Crisis Team Member Coordinator _____

Team Member Name	Title	Contact Number

2. Crisis Details

Victim Name:	ID:
Age:	Grade:
Contact Information :	
Other details:	

3. Identified students who may be at risk

4. Counseling Centers

Staffed By

5. Announcement of Crisis

<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Email to Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Connect Ed to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Staff Meeting

<input type="checkbox"/> Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Time
<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers

7. Debrief Date _____ Time _____

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

- Share factual information about the loss
- Identify staff who are significantly impacted by the loss and may need support services
- Review crisis response plan
- Review and distribute handouts covering the risk factors, warning signs and protective factors for suicide and common grief reactions that may be displayed by students
- Remind staff to discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information
- Discuss procedures for referring students to counselors
- Inform teachers that they may request a counselor to visit the classroom
- Remind staff of the availability of EAP services
- Introduce Crisis Management Team members
- Allow time for staff to ask questions and express feelings

Sample Email to Staff **Death of a Staff Member off Campus**

Staff, we have been informed of the tragic loss of a teacher/staff member. **(Name of Staff Member)** died as a result of suicide **(only state the cause of death as a suicide if the family has given permission to do so or if the incident is public knowledge)**. Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss. Support for staff will also be available in _____.

FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the loss and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample Email to Staff Death of a Staff Member on Campus

Staff, we have experienced the loss of a teacher/staff member. (Name of Staff Member) died today on campus, as a result of suicide (only state the cause of death as a suicide if the family has given permission to do so or if the incident is public knowledge). Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss. Support for staff will also be available in _____.

FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the loss and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed. Please reassure students that their safety is our main priority.

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Staff Member off Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I greet you today. We have received word that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our teachers/staff, **(Name of Staff Member)**. He/she has been a member of our staff for ___ years and will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students and colleagues. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Staff Member)**.

Thank you.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I inform you that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our teachers/staff today. **(Name of Staff Member)** died this morning on campus. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students and colleagues. We want to assure all of our staff and students that safety is our greatest concern and we take this responsibility very seriously. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Staff Member)**.

Thank you.

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
English

Our school has experienced the loss of a teacher/staff member today on campus. A death on campus is a very rare and tragic event. As always, Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff in our care. We take this responsibility very seriously. As a school community, we all are touched by this loss. For this reason, extra counselors will be available to speak with students, staff and parents, as the need arises. School will be in session tomorrow and we strongly encourage your child's attendance. Students will benefit from the support and structure provided by the school's staff and their classmates. We have all been moved to come together as a family during this difficult time. We send our sincere condolences to the family of **(Staff member's name)** and thank the community for your continued support. If you should require additional support or information, please contact the school at _____ .

Sincerely,

Principal

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Spanish

Nuestra escuela ha sufrido la pérdida de un miembro del personal (**Name of Staff Member**) que falleció hoy en el recinto escolar. Es un hecho poco común que fallezca un miembro del personal en un recinto escolar. Como siempre, las Escuelas Públicas del Condado Miami-Dade están comprometidas a proporcionar a todos los estudiantes que están a nuestro cuidado y al personal un ambiente de aprendizaje donde todos estén seguros y protegidos. Tomamos esta responsabilidad muy en serio. Como escuela comunitaria, a todos nos ha impactado esta pérdida. Por este motivo, habrá más consejeros disponibles para que hablen con los estudiantes, el personal y los padres de familia, según sea necesario. La escuela funcionará mañana como de costumbre y los animamos encarecidamente a que sus hijos asistan a clases. Los estudiantes se beneficiarán del apoyo y de la estructura que brindarán miembros del personal de la escuela y otros compañeros de clases. Estamos conmovidos y nos hemos unidos como una familia durante estos tiempos difíciles. Nuestra condolencia más sincera a la familia de (**Name of Staff Member**) y agradecemos el continuo apoyo de la comunidad. Si necesitasen más apoyo o información, por favor, comuníquense con la escuela al (_____).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Creole

Lekòl nou an ap fè eksperyans pèt yon anplwaye. **(Name of Staff Member)** mouri sou kanpous la jodi a. Lanmò yon anplwaye sou kanpous la se yon evènman ki trè ra. Kòm toujou, Lekòl Leta Miami-Dade County detèmine pou ofri yon anviwònman aprantisaj pou elèv ak anplwaye ki gen sekirite. Nou pran responsablite sa a trè serye. Kòm yon kominote lekòl, nou tout sibi efè pèt sa a. Se pou rezon sa a, ap gen plis konseye disponib pou pale avèk elèv ak paran lè li nesèsè. Ap gen lekòl demen e nou ankouraje pitit ou a anpil pou li vini. Elèv yo ap benefisye sipò ak ankadreman anplwaye lekòl la ak kondisip yo. Nou tout santi nou bezwen met tèt nou ansanm kòm yon fanmi nan moman difisil sa a. Nou voye kondoleyans sensè nou bay fanmi **(Name of Staff Member)** e nou remèsye kominote a pou sipò kontinyèl yo. Si w bezwen plis sipò oubyen enfòmasyon, silvouplè kontakte lekòl la nan (_____).

Sensèman,

Direktè (tris)

Sample Letter to Parent
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to 2nd Grade
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(Name of School)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved staff member **(Name of Staff Member)**.

He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students, staff and parents.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of a loved one or friend for the first time will often be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance. Due to the age of your child, we feel that it would be best for you to inform him/her of this loss in the comfort of your home environment.

In an effort to assist you in helping your child during this difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. Members of the District Crisis Management Team, along with your school's counselor will be available to assist students impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings of that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor, **(Name of Counselor)** at **(Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek some professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Young children especially may display regressive behavior, e.g. bedwetting, thumb sucking or tantrums.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime, and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to Grade 2
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido miembro del personal **(Name of Staff Member)**. Su familia, amigos, estudiantes, compañeros y padres de familia le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren por primera vez la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo, a menudo se sentirán atemorizados o abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Debido a la edad de su hijo, nos parece que sería mejor que usted le informase de esta pérdida en la comodidad de su hogar.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Team*) junto a nuestros consejeros estará disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjele saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido recientemente una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una reacción normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Director

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to Grade 2
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of Staff Member)**, yon anplwaye nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, elèv, anplwaye ak paran ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi pou premye fwa, ap souvan pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote ou pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans. Akòz laj pitit ou a, nou santi li ta pi bon pou enfòm li oumenm sou lanmò sa a nan konfò anviwònman kay ou.

Nan yon efò pou asiste w nan ede pitit ou pandan peryòd difisil sa a, nou prepare lis machasuiv ki tache a.

Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak konseye lekòl nou an ap disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt sa a.

Silvoulplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan

(School Phone Number).

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapè.
- Mò sibit, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3 -12
English

Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved member of our staff, **(Name of Staff Member)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, colleagues and students.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of someone may be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance.

We have prepared the attached list of guidelines for parents/guardians to help their children through the grieving process. Members of the District Crisis Management Team along with your school's counseling staff are available to assist students who are impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher **or** counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. If your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor(s), **(Counselor Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal's Name

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3-12
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido miembro de nuestro personal, **(Name of Staff Member)**. Su familia, amigos, compañeros y estudiantes le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido, puede que sientan miedo o se sientan abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjenle saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una experiencia normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3-12
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of a Staff Member)**, yon anplwaye nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi, kolèg ak elèv ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun ka pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote w pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans.

Nou prepare lis machasuiv ki tache a pou paran/gadyen ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis lapenn nan. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak anplwaye konseye lekòl ou a disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Silvoulè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen teraplis.
- Mò sibat, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of Teacher
Pre-K to Grade 2

Good morning boys and girls. My name is **(Name)**. I am here today to talk to you about something important. First, I would like to know how many of you have or had a pet? What kind of pet(s) do you have? Pets are a very important part of a family. How many of you have had a pet that died? How did you feel when your pet died? How many of you know a person who has died? Who is that person? How did you feel when that person died?

There are a lot of important people in your life. Your teacher is also an important person in your life. He/she is someone who you see each day at school.

Today, I am here to tell you some sad news about your teacher. Unfortunately, **(Name of teacher)** died. When someone dies, they are no longer breathing and their heart is no longer working. They can no longer walk, talk, eat or sleep. That is when happened to **(Name of teacher)**. It is very hard when someone you care about dies.

You may feel very sad and miss them. It isn't always easy to talk about sad feelings; by talking to someone you love can help you feel better. You might want to talk about it with your parents, other people in your family or maybe another adult at school. No matter how sad you feel today, one thing you can be sure of is that you will not always feel this way. There will come a time when you don't feel as sad anymore and you will feel happy again remembering your friend. Happy times and sad times are a part of everyone's life.

Let's talk about some nice things about your teacher. You can also draw a nice picture about him/her and we can give it to his/her family who will also miss him/her.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Teacher
Grades 3-5

Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here today to inform you of some sad news. **(Name of Teacher)** died yesterday. **(Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).**

(Name of Teacher) will be missed by his/her family, friends, students and other teachers.

If the students are aware of the death as being the result of a suicide use the following passage.

(Name of Teacher) died as a result of suicide. When someone chooses to take his/her life, we call it suicide. We don't always know why a person chooses to take his/her life, but we do know that suicide is never the answer to any problems. It is important to remember that the suicide is not your fault. Only the person who made the choice to take their life is responsible for his/her actions. If you or anyone you know is talking about wanting to hurt themselves, please tell a teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately.

We want everyone to be safe. You can also anonymously contact the BE SAFE-Tip Reporting System at 305-995-2677; provide information online at <http://besafe.dadeschools.net>; or text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Besafe.

When these types of things happen to people we know, new feelings and thoughts can happen inside of us. Some of these are new feelings we've never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just don't want to think that it happened. It is OK to feel sad and cry. It is not OK to make fun of anyone who is sad, scared or cries. We all have different feelings and they should be respected. It is also very important to talk about what happened, because talking will help us to feel better.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/ staff that are in need of additional counseling services.

Sample Classroom Script Death of a Teacher Secondary Students

Hello. Our Names are _____ and _____. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. Yesterday one of your teachers, **(Name of Teacher)** died as a result of suicide **(Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).**

If the students are aware of the death as being the result of a suicide use the following passage.

You may be feeling a variety of things right now. Confusion, asking yourself ‘why’ questions that can never be fully answered, maybe feeling angry that he/she took his/her life. Some of you may feel very sad, while others may feel numb, not wanting to believe that this really happened. You may be asking yourself if you should have known; could I have stopped him/her. These thoughts and feelings are normal.

“We don’t always know why a person chooses to take his/her life, but we do know that suicide is never the answer to any problems. It is important to remember that the suicide is not your fault. Only the person who made the choice to take his/her life is responsible for his/her actions. Suicide is a tragedy that leaves many victims behind-family and friends. Most people who are suicidal really don’t want to die. They just want to end the pain they are experiencing and unfortunately lose sight of the choices that are available to them. There are always other choices. Suicide is never an acceptable choice. We can help prevent future tragedies like this by realizing that we have the power to get help for ourselves and others who are feeling suicidal. Therefore, if you or anyone you know is thinking or talking about wanting to hurt themselves, please tell a teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately. We want everyone to be safe.” You can also anonymously contact the BE SAFE-Tip Reporting System at 305-995-2677; provide information online at <http://besafe.dadeschools.net>; or text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Besafe.

You can contact Switchboard of Miami (305-358-HELP) for confidential counseling and community resources.

There is no “right” way to react to death, the important thing to recognize is how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling.

In your school you have **(List Counselors)** that are here every day for you.

Today the **(Designated Counseling Area)** is the space that we have designated as a place to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor please ask you teachers for a pass.

This may be a difficult day for many of you, please know that you administrators, teachers and counselors are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced loss in the past and so this may trigger some other feelings. Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way.

Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with your about the loss of your teacher, **(Name of Deceased)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students and colleagues.

Stages of Grief Following a Suicide

Shock and Denial: At first there may be minimal responses to the death. The reality of the death has yet to be absorbed. Suggested Response? Acknowledge the shock, anticipate the reactions to come, demonstrate a willingness to talk when students are ready.

Anger and Protection: Students want someone to blame for this and may openly express/direct anger at the deceased's parents/teachers/boyfriend/girlfriend.

Suggested Response: Listen to their concerns and feelings. Gently explain that it is natural to want to find a reason for things we don't understand. Suggest that suicide is a very complicated human behavior and that there are always multiple reasons.

Guilt: Students close to the deceased may blame themselves for not doing enough or knowing how serious the situation was. Students may also feel guilty if they feel that they have contributed to the problem in some way.

Suggested Response: Remind students that only the person who kills him/herself is responsible for having made that decision.

Anger at the Deceased: This is surprisingly common among close friends as well as those who were not close to the deceased.

Suggested Response: Allowing and acknowledging some expression of anger is helpful. Explain that this is normal stage of grieving. Acknowledging the anger often lessens the intensity.

Anxiety: Students sometimes start to worry about themselves and/or other friends. Fear of a contagion happening may increase the anxiety in other students.

Suggested Response: This is an opportunity to work with students who display some anxiety and teach them healthy coping strategies. Remind students that there are counselors available at school every day to listen and help them with whatever anxiety they may be experiencing. Practice problem solving.

Loneliness: Those closest to the deceased may find it almost impossible to return to a normal routine, and may even resent those who appear to be having fun. They may feel empty, lost, totally disconnected. They may become obsessed with keeping memory of their friend alive.

Suggested Response: Notice anyone who seems to be isolating from others and reach out to them. Connect them with a positive peer, as a means of support.

Talking Points for Students and Staff after a Suicide

Talking Points	What to Say
<p>Give accurate information about suicide.</p> <p>Suicide is a complicated behavior. Help students understand the complexities</p>	<p>Suicide is not caused by a single event such as fighting with parents, a bad grade, or the breakup of a relationship.</p> <p>In most cases, suicide is caused by mental health disorders like depression or substance abuse. Mental health disorders affect the way people feel and prevent them from thinking clearly and rationally. Having a mental health disorder is nothing to be ashamed of.</p> <p>There are effective treatments to help people who have mental health disorders or substance abuse problems. Suicide is never the answer.</p>
<p>Address blaming and scapegoating.</p> <p>It is common to try to answer the question “why” by blaming others for the suicide.</p>	<p>Blaming others for the suicide is wrong and it is not fair. Doing that can hurt another person deeply.</p>
<p>Do not talk about the method</p> <p>Talking about the method can create images that are upsetting, and it may increase the risk of imitative behavior by vulnerable youth.</p>	<p>Let’s focus on talking about the feelings we are left with after _____’s death and figure out the best way to manage them.</p>
<p>Address anger.</p> <p>Accept expressions of anger at the deceased. Help students understand that these feelings are normal.</p>	<p>It’s OK to feel angry. These feelings are normal, and it doesn’t mean you didn’t care about _____. You can be angry at someone’s behavior and still care deeply about that person.</p>
<p>Address feelings of responsibility</p> <p>Help students understand that the only person responsible for the suicide is the deceased.</p> <p>Reassure those who have exaggerated feelings of responsibility, such as thinking they should have done something to save the deceased or seen the signs.</p>	<p>This death is not your fault. We cannot always see the signs because a suicidal person may hide them well.</p> <p>We cannot always predict someone’s behavior.</p>
<p>Encourage help-seeking.</p> <p>Encourage students to seek help from a trusted adult if they or a friend are feeling depressed or suicidal.</p>	<p>We are always here to help you through any problem, no matter what. Who are the people you would go to if you or a friend were feeling worried, depressed, or had thoughts of suicide.</p>

Adapted from AFSP. After a suicide: A toolkit for schools. Newton, MA.: Education Development Center, Inc.

Memorial Guidelines Following a Suicide

Students and staff should be given the opportunity to participate in activities to remember the student who died and can also be prevention oriented, including the following:

- Donate money to charities, crisis support centers, or youth support programs
- Create an album of positive memories of the deceased that can be given to the family
- Volunteer with a local charity, community agency or crisis center
- Encourage impacted students, with parental permission, to attend the funeral

Memorials **should not** glorify, glamorize or sensationalize the death. Therefore it is recommended that you **avoid** the following:

- Memorial services within the school building
- Making announcements regarding the suicide
- Sending all students to the funeral or canceling classes for the funeral
- Flying the flag at half mast
- Large student assemblies about the victim or a moment of silence at assemblies
- Dedication of sports events or other events
- Permanent markers or memorials of any kind, e.g., at the student's locker, plaques, trees, benches, retirement of a sports jersey, etc.
- Shrines of any kind

Crisis Hotline Reporting

The crisis hotline is used to report student risk behaviors that have come to the attention of a school staff member. Consultation may include discussion of district response procedures regarding individual and school crises, and a review of risk assessment guidelines and intervention strategies. Crisis Team Members may also assist schools in identifying and locating appropriate resources for individuals and families.

School administration and all school staff may consult with a Crisis Team Member by dialing the Crisis Hotline at 305-995-2273(CARE)

Staff **MUST** always report the following student behaviors to the Crisis Hotline (after stabilization of crisis):

- Suicidal Ideations
- Suicide Threats
- Suicide Attempts
- Suicidal Gestures
- Homicidal Threats
- Homicidal Ideations
- Homicidal Gestures
- Self Injury

Suicide Warning Signs

Early Warning Signs

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Preoccupation with death
- Marked personality change and serious mood changes
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulties in school(decline in the quality of work, behavior, attendance)
- Change in eating and sleeping habits
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- Persistence of boredom
- Loss of interest in things one cares about

Late Warning Signs

- Actually talking about suicide or a plan
- Exhibiting impulsivity such as violent actions, rebellious behaviors or running away
- Refusing help, feeling “beyond help”
- Complaining about being a bad person
- Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness
- Giving away favorite possessions
- Giving verbal hints such as “I won’t be a problem for you much longer,” “nothing matters,” “It’s no use,” and “I won’t see you again”
- Becoming suddenly cheerful after a period of depression- this may be a sign that the student has already made the decision to escape all problems by ending his/her life
- Saying other things like: “I’m going to kill myself,” “I wish I were dead,” or “I shouldn’t have been born”

Suicide Risk and Protective Factors

Suicide Risk Factors

- Previous suicide attempt or gesture
- Feelings of hopelessness or isolation
- Substance abuse
- Family history of suicidal behavior
- Access to firearms
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Conduct disorders or disruptive behaviors
- Sexual orientation(homosexual, bisexual, and trans-gendered youth)
- Juvenile delinquency
- School and/or work problems
- Chronic physical illness
- Living alone and/or runaway
- Aggressive impulsive behaviors

Protective Factors

- Family cohesion
- Good coping skills
- Perceived connectedness with the school
- Good relationships with other school youth
- Help- seeking behavior
- Impulse control
- Problem solving/conflict resolution abilities
- Stable environment
- Sense of worth/confidence
- Responsibilities for others/pets
- Social integration/opportunities to participate
- Access to care for mental/physical/substance disorders

What to do if a Student is Suicidal: Recommendations for Staff

- Always ensure a student's safety
- Send someone for help
- Listen
- Be direct
- Remain calm
- Be empathetic
- Always take the student seriously
- Escort student to school counseling professional immediately
- Don't be judgmental
- Do not worry about silence during a discussion
- Don't under-react or minimize. Even if a student is seeking attention, you should act. The benefits could certainly outweigh the costs
- If a student is threatening suicide and does have a weapon, never try to physically take the weapon from the student. Call for help.
- NEVER LEAVE THE STUDENT ALONE OR SEND THE STUDENT AWAY. This may just reinforce feelings of isolation & hopelessness.

Consent for Mutual Exchange of Information

The current Miami-Dade County Public Schools Consent for Mutual Exchange of Information allows school counseling professionals to share important details with community and private mental health providers. These exchanges of information assist in establishing an appropriate plan of care and possible future educational services for students.

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools Consent for Mutual Exchange of Information is in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). However, this consent does not comply with HIPAA regulations. It is possible that many medical and mental health institutions will not release student information without the signed HIPAA form usually provided by the institution. It is the recommendation of the Division of Student Services that counselors request for the parent/guardian to add the counselor's information on the institutional HIPAA mutual release of information.

Remember: Any and all shared information must be kept private and confidential.

Consent Form (English)

[Clear Form](#)



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CONSENT FORM FOR MUTUAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Date _____

Student's Name _____

Date of Birth _____ ID# _____

I hereby authorize the mutual exchange of records pertaining to my child or myself, _____, between the MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS and the following agencies (include all schools, physicians, psychologists, hospitals, clinics, etc., that have had significant contact with your child):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- The specific records to be disclosed pertain to: _____

- The purpose for making these records available is: _____

- **The receiving party will not disclose the information to any other party without signed consent.**

I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of the child named above or that I am a student of majority age and have the authority to sign this release.

Name (print)	Signature	
Address	City, State	Zip Code

Please return this form to: _____

Consent Form (Spanish)



ESCUELAS PÚBLICAS DEL CONDADO MIAMI-DADE

CARTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA EL INTERCAMBIO MUTUO DE INFORMACIÓN (CONSENT FORM FOR MUTUAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION)

Fecha _____

Nombre del estudiante _____

Fecha de nacimiento _____ Número de identidad _____

Con la presente carta autorizo el intercambio de información en referencia a mi hijo o mi persona, _____, entre las Escuelas Públicas del Condado de Miami-Dade (MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS) y las siguientes agencias (incluyendo escuelas, médicos, psicólogos, hospitales, clínicas, etc., que han tenido que ver con su hijo/hija):

Nombre

Dirección

• Los documentos específicos divulgados conciernen: _____

• La razón de tener estos documentos disponibles es: _____

• **La(s) persona(s) que reciba(n) estos documentos no divulgará(n) la información con otras personas y/o agencias sin su consentimiento.**

Hago constar que soy el padre o tutor legal del niño cuyo nombre se menciona arriba o que soy un estudiante mayor de edad y estoy autorizado para firmar esta carta de autorización.

Nombre Nombre Firma

Dirección Ciudad, Estado Código postal

Sírvase devolver esta carta a:

Consent Form (Creole)



LEKÒL PIBLIK MIYAMI

FÑM KONSANTMEN POU ECHANJ EMFÑMASYON
(CONSENT FORM FOR MUTUAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION)

Dat _____

Nom elèv _____

Dat li fèt _____ ID# _____

Mwen otorize ke yo fe echanj enfomasyon sou dosye pitit mwen ou dosye pa-m, _____, ant Lekòl Leta Miami-Dade Konti ak ajns sa yo mete (tout lekòl, doktè, sikològ, klinik, esetera, ki te an afè avèk pitit ou):

Nom

Adrès

• Dosye yo kapab kite moun wè yo, se dosye ki gen rapò ak: _____

• Dosye yo kapab kite moun wè yo, se dosye ki gen rapò ak: _____

• **Moun ki resevwa dosye ya p'ap kite okenn lot moun wè yo san yon konsantman siyen.**

Mwen sètifye ke se mwen ki paran ou gadyen timoun, non ekri anro, fòm sa a ou swa mwen se yon elèv ki majè e ke mwen gen otorite ou siyen pèmasyon sa a.

_____ Non _____ Siyati

Adrès

Sil vou plè, retounen fòm sa bay:

FM-2128H Rev. (11-03)

**Resources for Responding to Self-Injurious
Behavior**

Self- Injurious Behavior: Definition

The deliberate, intentional act of inflicting harm or injury to one's own body that causes tissue damage or leaves marks for more than a few minutes. These injuries are often done in order to cope with an overwhelming or distressing situation. Common terminologies used to define this behavior are self-injurious behaviors, self-harm, self- mutilation or self-inflicted violence.

Cutting: This involves making cuts or scratches to one's own body with a sharp object. Objects used may include knives, needles, razor blades, finger nails or even paper clips. The most common places to cut are the arms, legs and torso.

Branding: This involves burning of one's own skin with a hot object such as a cigarette, iron or any metal object placed in heat. Friction burning is also common which includes the continuous back and forth rubbing of a pencil eraser on the skin.

Hitting: Hitting may be the punching, smacking or the banging of one's head. It may be breaking of one's bones with a hammer or other heavy object.

Asphyxiation: Adolescents cut off the flow of blood to the brain, in exchange for a few seconds of feeling lightheaded. Some temporarily choke themselves with a belt, a rope or their bare hands; others push on their chest or hyperventilate.

Trichotillomania: Recurrent pulling out of one's hair resulting in noticeable hair loss. An individual may feel pleasure, gratification, or relief when pulling out their hair.

Dermatillomania: Also known as Compulsive Skin Picking (CSP) is the repeated urge to pick at one's own skin to the point that damage is caused.

Symptoms and Warning Signs

- Unexplained cuts in various locations and in various stages of healing
- Unexplained bruises
- Arms and legs are always covered even in very hot temperatures
- Pieces of glass, razors, bent paper clips or other sharp objects in the student's possession
- Frequent complaints of accidental injuries
- Overly defensive when approached about the possibility of self-injury
- Locking self in bathroom for long periods of time and the presence of a new injury upon leaving the bathroom
- Presence of blood or burn stains on the inside of clothing
- Wanting to do own laundry
- Making excuses for injuries
- Avoiding situations where more revealing clothing might be expected

Reasons for Self-Injurious Behavior

- Self injury may be a result of never learning the right coping skills for an adolescent or adult to deal with a difficult or emotional situation.
- In order to seek relief from overwhelming emotional pain, frustration and other negative feelings; self-injury provides the individual with a false distraction to physical pain.
- Individuals who self-harm often do so as a result of a need to feel pain externally, rather than internally.
- Inflicting harm on oneself can provide a sense of control over one's pain.
- To express their anger and/or frustration over a situation.
- To communicate emotional pain to others and ask for help.
- Self- injury may also be a way for the individual to regulate strong emotions and bring high levels of physiological arousal back to normal.
- A child may have intense feelings of fear, hurt, anger, rejection or abandonment following major changes in his/her life such as parents' divorce, death or loss of an intimate relationship.

Working with Students Who Self-Injure

When working with students who you suspect self-injure, please make the following considerations when counseling or referring to an outside mental health professional.

- Understand that self-injury may be a way or an attempt to maintain a certain amount of control, which can be interpreted by the individual as self-soothing behavior.
- Let the student know that you care about him/her and that you are available to talk about his/her feelings and are there to listen to his/her concerns.
- Encourage the expression of emotions including anger.
- Use these teachable moments, and explore other ways an individual can express his/her emotions and deal with what he/she is feeling in a more positive and healthy way.
- Do not tell the student to stop the behavior. Take his/her word that he/she will discontinue the behavior, thus allowing him/her to feel a sense of control.
- Refer students to an outside mental health agency for counseling.
- Help the child retrace the steps leading up to the incident: process the thoughts, events and feelings which surround the self-injury.

Resources for Responding to the Homicide of a Student

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Homicide

- Verify that incident occurred
- Notify District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2677)
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting, if time permits
- Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed
- Contact the family of the deceased student and offer support services. Identify information family is willing to disclose about the loss
- Determine if the deceased has other siblings attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools. If so, contact the principals of those sites to inform them of the loss.
- Prepare and facilitate the dissemination of crisis notification information and additional resources for staff, students and parents
- Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss
- Refer media requests to Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact Miami-Dade County Public Schools Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 305-995-7111, for staff that may need additional support
- Designate staff to help coordinate memorial activities
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel and staff
- Determine if additional assistance is needed
- Closely monitor student and staff attendance in the days following the homicide
- Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days

Principal's Response Checklist: On Campus Homicide

- Call 911
- Implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures to ensure student and staff safety, if appropriate
- Clear persons from the immediate area. Do not disturb anything as police investigation will follow
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2277)
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Determine whether the bell schedule should be changed. Prepare the announcement with the new schedule
- Meet with the victim's family to offer condolences and offer support
- Determine what information will be shared with students, staff and parents
- Prepare and facilitate dissemination of crisis notification information and additional resources to staff, students, and parents
- Determine alternative student pick up locations for parents and bus drivers, if necessary
- Refer media requests to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 305-995-7111, to assist staff that may need additional support services
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel
- Schedule staff meeting for after dismissal



Miami Dade County Public Schools

Division of Student Services

Crisis Management Program

Crisis Response Worksheet

Crisis Team Meeting Date _____ Time _____

1. Crisis Team Member Coordinator _____

Team Member Name	Title	Contact Number

2. Crisis Details

Victim Name:	ID:
Age:	Grade:
Contact Information :	
Other details:	

3. Identified students who may be at risk

4. Counseling Centers Staffed By

5. Announcement of Crisis

<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Email to Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Connect Ed to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Assembly

6. Staff Meeting

<input type="checkbox"/> Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Time
<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers

7. Debriefing Date _____ Time _____

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

- Share factual information about the loss of a student
- Identify staff who are significantly impacted by the loss and may need support services
- Review crisis response plan
- Review behaviors and common grief reactions that may be displayed by students
- Discuss resources that are available today for students staff
- Remind staff to discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information especially cyber communications
- Instruct staff to refer students to counselors, as necessary
- Inform teachers that they may request a counselor to visit the classroom
- Remind staff of the availability of EAP services
- Introduce Crisis Management Team Members
- Q/A

Sample Email to Staff Death of a Student off Campus

Staff, we have been informed of the tragic loss of a student. The student **(Name of Student)** died as a result of a homicide (Only give this information if the parents of the deceased have given permission to do so, or if the homicide is public knowledge). Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to_____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample Email to Staff Death of a Student on Campus

Staff, we have experienced the tragic loss of a student today on campus. The student **(Name of Student)** died as a result of a homicide (Only give this information if the parents of the deceased have given their permission or if the information is public knowledge). Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed. Please reassure students that their safety is our main priority.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Student off Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I greet you today. We have received word that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our students, **(Name of Student)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Student)**.

Thank you.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Student on Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I inform you that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our students today. **(Name of Student)** a grade student, died this morning on campus. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers. We want to assure all of our faculty and students that safety is our greatest concern and we take this responsibility very seriously. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Student)**.

Thank you.

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
English

Our school has experienced the loss of a student today on campus. The student's parents have been notified of the loss. The death of a student on campus is a very rare and tragic event. As always, Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff in our care. We take this responsibility very seriously. As a school community, we all have been impacted by this loss. For this reason, extra counselors will be available to speak with students, staff and parents, as the need arises. School will be in session tomorrow and we strongly encourage your child's attendance. Students will benefit from the support and structure provided by the school's staff and their classmates. We have all been moved to come together as a family during this difficult time. We send our sincere condolences to the family of the student and thank the community for your continued support. If you should require additional support or information, please contact the school at _____ .

Sincerely,

Principal

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
Spanish

Nuestra familia de (**Our school or mascot's name**) ha sufrido la pérdida de un estudiante que falleció hoy en el recinto escolar. A los padres del estudiante se les ha informado de la pérdida. Es un hecho poco común que fallezca un estudiante en un recinto escolar. Como siempre, las Escuelas Públicas del Condado Miami-Dade y (**Insert school name**) están comprometidas a proporcionar a todos los estudiantes que están a nuestro cuidado y al personal un ambiente de aprendizaje donde todos estén seguros y protegidos. Tomamos esta responsabilidad muy en serio. Como escuela comunitaria, a todos nos ha impactado esta pérdida. Por este motivo, habrá más consejeros disponibles para que hablen con los estudiantes y los padres de familia, según sea necesario. La escuela funcionará mañana como de costumbre y los animamos encarecidamente a que sus hijos asistan a clases. Estamos conmovidos y nos hemos unido como una familia durante estos tiempos difíciles. Nuestra condolencia más sincera a la familia del estudiante y a ustedes les agradecemos su continuo apoyo. Si necesitasen más apoyo o información, por favor, comuníquense con la escuela al (_____).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Student on Campus
Creole

Fanmi **(Insert school or mascot's name)** nou an ap fè eksperyans pèt yon elèv sou kanpous la jodi a. Nou deja enfòmè paran elèv la sou lanmò a. Lanmò yon elèv sou kanpous la se yon evènman ki trè ra e trajik. Kòm toujou, Lekòl Leta Miami-Dade County ak **(Insert school name)** detèmine pou ofri yon anviwònman aprantisaj ki gen sekirite pou tout elèv ak anplwaye ki nan swen nou. Nou pran responsablite sa a trè serye. Kòm yon kominote lekòl, nou tout sibi efè pèt sa a. Se pou rezon sa a, ap gen plis konseye disponib pou pale avèk elèv ak paran lè li nesèsè. Ap gen lekòl demen e nou ankouraje pitit ou a anpil pou li vini. Nou tout santi nou bezwen met tèt nou ansanm kòm yon fanmi nan moman difisil sa a. Nou voye kondoleyans sensè nou bay fanmi elèv la e mwen remèsye w pou sipò kontinyèl ou. Si w bezwen plis sipò oubyen enfòmasyon, silvouplè kontakte lekòl la nan (_____).

Sensèman,

Direktè (tris)

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Pre-K to Grade 2
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved **(Student's Grade Level)** grade student, **(Name of Student)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend.

Children experiencing the death of a loved one or friend for the first time will often be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance. Due to the age of your child, we feel that it would be best for you to inform him/her of this loss in the comfort of your home environment.

In an effort to assist you in helping your child during the difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings connected to that loss. This is a normal experience.

Members of the District Crisis Management Team, along with your school's counseling professional will be available to assist students who are impacted by the loss. If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselors, **(Counselor's Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Use the correct language e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Young children especially may display regressive behavior, e.g., bedwetting, thumb sucking or tantrums.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bed time and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Pre-K to Grade 2
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela (**School Name**) anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido estudiante de (**student's grade level**) grado. Su familia, amigos y maestros le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren por primera vez la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo, a menudo se sentirán atemorizados o abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Debido a la edad de su hijo, nos parece que sería mejor que usted le informase de esta pérdida en la comodidad de su hogar.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjele saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido recientemente una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una reacción normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares (**Counselor's Name**) al (**School Phone Number**).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Pre-K to Grade 2
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of student)**, yon elèv **(Student's Grade Level)** nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, ak pwofesè li ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi pou premye fwa, ap souvan pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote ou pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans. Akòz laj pitit ou a, nou santi li ta pi bon pou enfòmasyon li oumenm sou lanmò sa a nan konfò anviwònman kay ou.

Nan yon efò pou asiste w nan ede pitit ou pandan peryòd difisil la, nou prepare lis machasuiv ki nan atachman an. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak konseye nou an ap disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt sa a.

Silvoulplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon kèlkonk lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon reyaksyon ki nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesesè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmasyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapè.
- Mò sibat, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 3-12
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved (**grade level**) student, **(Name of Student)**. She/he will be greatly missed by his family, friends and teachers.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend.

Children experiencing the death of someone may be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance.

We have prepared the attached list of guidelines for parents/guardians to help their children through the grieving process. Members of the District Crisis Management Team along with your school's counseling staff are available to assist students who are impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor(s), **(Counselor's Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal's Name

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bed time and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 3 -12
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela (**School Name**) anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido estudiante de (**student's grade level**) grado. Su familia, amigos y maestros le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido, a menudo sienten miedo o se sienten abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjenle saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una experiencia normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares (**Counselor's Name**) al (**School Phone Number**).

Atentamente,

Director o Director

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabieta.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 3-12
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of student)**, yon elèv **(Student's Grade Level)** nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, ak pwofesè li ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun ka pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman sa a. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote w pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans.

Nou prepare lis machasuiv ki nan atachman an pou paran/gadyen ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis lapenn nan. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak anplwaye konseye lekòl la disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Silvoulplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans ki nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapis.
- Mò sibat, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Pre- K to Grade 2

Good morning boys and girls. My name is **(Name)**. I am here today to talk to you about something important. First, I would like to know how many of you have or had a pet? What kind of pet(s) do you have? Pets are a very important part of a family. How many of you have had a pet that died? How did you feel when your pet died? How many of you know a person who has died? Who is that person? How did you feel when that person died?

There are a lot of important people in your life. Your friends are also important people in your life.

He/she is someone who you see each day at school.

Today, I am here to tell you some sad news about one of your friends. Unfortunately, **(Name of Student)** died. When someone dies, they are no longer breathing and their heart is no longer working. They can no longer walk, talk, eat or sleep. That is what happened to **(Name of Student)**.

It is very hard when someone you care about dies.

You may feel very sad and miss them. It isn't always easy to talk about sad feelings; by talking to someone you love can help you feel better. You might want to talk about it with your parents, other people in your family or maybe another adult at school. No matter how sad you feel today, one thing you can be sure of is that you will not always feel this way. There will come a time when you don't feel as sad anymore and you will feel happy again remembering your friend. Happy times and sad times are a part of everyone's life. Let's talk about some nice things about your friend. You can also draw a nice picture about him/her and we can give it to his/her family who will also miss him/her (Ask the children if they would like to share their pictures with the class).

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Grades 3-5

Introduction

Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here today to give you some information and talk with you. Students, as a class and as a school, you are a family. You spend five days a week together and attend school 180 days a year. During that time, you have many happy moments and celebrate many occasions. However, like any family, you also have experiences that are not fun. Sometimes things happen that make you sad. Today, we must tell you about something that is quite sad. One of the students in your class has died. **(Name of Student)** died yesterday. **(Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).** **(Name of Student)** will be missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.

If the students are aware of the death as being the result of a homicide use the following passage.

(Name of Student) died as a result of a homicide, which means that someone hurt **(Name of Student)** so badly that he/she died. We don't always know why a person chooses to hurt other people, but we do know that violence is never the answer to any problems. If you or anyone you know is talking about wanting to hurt other people, or if you know someone who is carrying a weapon on campus, please tell your teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately. We want everyone to be safe. You can also anonymously contact the BE SAFE-Tip Reporting System at 305-995-2677; provide information online at <http://besafe.dadeschools.net>; or text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Besafe.

When these types of things happen to people we know, new feelings and thoughts can happen inside of us. Some of these are new feelings we've never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just don't want to think that it happened. It is OK to feel sad and cry. It is not OK to make fun of anyone who is sad, scared or cries. We all have different feelings and they should be respected. It is also very important to talk about what happened, because talking will help us to feel better.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/ staff that are in need of additional counseling services.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Secondary Students

Hello. Our Names are _____ and _____. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. One of your classmates, **(Name of Student)** died. **(Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).**

If the students are aware of the death as being the result of a homicide use the following passage.

In these situations, which are very rare, it is normal to be fearful of your own safety or the safety of others. Your administration, teachers, counselors and everyone here at **(Name of School)** will do the very best to ensure the safety of every single one of you.

You may hear other students make rude comments or react insensitively. This may be a way for them to cope with the intense feelings that they are experiencing for the first time; they may be trying to block out what they are really feeling. A homicide is a unique situation; it is hard for most to deal with this kind of tragedy. We cannot predict how others will cope or react. If you hear of any rude or insensitive comments, please notify your teacher or administrator so that we may have the opportunity to speak with the person making these comments.

It is ok to feel angry. Anger is a normal reaction. However, it is not ok to seek revenge on those we “think” have something to do with the death. No one in this room wants to experience another loss. This was a senseless act of violence that should not continue, nor be retaliated against.

Some of you may have information surrounding this tragedy. We ask that you report whatever information you may have to your administrator, teacher, counselor or a police officer. It is important that you break the silence and realize that you have the power to help keep your school and community to be safe. If you have any information surrounding what happened and do not feel comfortable talking to anyone, remember that the School Board has an anonymous way of reporting information, either by contacting the BE SAFE-Tip Reporting System at 305-995-2677; provide information online at <http://besafe.dadeschools.net>; or text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Besafe.

If at any time during the next several days or weeks you feel you need to talk to someone or are just unsure about how you feel, let your teacher know and he/she will know who to refer you to.

**Resources for Responding to the Homicide of a
Staff member**

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Homicide

- Verify that incident occurred
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305- 995-COPS (2677)
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Hold an emergency faculty meeting, if time permits
- Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed
- Contact the family of the deceased staff member and offer support services. Identify information family is willing to disclose about the loss
- Prepare and facilitate the dissemination of crisis notification information and additional resources for staff, students and parents
- Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss
- Refer media requests to Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact Miami-Dade County Public Schools Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 305-995-7111, for staff that may need additional support
- Designate staff to help coordinate memorial activities
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel and staff
- Determine if additional assistance is needed
- Closely monitor student and staff attendance in the days following the homicide
- Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days

Principal's Response Checklist: On Campus Homicide

- Call 911
- Implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures to ensure student and staff safety, if appropriate
- Clear persons from the immediate area. Do not disturb anything as police investigation will follow
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-COPS (2277)
- Mobilize the School-based Critical Incident Response Team
- Determine whether the bell schedule should be changed. Prepare the announcement with the new schedule
- Meet with the victim's family to offer condolences and offer support
- Determine what information will be shared with students, staff and parents
- Prepare and facilitate dissemination of crisis notification information and additional resources to staff, students and parents
- Determine alternative student pick up locations for parents and bus drivers, if necessary
- Refer media requests to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Public Information at 305-995-1825
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 305-995-7111, to assist staff that may need additional support services
- Schedule a time and location for debriefing with all crisis response personnel
- Schedule staff meeting for after dismissal

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

- Share factual information about the loss of a staff member
- Identify staff who are significantly impacted by the loss and may need support services
- Review crisis response plan
- Review behaviors and common grief reactions that may be displayed by students
- Discuss resources that are available today for students and staff
- Remind staff to discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information especially cyber communications
- Instruct staff to refer students to counselors, as necessary
- Inform teachers that they may request a counselor to visit the classroom
- Remind staff of the availability of EAP services
- Introduce Crisis Management Team Members
- Q/A

Sample Email to Staff Death of a Staff Member off Campus

Staff, we have been informed of the tragic loss of a teacher/staff member. **(Name of Staff Member)** died as a result of a homicide **(only state the cause of death as a homicide if the family has given permission to do so or if the incident is public knowledge)**. Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss. Support for staff will also be available in _____.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample Email to Staff
Death of a Staff Member on Campus

Staff, we have experienced the loss of a teacher/staff member. **(Name of Staff Member)** died today on campus, as a result of a homicide **(Only state the cause of death as a homicide if the family has given permission to do so or if the incident is public knowledge)**. Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students' behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to _____. Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss. Support for staff will also be available in _____.

_____ **[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed. Please reassure students that their safety is our main priority.]**

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Secondary Students

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I inform you that the **(Name of School or Mascot)** family has suffered the loss of one of our teachers/staff today. **(Name of Staff Member)** died this morning on campus. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students and colleagues. We want to assure all of our staff and students that safety is our greatest concern and we take this responsibility very seriously. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of Staff Member)**.

Thank you.

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
English

Our school has experienced the loss of a teacher/staff member, **(Name of Staff Member)** today on campus. A death on campus is a very rare and tragic event. As always, Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff in our care. We take this responsibility very seriously. As a school community, we all are touched by this loss. For this reason, extra counselors will be available to speak with students, staff and parents, as the need arises. School will be in session tomorrow and we strongly encourage your child's attendance. Students will benefit from the support and structure provided by the school's staff and their classmates. We have all been moved to come together as a family during this difficult time. We send our sincere condolences to the family of **(Name of Staff Member)** and thank the community for your continued support. If you should require additional support or information, please contact the school at **(Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Spanish

Nuestra escuela ha sufrido la pérdida de un miembro del personal (**Name of Staff Member**) que falleció hoy en el recinto escolar. Es un hecho poco común que fallezca un miembro del personal en un recinto escolar. Como siempre, las Escuelas Públicas del Condado Miami-Dade están comprometidas a proporcionar a todos los estudiantes que están a nuestro cuidado y al personal un ambiente de aprendizaje donde todos estén seguros y protegidos. Tomamos esta responsabilidad muy en serio. Como escuela comunitaria, a todos nos ha impactado esta pérdida. Por este motivo, habrá más consejeros disponibles para que hablen con los estudiantes, el personal y los padres de familia, según sea necesario. La escuela funcionará mañana como de costumbre y los animamos encarecidamente a que sus hijos asistan a clases. Los estudiantes se beneficiarán del apoyo y de la estructura que brindarán miembros del personal de la escuela y otros compañeros de clases. Estamos conmovidos y nos hemos unidos como una familia durante estos tiempos difíciles. Nuestra condolencia más sincera a la familia de (**Name of Staff Member**) y agradecemos el continuo apoyo de la comunidad. Si necesitasen más apoyo o información, por favor, comuníquense con la escuela al (_____).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Sample Connect Ed Message
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Creole

Lekòl nou an ap fè eksperyans pèt yon anplwaye. **(Name of Staff Member)** mouri sou kanpous la jodi a. Lanmò yon anplwaye sou kanpous la se yon evènman ki trè ra. Kòm toujou, Lekòl Leta Miami-Dade County detèmine pou ofri yon anviwònman aprantisaj pou elèv ak anplwaye ki gen sekirite. Nou pran responsablite sa a trè serye. Kòm yon kominote lekòl, nou tout sibi efè pèt sa a. Se pou rezon sa a, ap gen plis konseye disponib pou pale avèk elèv ak paran lè li nesèsè. Ap gen lekòl demen e nou ankouraje pitit ou a anpil pou li vini. Elèv yo ap benefisye sipò ak ankadreman anplwaye lekòl la ak kondisip yo. Nou tout santi nou bezwen met tèt nou ansanm kòm yon fanmi nan moman difisil sa a. Nou voye kondoleyans sensè nou bay fanmi **(Name of Staff Member)** e nou remèsye kominote a pou sipò kontinyèl yo. Si w bezwen plis sipò oubyen enfòmasyon, silvouplè kontakte lekòl la nan (_____).

Sensèman,

Direktè (tris)

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to Grade 2
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(Name of School)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved staff member **(Name of Staff Member)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students, staff and parents.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of a loved one or friend for the first time will often be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance. Due to the age of your child, we feel that it would be best for you to inform him/her of this loss in the comfort of your home environment.

In an effort to assist you in helping your child during this difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. Members of the District Crisis Management Team, along with your school's counselor will be available to assist students impacted by the loss. A member of the Team will also speak to **(Name of Teacher) (Grade Level Taught)** class tomorrow.

Please let your child's **(teacher/counselor)** know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor, **(Name of Counselor and Contact Information)**.

Sincerely,

Principal

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek some professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Young children especially may display regressive behavior, e.g., bedwetting, thumb sucking or tantrums.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bed time and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to Grade 2
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido miembro del personal **(Name of Staff Member)**. Su familia, amigos, estudiantes, compañeros y padres de familia le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren por primera vez la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo, a menudo se sentirán atemorizados o abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Debido a la edad de su hijo, nos parece que sería mejor que usted le informase de esta pérdida en la comodidad de su hogar.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Team*) junto a nuestros consejeros estará disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjele saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido recientemente una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una reacción normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to Grade 2
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of Staff Member)**, yon anplwaye nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, elèv, anplwaye ak paran ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi pou premye fwa, ap souvan pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote ou pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans. Akòz laj pitit ou a, nou santi li ta pi bon pou enfòm li oumenm sou lanmò sa a nan konfò anviwònman kay ou.

Nan yon efò pou asiste w nan ede pitit ou pandan peryòd difisil sa a, nou prepare lis machasuiv ki tache a. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak konseye lekòl nou an ap disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt sa a.

Silvouplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans nòmral.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvouplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen teraplis.
- Mò sibit, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3 -12
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School Name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved member of our staff, **(Name of Staff Member)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, colleagues and students.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend.

Children experiencing the death of someone may be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance.

We have prepared the attached list of guidelines for parents/guardians to help their children through the grieving process. Members of the District Crisis Management Team along with your school's counseling staff are available to assist students who are impacted by the loss.

Please let your child's teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor(s), **(Counselor's Name)** at **(School Phone Number)**.

Sincerely,

Principal's Name

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process: Guidelines for Parents

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for him/her to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve. Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bed time and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3-12
Spanish

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela **(School Name)** anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido miembro de nuestro personal, **(Name of Staff Member)**. Su familia, amigos, compañeros y estudiantes le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido, puede que sientan miedo o se sientan abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (*District Crisis Management Team*) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjenle saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una experiencia normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares **(Counselor's Name)** al **(School Phone Number)**.

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Spanish

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.
- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.
- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.
- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.
- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarlo.
- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.
- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.
- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.
- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 3-12
Creole

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl **(School Name)** anonse avèk lapenn lanmò **(Name of a Staff Member)**, yon anplwaye nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi, kolèg ak elèv ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun ka pè oubyen boulvèse akòz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote w pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans.

Nou prepare lis machasuiv ki tache a pou paran/gadyen ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis lapenn nan. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak anplwaye konseye lekòl ou a disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Silvoulplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans nòminal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's Name)** nan **(School Phone Number)**.

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris

Helping your Child through the Grieving Process:
Guidelines for Parents
Creole

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesèsè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Sèvi ak langaj ki kòrèk, egzanp, “mouri” oubyen “te mouri”. Pa sèvi ak fraz tankou: “Li ap dòmi” oubyen “Bondye pran li” oubyen “Li pati”. Timoun ki pi piti ka pè ak referans sa yo.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapis.
- Mò sibat, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyo

Sample Classroom Script
Death of Teacher
Pre-K to Grade 2

Good morning boys and girls. My name is **(Name)**. I am here today to talk to you about something important. First, I would like to know how many of you have or had a pet? What kind of pet(s) do you have? Pets are a very important part of a family. How many of you have had a pet that died? How did you feel when your pet died? How many of you know a person who has died? Who is that person? How did you feel when that person died?

There are a lot of important people in your life. Your teacher is also an important person in your life. He/she is someone who you see each day at school. Today, I am here to tell you some sad news about your teacher. Unfortunately, **(Name of Teacher)** died. When someone dies, they are no longer breathing and their heart is no longer working. They can no longer walk, talk, eat or sleep. That is what happened to **(Name of Teacher)**. It is very hard when someone you care about dies.

You may feel very sad and miss them. It isn't always easy to talk about sad feelings; by talking to someone you love can help you feel better. You might want to talk about it with your parents, other people in your family or maybe another adult at school. No matter how sad you feel today, one thing you can be sure of is that you will not always feel this way. There will come a time when you don't feel as sad anymore and you will feel happy again remembering your friend. Happy times and sad times are a part of everyone's life. Let's talk about some nice things about your teacher. You can also draw a nice picture about him/her and we can give it to his/her family who will also miss him/her.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Teacher
Grades 3-5

Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here today to give you some information and talk with you. Students, as a class and as a school, you are a family. You spend five days a week together and attend school 180 days a year. During that time, you have many happy moments and celebrate many occasions. However, like any family, you also have experiences that are not fun. Sometimes things happen that make you sad. Today, we must tell you about something that is quite sad. Your teacher has died. **(Name of Teacher)** died yesterday. **(Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).** **(Name of Teacher)** will be missed by his/her family, friends, students and other teachers.”

If the students are aware of the death as being the result of a homicide use the following passage.

(Name of Teacher) died as a result of a homicide, which means that someone hurt **(Name of Teacher)** so badly that he/she died. We don’t always know why a person chooses to hurt other people, but we do know that violence is never the answer to any problems. If you or anyone you know is talking about wanting to hurt other people, or if you know someone who is carrying a weapon on campus, please tell your teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately. We want everyone to be safe.” You can also anonymously contact the BE SAFE-Tip Reporting System at 305-995-2677; provide information online at <http://besafe.dadeschools.net>; or text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Besafe.

When these types of things happen to people we know, new feelings and thoughts can happen inside of us. Some of these are new feelings we’ve never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just don’t want to think that it happened. It is OK to feel sad and cry. It is not OK to make fun of anyone who is sad, scared or cries. We all have different feelings and they should be respected. It is also very important to talk about what happened, because talking will help us to feel better.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/ staff that are in need of additional counseling services.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Teacher
Secondary Students

“Hello. Our names are _____ and _____. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. One of your teachers, **(Name of Teacher)** died. **(Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).”**

If the students are aware of the death as being the result of a homicide use the following passage.

In these situations, which are very rare, it is normal to be fearful of your own safety or the safety of others. Your administration, teachers, counselors and everyone here at **(Name of School)** will do the very best to ensure the safety of every single one of you.

You may hear other students make rude comments or react insensitively. This may be a way for them to cope with the intense feelings that they are experiencing for the first time; they may be trying to block out what they are really feeling. A homicide is a unique situation; it is hard for most to deal with this kind of tragedy. We cannot predict how others will cope or react. If you hear of any rude or insensitive comments, please notify your teacher or administrator so that we may have the opportunity to speak with the person making these comments.

It is ok to feel angry. Anger is a normal reaction. However, it is not ok to seek revenge on those we “think” have something to do with the death. No one in this room wants to experience another loss. This was a senseless act of violence that should not continue, nor be retaliated against.

Some of you may have information surrounding this tragedy. We ask that you report whatever information you may have to your administrator, teacher, counselor or police officer. It is important that you break the silence and realize that you have the power to help keep your school and community safe. If you have any information surrounding what happened and do not feel comfortable talking to anyone, remember that the School Board has an anonymous way of reporting information, either by contacting the BE SAFE-Tip Reporting System at 305-995-2677; provide information online at <http://besafe.dadeschools.net>; or text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Besafe.

If at any time during the next several days or weeks you feel you need to talk to someone or are just unsure about how you feel, let your teacher know and he/she will know who to refer you to.

Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers

High profile acts of violence, particularly in schools, can confuse and frighten children who may feel in danger or worry that their friends or loved-ones are at risk. They will look to adults for information and guidance on how to react. Parents and school personnel can help children feel safe by establishing a sense of normalcy and security and talking with them about their fears.

1. **Reassure children that they are safe.** Emphasize that schools are very safe. Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them into perspective, and assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.
2. **Make time to talk.** Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. Be patient. Children and youth do not always talk about their feelings readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. Some children prefer writing, playing music, or doing an art project as an outlet. Young children may need concrete activities (such as drawing, looking at picture books, or imaginative play) to help them identify and express their feelings.
3. **Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate.**
 - **Early elementary school** children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them. Give simple examples of school safety like reminding children about exterior doors being locked, child monitoring efforts on the playground, and emergency drills practiced during the school day.
 - **Upper elementary and early middle school** children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to provide safe schools.
 - **Upper middle school and high school** students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. They will share concrete suggestions about how to make school safer and how to prevent tragedies in society. Emphasize the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following school safety guidelines (e.g. not providing building access to strangers, reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to the school safety made by students or community members, etc.), communicating any personal safety concerns to school administrators, and accessing support for emotional needs.
4. **Review safety procedures.** This should include procedures and safeguards at school and at home. Help children identify at least one adult at school and in the community to whom they go if they feel threatened or at risk.
5. **Observe children's emotional state.** Some children may not express their concerns verbally. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. In most children, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time. However, some children may be at risk for more intense reactions. Children who have had a past

traumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from depression or other mental illness, or with special needs may be at greater risk for severe reactions than others. Seek the help of mental health professional if you are at all concerned.

6. **Limit television viewing of these events.** Limit television viewing and be aware if the television is on in common areas. Developmentally inappropriate information can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children. Adults also need to be mindful of the content of conversations that they have with each other in front of children, even teenagers, and limit their exposure to vengeful, hateful, and angry comments that might be misunderstood.
7. **Maintain a normal routine.** Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise. Encourage them to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children

- **Schools are safe places.** School staff work with parents and public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep you safe.
- **The school building is safe because ...** (cite specific school procedures).
- **We all play a role in the school safety.** Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.
- **There is a difference between reporting, tattling or gossiping.** You can provide important information that may prevent harm either directly or anonymously by telling a trusted adult what you know or hear.
- **Don't dwell on the worst possibilities.** Although there is no absolute guarantee that something bad will never happen, it is important to understand the difference between the **possibility** of something happening and the **probability** that it will affect our school.
- **Senseless violence is hard for everyone to understand.** Doing things that you enjoy, sticking to your normal routine, and being with friends and family help make us feel better and keep us from worrying about the event.
- **Sometimes people do bad things that hurt others.** They may be unable to handle their anger, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or suffering from mental illness. Adults (parents, teachers, police officers, doctors, faith leaders) work very hard to get those people help and keep them from hurting others. It is important for all of us to know how to get help if we feel really upset or angry and to stay away from drugs and alcohol.
- **Stay away from guns and other weapons.** Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence.
- **Violence is never a solution to personal problems.** Students can be part of the positive solution by participating in anti-violence programs at school, learning conflict mediation skills, and seeking help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other emotions they cannot control.

RECOVERY

NATURAL DISASTERS

Helping Children after a Natural Disaster: Information for Parents and Teachers

Natural disasters can be especially traumatic for children and youth. Often an entire community is impacted, further undermining a child's sense of security and normalcy. These factors present a variety of unique issues and coping challenges, including issues associated with specific types of natural disasters, the need to relocate when home and/or community have been destroyed, the role of the family in lessening or exacerbating the trauma, emotional reactions and coping techniques

Issues Associated with Specific Disasters

Hurricanes. Usually hurricanes are predicted days in advance, giving communities time to prepare. These predictions give families time to gather supplies and prepare. At the same time, however, these activities may generate fear and anxiety. Although communities can be made aware of potential danger, there is always uncertainty about the exact location of where the hurricane will impact. When a hurricane strikes, victims experience intense thunder, rain, lightning and wind. Consequently, startle reactions to sounds may be acute in the months that follow. Among a few children subsequent storms may trigger panic reactions. Immediate reactions to hurricanes can include emotional and physical exhaustion. In some instances children may experience survivor guilt (e.g., that they were not harmed, while others were injured or killed).

Earthquakes. Aftershocks differentiate earthquakes from other natural disasters. Since there is no clearly defined endpoint, the disruptions caused by continued tremors may increase psychological distress. Unlike other natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes and certain types of floods), earthquakes occur with virtually no warning. This fact limits the ability of disaster victims to make the psychological adjustments that can facilitate coping. This relative lack of predictability also significantly lessens feelings of control. While one can climb to higher ground during a flood, or install storm shutters before a hurricane, there is usually no advance warning or immediate preparation with earthquakes. Survivors may have to cope with reminders of the destruction (e.g., sounds of explosions, and the rumbling of aftershocks; smells of toxic fumes and smoke; and tastes of soot, rubber, and smoke).

Tornadoes. Like earthquakes, tornadoes can bring mass destruction in a matter of minutes, and individuals typically have little time to prepare. Confusion and frustration often follow. Similar to a

hurricane, people experience sensations during tornadoes that may generate coping challenges. It can be difficult to cope with the sights and smells of destruction. Given the capricious nature of tornadoes, survivor guilt has been observed to be an especially common coping challenge. For instance, some children may express guilt that they still have a house to live in while their friend next door does not.

Floods. These events are one of the most common natural disasters. Flash floods are the most dangerous as they occur without warning; move at intense speeds; and can tear out trees, destroy roads and bridges, and wreck buildings. In cases of dam failure the water can be especially destructive. Sensations that may generate coping challenges include desolation of the landscape, the smell of sludge and sodden property, coldness and wetness, and vast amounts of mud. Most floods do not recede overnight, and many residents have to wait days or weeks before they can begin the cleanup.

Possible Reactions of Children and Youth to Natural Disasters

The severity of children's reactions will depend on their specific risk factors. These include exposure to the actual event, personal injury or loss of a loved one, level of parental support, dislocation from their home or community, the level of physical destruction, and pre-existing risks, such as a previous traumatic experience or mental illness. Adults should contact a professional if children exhibit significant changes in behavior or any of the following symptoms over an extended period of time.

- **Preschoolers**—thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinging to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, and withdrawal from friends and routines.
- **Elementary School Children**—irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, school avoidance, poor concentration, and withdrawal from activities and friends.
- **Adolescents**—sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, delinquent behavior, and poor concentration.

A minority of children may be at risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Symptoms can include those listed above as well as re-experiencing the disaster during play and/or dreams; anticipating or feeling that the disaster is happening again; avoiding reminders of the disaster; general numbness to emotional topics; and increased arousal symptoms such as inability to concentrate and startle reactions. Although rare, some adolescents may also be at increased risk

of suicide if they suffer from serious mental health problems like PTSD or depression. Again, adults should seek professional mental health help for children exhibiting these symptoms.

Immediately Following a Natural Disaster: Information for Parents and Teachers

- Remain calm and reassuring
- Acknowledge and normalize their feelings
- Encourage children to talk about disaster-related events
- Promote positive coping and problem-solving skills
- Emphasize children's resiliency
- Strengthen children's friendship and peer support
- Take care of your own needs

Immediately Following a Natural Disaster: Specific Information for Schools

- Identify children who are at high risk and plan interventions
- Provide time for students to discuss the disaster
- Allow time for staff to discuss their feelings and share their experiences

Helping Children Adjust to Relocation after a Natural Disaster

The frequent need to relocate after a disaster creates unique coping challenges. It may contribute to the social, environmental, and psychological stress experienced by children and their families. Children will be most impacted by the reactions of their parents and other family members, the duration of the relocation, their natural coping style and emotional reactivity, and their ability to stay connected with friends and other familiar people and activities. To the extent possible parents and other caregivers should:

- Provide opportunities for children to see friends.
- Bring personal items that the child values when staying in temporary housing.
- Establish some daily routines so that the child is able to have a sense of what to expect (including returning to school as soon as possible).
- Provide opportunities for children to share their ideas and listen carefully to their concerns or fears.
- Be sensitive to the disruption that relocation may cause and be responsive to the child's needs.

- Consider the developmental level and unique experiences of each child; it is important to remember that as children vary, so will their responses to the disruption of relocation,

In addition, school personnel should:

- Determine the status of every child in the school. Contact each child who is absent and keep a record. Identify the needs of children whose home was destroyed or damaged.
- Find out the phone numbers and addresses of every student that had to relocate. Encourage classmates to write notes or make phone calls.
- Develop an advisory committee of students to report back to school staff about what resources and changes in routines will help students cope.
- Listen to and observe students' behavior. It takes time for children to understand and adjust to disasters. It is perfectly normal for them to discuss the event over and over again. Provide opportunities for children to discuss how they are coping. Use creative arts (e.g., drama, art, music, photography) to help them express their emotions.
- Help connect families to community resources. Bring agencies into the school that can deal with needs related to housing, finances, and insurance. Ensure that children get any necessary medical and emotional assistance.
- Increase staffing for before and after school care. If possible, extend the service for additional hours and even on weekends.
- Incorporate information about the disaster into related subject areas, as appropriate. Science, math, history, and language arts are especially relevant.

Adapted from Lazarus, P. J., & Jimerson, S. R., Brock, S. E. (2002). Natural Disasters. In S. E. Brock, P. J. Lazarus, & S. R. Jimerson (Eds.), Best Practices in School Crisis Prevention and Intervention (pp. 435-450), Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists and other crisis information posted on the NASP website at www.nasponline.org.

Supporting Children's Recovery after a Hurricane

Children will react differently to a hurricane and its aftermath depending on their age, developmental level, and prior experiences. Some will withdraw, while others will have angry outbursts. Still others will become agitated or irritable. Parents should be sensitive to each child's coping style. The following are typical reactions children exhibit following a hurricane or other natural disaster:

- Fear and worry about their safety and the safety of others, including pets
- Fear of separation from family members
- Clinging to parents, siblings or teachers
- Worry that another hurricane will come
- Increase in activity level
- Trouble concentrating or paying attention
- Withdrawal from others
- Angry outbursts or tantrums
- Aggression toward parents, siblings or friends
- Increase in physical complaints, such as headaches and stomach aches
- Change in school performance
- Long-lasting focus on the hurricane, such as talking repeatedly about it or acting out the event in play
- Increased sensitivity to sounds of thunder, wind, rain or things crashing
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite
- Lack of interest in usual activities, even playing with friends
- Returning to earlier behaviors, such as baby talk, bedwetting or tantrums
- Increase in teens' risky behaviors, such as drinking alcohol, using substances, harming themselves or engaging in dangerous activities

What Parents Can Do to Help Their Children

Parents should spend time talking to their children, letting them know that it is okay to ask questions and to share their worries. Although it will be hard finding time, parents can use regular family mealtimes or bedtimes to talk. Issues may come up more than once and parents should remain patient and open to answering questions and clarifying the situation. They should let children know, without overwhelming them with information, what is happening in the family, with their school and in the community. Parents should answer questions briefly and honestly and ask their children for their opinions and ideas. To help younger children feel safe and calm after talking about the hurricane, parents might read a favorite story or have a relaxing family activity.

To help children's recovery, parents should:

- Be a role model. Try to remain calm so that you can teach your child how to handle stressful situations.
- Monitor adult conversations. Be aware of what adults are saying about the hurricane or the damage. Children listen to adults' conversations and may misinterpret what they hear, becoming unnecessarily frightened.
- Limit media exposure. Protect your child from too many images and descriptions of the hurricane, including those on television, on the Internet, on radio and in the newspaper.
- Reassure children that they are safe. You may need to repeat this frequently even after the hurricane passes.
- Spend extra time with your children, playing games outside, reading together indoors or just cuddling. Be sure to tell them you love them. Replace lost or damaged toys as soon as you are able.
- Calm worries about their friends' safety. Even though phones may not be working, reassure your children that their friends' parents are taking care of them, just the way you are taking care of your children.
- Tell children about community recovery. Reassure them that the government is working hard to restore electricity, phones, water and gas. Tell them that the town or city will be removing debris and helping families find housing.

- Take care of your children's health. Help them get enough rest, exercise, and healthy food and water. Give them both quiet and physical activities.
- Maintain regular daily life. In the midst of disruption and change, children feel more secure with structure and routine. As much as possible, have regular mealtimes and bedtimes.
- Maintain expectations. Stick to your family rules about good behavior and respect for others. Continue family chores, but keep in mind that children may need more reminding than usual.
- Encourage children to help. Children cope better and recover sooner when they help others. Give them small cleanup tasks or other ways to contribute. Afterward, provide activities unrelated to the hurricane, such as playing cards or reading.
- Be extra patient as your children return to school. They may be more distracted and need extra help with homework for a while.
- Give support at bedtime. Children may be more anxious when separating from parents. Spend a little more time than usual talking, cuddling or reading. Start the bedtime routine earlier so children get the sleep they need. If younger children need to sleep with you, let them know it is a temporary plan, and that soon they will go back to sleeping in their own beds.
- Help with boredom. The hurricane may have disrupted the family's daily activities (watching television, playing on the computer, and having friends over) or caused the suspension of extracurricular activities (sports, youth groups, dances, or classes). Help children think of alternative activities, such as board games, card games, and arts and crafts. Try to find community programs (at the library, a park program, or a local YMCA) with child-friendly activities.
- Keep things hopeful. Even in the most difficult situation, your positive outlook on the future will help your children see good things in the world around them, helping them through challenging times.
- Seek professional help if your child still has difficulties more than six weeks after the hurricane.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2012

<http://nctsn.org/trauma-types/natural-disasters/hurricanes#q3>

Global Disasters: Helping Children Cope

Global disasters, like massive earthquakes, tsunamis or storms, can have a strong emotional effect on people around the world. The scale of the physical devastation and the loss of life in large disasters are disturbing even for those not directly affected by the event. Like adults, many children and youth try to comprehend the scope of such tragedy and understand how it relates to them. Common reactions include sadness, concern over a large scale disaster occurring at home, and the strong desire to help. Although most children will be fine, some may need additional support from adults because of their personal circumstances, in particular those who come from or may have lost loved ones in the affected areas. Extended family is extremely important in many cultures and many immigrants have strong ties to family back home. Adults can help children by supporting their emotional and psychological needs, helping them understand the events factually, and providing the opportunity to process their reactions, as needed.

For all Children

- Identify vulnerable populations
- Talk to your children and students
- Be a good listener and observer
- Highlight people's compassion and humanity
- Do something positive with your children/students to help others in need
- Be honest
- Spend family time

For Children Personally Impacted

- Recognize potential grief, anxiety and stress
- Provide students the opportunity to express their feelings
- Maintain as much normalcy as possible
- Enable students to take action
- Respect cultural issues and boundaries regarding crisis and death
- Make mental health services available
- Be willing to discuss the concept of death
- Understand the grief process
- Know the potential child/adolescent reactions to trauma

- Help children support their friends

National Association of School Psychologists, 2008

http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/index.aspx

Factors to Consider when Working with Students who are Victims of Natural disasters

1. **Exposure to traumatic events during and after the disaster:** it is so important to limit media exposure and detailed conversations about the disaster around students, especially young children.
2. **Pre-existing demographic characteristics:** factors like poverty and age influence emotional recovery following a disaster.
3. **Occurrence of life stressors:** a child whose parents have divorced or will divorce, parents loss of employment, or an over burdened community system may add to the already existing stress and worry for the child.
4. **Availability of social support:** families that have been forced to relocate due to a natural disaster many times have left their social support behind. Students in particular may lose their friends, teachers, family, school and neighborhood.
5. **Type of coping strategies used to manage disaster-related stress:** children are still learning how to cope with different stresses in their every-day life. A child who has not learned how to cope with different everyday stressors will have a much more difficult time adjusting to the aftermath of a natural disaster.

Recommendations For Helping Children Cope After a Disaster: Tips for Teachers

- Refrain from discussing disturbing details related to the disaster with other staff members in the presence of students
- Provide opportunities for children to share their experiences
- Involve children in activities that allow them to make choices and resume a sense of control over their environment
- Incorporate information about the disaster into related subject areas, as appropriate
- Listen and observe student behaviors
- Consider developmental level and unique experiences of each child
- Involve students in recovery-related activities and projects
- For displaced children, investigate resources to allow a return to activities they previously enjoyed
- Talk to displaced children about how they would like to handle questions from new friends about their disaster experience
- Maintain normalcy, routine and stability
- Create an environment of safety
- Be calm, be hopeful, be friendly
- Be sensitive to diverse cultural and religious traditions regarding tragedy and loss
- Be honest, but avoid discussing any disturbing details
- Avoid repeated exposure to details of the disaster via media
- Listen to child's fears and feelings surrounding the disaster
- Give the children an opportunity to tell their story
- Understand that children deal with trauma in their own unique way

Psychological First Aid

Children and adolescents react to trauma in many different ways. Some may become increasingly anxious, confused, hopeless and restless. Early intervention with youth following a natural disaster will help promote a safe and hopeful environment. Psychological First Aid is an evidence-informed approach for assisting children, adolescents, adults and families in the aftermath of disaster. Please review the following steps:

- Listen** Respond to questions and concerns with honesty. Stick to the facts of the event and only discuss information that will positively contribute to the emotional well-being of the child. Observe changes in behaviors/mood, school performance, relationships with classmates and school-based activities. Be patient and be prepared to explain things more than once.
- Protect** Answer questions simply and honestly using age appropriate responses. Provide students an opportunity to express themselves by facilitating classroom discussions, art activities or play. Pay extra attention to anything in the child’s environment that may re-traumatize the child. Limit students’ access to television and internet coverage of the incident, the disaster and any recovery efforts.
- Connect** Check in with students on a regular basis. Find resources that can offer support to your students and the classroom. Keep the communication lines open with caregivers, parents, siblings, other teachers and relatives. Encourage student involvement in interactive school activities such as sports, clubs and student-community projects. This will allow students to meet other students and feel a part of something.
- Model** Children model behaviors. How you cope with your emotions surrounding the event will influence how your students will cope and behave. Find practical ways to empower students and their families. Acknowledge the difficulty of the situation while emphasizing that people can learn to cope with the worse of situations. If you are hopeful and positive, your students will be as well.
- Teach** Explain that children and adults understand and react differently to traumatic events and disasters. Help children understand that there is no right way to react to disaster. Encourage students to identify and use positive coping strategies. Help youth problem solve. Encourage physical activities and combine these activities with useful tasks.

Supporting Student Recovery: Handouts

Crisis Reactions: Developmental Factors

Preschool- Age Children

- Re-enact experience
- Generalize fears
- Withdrawal
- Separation Anxiety
- General behavior problems
- Behavioral regression: thumb sucking, bedwetting, fear of the dark
- Clinging to parents
- Sleep disturbances
- Loss of appetite
- Whimpering
- Screaming
- Clinging

Elementary-Age Children

- Extreme withdrawal
- Disaster/incident-related irrational fears
- Disruptive behavior
- Difficulty paying attention
- Outbursts of anger
- Stomachache
- Headaches
- Depression
- Anxiety
- School Refusal
- Irritability
- Increased fighting and aggression
- Emotional numbing
- Irritability and Aggression
- Fears
 - Of the dark
 - Of being left alone
 - Of being separated from family; school avoidance

Crisis Reactions: Developmental Factors (continued)

Middle and High School Students

- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Emotional numbing
- Avoidance
- Substance abuse
- Headaches, stomachaches, risk taking behavior
- Rebellion
- Decline in responsible behavior
- Sleeping or eating disturbances
- Irritability
- Delinquency
- Physical complaints
- Poor concentration
- Depression

Grief Reactions

Most individuals will exhibit some reaction after exposure to a crisis event, although there is no one “normal” or expected crisis reaction or set of reactions. Different people will have different reactions to the same event. Age, degree of exposure to the event, pre-existing risk factors, and family dynamics may all contribute to student grief reactions.

Emotional Symptoms		Cognitive Reactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock • Anger • Grief • Phobias • Dissociation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Emotional Numbness • Irritability • Helplessness • Hypersensitivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impaired Concentration • Impaired Decision Making • Memory Impairment • Decreased Self-Efficacy • Intrusive Thoughts/Memories

Physical Effects	Behavioral Effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Sleep Disturbances • Headaches • Gastrointestinal Problems • Decreased Appetite • Impaired Immune Response • Somatic Complaints • Increased Appetite • Insomnia • Hyper arousal • Stomachaches • Startle Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alienation • Social withdrawal/isolation • Excessive/Uncontrollable Crying • Refusal to go to School • Aggressive Behavior • Regressive Behavior • Tantrums • Increased Risk Taking Behavior

Stages of Grief

Many of the symptoms may vary depending on the age of the child, educational development, previous exposure to death or other factors. The order of these stages may vary per individual.

Denial/Shock In this stage, an individual may believe that the deceased will return. Symptoms such as nightmares, being easily startled, anxiety and restlessness may be prevalent with those close to the deceased. Students may appear emotionless or numb, displaying their refusal to accept the loss.

Bargaining During this stage a child may display their refusal to accept the loss by bargaining or making deals that if they behave better or change certain at-risk behavior, then their friend will be returned.

Anger Young children may become significantly irritable and display antisocial behavior. Adolescents and young adults may become isolated and resentful of the situation, vandalizing property and refusing to comply with rules.

Guilt This stage is particularly important for those closest to the deceased or those who treated him/her poorly. Children may blame themselves for not being there or not doing enough to help them..

Depression Children who are depressed feel an overwhelming sense of emptiness and unhappiness. A drop in school academic performance along with increased absenteeism may be noticed. Students may also display uncontrollable crying, demonstrate an inability to concentrate and seem noticeably withdrawn from activities they previously enjoyed.

Acceptance Coming to terms with the loss and being hopeful of the future.

Working with a Grieving Child: Recommendations for Teachers

- Model calm behavior
- Modify / set aside scheduled activities in order to address event
- Share only information that has been cleared by the Principal
- Answer questions honestly, avoiding unnecessary details
- Listen to what students want to share with you
- Protect students from seeing and hearing things that may traumatize or re-traumatize them (e.g. media reports, looking out the window at an incident scene, etc.)
- Connect with students who are grieving, regularly asking them how they are and letting them know that you are available to listen to them
- Be sensitive to diverse cultural and religious traditions regarding tragedy and loss
- Read a relevant age-appropriate book
- Offer necessary reassurance and support
- Gradually guide students toward the resumption of normal class routine and expectations
- Inform the main office or Student Services Department Chairperson of students in need of counseling services
- Notify the main office or Student Services Department Chairperson if you would like a counseling professional to visit your class
- Notify parent/guardian regarding any concerns you are having about their child's post-event behavior or classroom performance.

Support Activities

Support Activities

Spontaneous Writing

Cut long pieces of mural paper, enough for multiple students to participate at the same time. This provides an opportunity for students to write messages to the family or draw pictures. The pieces of paper could be rolled up and given to the family as a gift from the classmates and/or students.

Safe Box

Creating a safe box is a creative way for students to share their feelings and provide a sense of empowerment. Students decorate old shoe boxes and place pictures inside, drawings, photos, or writings, which bring them peace. The object is to create a space where the child feels safe and enjoys looking at.

Memory Box

This is especially useful for older children. Along the same lines as creating a safety box, students can create a memory box and decorate it with images, quotes or objects that remind them of the deceased. Inside the box could be objects, special interests, news articles, etc.

Grief Books

Reading to children about grief can be very useful in the healing process, especially with very young children. Children in Pre-K through 2nd grade may not understand the permanency of death. Finding the right grief book could help the children understand what happened.

Buddy System

Pairing students with other students in their grade level or classroom to go to and from class, make trips to the office or running errands, provides students with a sense of safety. It relieves the student from being alone.

**Division of Student Services
Crisis Management Program
Grief Activity – Elementary –Age Students**

Creating My “Safe Box”

Concept: As students recover from a traumatic event or loss they need to find ways to feel safe and secure. Students can create a “safe box” in which they can place a variety of objects or photos that help them feel protected and safe.

Required Materials:

- Shoe Box or empty box
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils
- White paper
- Colored sheets of paper
- Magazines or pictures

Step-by-Step

- Students select a box they would like to decorate
- Decorate the outside of box with paper, markers, crayons or pictures
- Place objects or images that remind students of feeling safe and peaceful
- Have students tell the story of their box

Connect

Discuss with students the significance of feeling safe and remind them of all the things that are meaningful in their life. Teachers can display boxes in the classroom for a short period of time before students are allowed to take them home.



**Division of Student Services
Crisis Management Program
Grief Activity – Middle School and High School Students**

Creating a “Memory Box”

Concept: A creative way for students to deal with loss and remember the positive. Students can create a memory box to share their experiences with other students, as well as providing an outlet for creative expression about their feelings.

Required Materials:

- Shoe Box or empty box
- Markers, crayons or color pencils
- White paper
- Color construction paper
- Magazines or pictures
- Newspaper clippings

Step-by-Step

- Students select a box they would like to decorate
 - Students decorate the box with paper, markers, crayons or pictures
 - Students place objects, photos, letters of who they would like to remember
 - Have students tell a memory they placed in the box.
- *Allow students to be creative. Teachers may elect to have students work in groups as well as individually.*

Connect

Teachers and/or counselors can use this activity to allow students time to share their memories. Please make sure that information placed inside the box and materials used to decorate the outside of box are appropriate. Do not allow profanity or explicit content. Encourage students to use positive and healthy ways of expression.



Draw a picture and use words to answer the questions

What Happened?

What could help you feel better?

Writing Exercise – Fill in the Blanks



The person who died in my life was _____.

I was _____ when I found out.

After, I felt _____

because _____.

Now I feel _____

because _____

What makes me angry is _____

I worry about _____

because _____.

It is difficult for me to concentrate

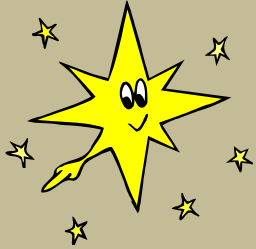
because _____

_____.

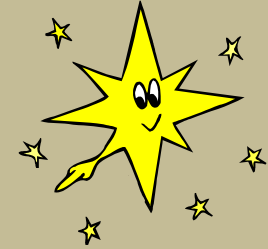
When I feel bad I can talk to _____.

What helps me the most is _____.

What helps me the least is _____.



Things I will remember



_____ was my teacher. I remember _____ liked to wear _____. The things I remember and will miss the most are _____.

Since _____ died I sometimes worry that _____.

Some of the funny times we shared together were _____ and when _____.

Memorial Activities

Following a traumatic experience, natural disaster, or death of a loved one, many students may express their desire to “do something.” School memorial activities may serve as an important part of the healing process. How a school approaches a memorial activity can make a difference in the healing process for students and faculty alike. Memorials should promote positive experience and not re-traumatize students or staff participating in the activities.

Student lead activities have the most desirable impact with the direction of a responsible school employee. Consider the following when planning your school memorial activity.

Temporary Memorials

A temporary memorial will provide students and faculty with an opportunity to mourn and celebrate the life lost, without having a permanent reminder of the loss. Students may place flowers, stuffed animals or other tokens of remembrance in a special hallway, in front of a classroom or other location on the school campus. This is a natural memorial that should be temporary. It is recommended that this natural memorial be removed following the funeral. School personnel may arrange for the items to be delivered to the family of the deceased. Additionally, this provides students the opportunity to provide something for the family as a collective group.

School Initiatives

Following the death of a student or staff member, schools have the opportunity to provide activities that have positive impact. For example, the homicide of a student may prompt a “Youth Violence Prevention Week” that may incorporate pep rallies on

gun safety, in-services for teachers, and an art contest for students to display their prevention efforts in the memory of their classmate, friend, or teacher.

Teachers may also provide writing assignments or research projects following an incident, natural disaster or community loss.

Students may be encouraged to write post cards or letters to relief workers or military personnel. Older students may want to take part in government by writing letters of support or concern to local, state and national leaders.

Permanent Memorials

It is recommended that schools do not create permanent memorials. Gardens, tree-planting, plaques, etc., are best reserved for the community. Providing a temporary memorial at school provides students with the option not to participate and decreases the opportunity for re-exposure to traumatic events. Permanent memorials may provide an on-going visual reminder of the loss for students and staff, creating more harm than good. Participating in memorials should be a choice, not a mandate.

Additional Recommended Memorial Activities for students

- Donate money to a charity or community agency
- Volunteer to assist a local agency in providing a community service