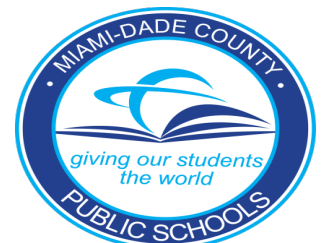


Miami-Dade County Public Schools Crisis Management Resource Manual



Division of Student Services Crisis Management Program



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

Ms. Mari Tere Rojas, Chair
Ms. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair
Mr. Roberto Alonso
Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller
Ms. Mary Blanco
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Mr. Danny Espino
Dr. Steve Gallon III
Ms. Luisa Santos

Dr. Jose Dotres
Superintendent

Ms. Lourdes Diaz
Chief Academic Officer
Division of Academic Support

Ms. Sally J. Alayon
Assistant Superintendent
Office of Mental Health and Student Services

Ms. Martha Z. Harris
Administrative Director
Division of Student Services

July 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	X
Crisis in the School Community	1
Crisis Response	2
<u>Resources for Responding to an Accidental or Illness- Related Death of a Student</u>	3
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist	
○ Off Campus Fatality	4
○ On Campus Fatality	5
• Crisis Response Worksheet	6
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	7
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	8
○ On Campus Fatality	9
• Sample PA Announcement	
○ Off Campus Fatality	10
○ On Campus Fatality	11
• Sample School Messenger Message to Parents	
○ English	12
○ Spanish	13
○ Creole	14
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre-K to Grade 3)	
○ English	15
○ Spanish	17
○ Creole	19
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 4-12)	
○ English	21
○ Spanish	23
○ Creole	25
• Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K to Grade 3)	27
• Sample Classroom Script (Grades 4-5)	28
• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	29

• Crisis Counseling Professionals' Log	30
• Crisis Counseling Students' Log	31
<u>Resources for Responding to an Accidental or Illness-Related Death of a Staff Member</u>	32
• Principal's Crisis Response Checklist	
○ Off Campus Fatality	33
○ On Campus Fatality	34
• Crisis Response Worksheet	35
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	36
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	37
○ On Campus Fatality	38
• Sample PA Announcement	
○ Off Campus Fatality	39
○ On Campus Fatality	40
• Sample School Messenger Message to Parents	
○ English	41
○ Spanish	42
○ Creole	43
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre-K to Grade 3)	
○ English	44
○ Spanish	46
○ Creole	48
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 4-12)	
○ English	50
○ Spanish	52
○ Creole	54
• Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K to Grade 3)	56
• Sample Classroom Script (Grades 4-5)	57
• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	58
• Crisis Counseling Professionals' Log	59
• Crisis Counseling Students' Log	60

<u>Resources for Responding to the Suicide of a Student</u>	61
• Student Suicide: Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist	
○ Off Campus Suicide	62
○ On Campus Suicide	63
• Crisis Response Worksheet	64
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	65
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	66
○ On Campus Fatality	67
• Sample PA Announcement	
○ Off Campus Fatality	68
○ On Campus Fatality	69
• Sample School Messenger Message to Parent/Guardian	
○ English	70
○ Spanish	71
○ Creole	72
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre-K to Grade 3)	
○ English	73
○ Spanish	75
○ Creole	77
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 4-12)	
○ English	79
○ Spanish	81
○ Creole	83
• Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K-3)	85
• Sample Classroom Script (Grades 4-5)	86
• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	87
• Crisis Counseling Professionals’ Log	88
• Crisis Counseling Student Log	89
<u>Resources for Responding to the Suicide of a Staff Member</u>	90
• Staff Suicide: Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist	
○ Off Campus Suicide	91

○ On Campus Suicide	92
• Crisis Response Worksheet	93
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	94
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	95
○ On Campus Fatality	96
• Sample PA Announcement	
○ Off Campus Fatality	97
○ On Campus Fatality	98
• Sample School Messenger Message to Parents	
○ English	99
○ Spanish	100
○ Creole	101
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre-K to Grade 3)	
○ English	102
○ Spanish	104
○ Creole	106
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 4-12)	
○ English	108
○ Spanish	110
○ Creole	112
• Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K to Grade 3)	114
• Sample Classroom Script (Grades 4-5)	115
• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	116
• Crisis Counseling Professionals' Log	117
• Crisis Counseling Student Log	118
• Crisis Helpline Reporting	119
• Suicide Warning Signs	120
• Suicide Risk and Protective Factors	121
• Responding to a Student who is Suicidal	122
<u>Resources for Responding to Self-Injurious Behavior</u>	123
• Definition and Methods	124
• Symptoms and Warning Signs	125

• Reasons for Self-Injurious Behavior	126
• Working with Students who Self-Injure	127
<u>Resources for Responding to the Homicide of a Student</u>	128
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist: Off - Campus Homicide	129
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist: On- Campus Homicide	130
• Crisis Response Worksheet	131
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	132
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	133
○ On Campus Fatality	134
• Sample Announcements	
○ Off Campus Fatality	135
○ On Campus Fatality	136
• Sample School Messenger Message to Parents	
○ English	137
○ Spanish	138
○ Creole	139
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre- K to 3rd Grade)	
○ English	140
○ Spanish	142
○ Creole	144
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 4-12)	
○ English	146
○ Spanish	148
○ Creole	150
• Sample Classroom Script: (Pre-K to Grade 3)	152
• Sample Classroom Script: (Grades 4- 5)	153
• Sample Classroom Script: (Secondary)	154
• Crisis Counseling Professionals’ Log	155
• Crisis Counseling Student Log	156
<u>Resources for Responding to the Homicide of a Staff Member</u>	157
• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist: Off - Campus Homicide	158

• Principal’s Crisis Response Checklist: On- Campus Homicide	159
• Crisis Response Worksheet	160
• Sample Staff Meeting Agenda	161
• Sample Email to Staff	
○ Off Campus Fatality	162
○ On Campus Fatality	163
• Sample PA Announcement	
○ Off Campus Fatality	164
○ On Campus Fatality	165
• Sample School Messenger Message to Parents	
○ English	166
○ Spanish	167
○ Creole	168
• Sample Letter to Parents (Pre- K to Grade 3)	
• English	169
• Spanish	171
• Creole	173
• Sample Letter to Parents (Grades 4-12)	
○ English	175
○ Spanish	177
○ Creole	179
• Sample Classroom Script (Pre-K to Grade 3)	181
• Sample Classroom Script (Grades 4- 5)	182
• Sample Classroom Script (Secondary)	183
• Crisis Counseling Professionals’ Log	184
• Crisis Counseling Student Log	185
• Talking to Children about Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers	186
Recovery	188
<u>Natural Disasters</u>	189
• Helping Children Cope after a Natural Disaster: Information for Parents and Teachers	190

• Supporting Children’s Recovery after a Hurricane	194
• Global Disasters: Helping Children Cope	197
• Factors to Consider when Working with Students who are Victims of Natural Disasters	198
• Recommendations for Helping Children Cope after a Disaster: Tips for Teachers	199
• Psychological First Aid	200

PREFACE

This manual is designed to provide Miami-Dade County Public Schools administrators, school-based mental health services providers, teachers, and members of critical incident response teams with information and guidance for responding to and recovering from critical incidents and disasters. These events have the potential to cause significant disruption in the school and community and may result in a wide range of emotional reactions and grief.

Exposure to a crisis and associated trauma may also impact attendance, academic performance, and behavior. Without a comprehensive and best practices approach, recovery may be lengthy and complicated. Although it is understood that even with our best efforts, we cannot prevent all harmful incidents and disasters from occurring; we, by our deliberate actions, can enhance the safety, security, and overall wellness of students and staff who experience these circumstances. To this end, we have prepared this publication for your use.

The resources found on the following pages will offer specific guidance for responding to critical incidents and disasters. Protocols are provided to address on campus and off campus fatalities of students and staff due to an accident, illness, homicide, or suicide. The information included in this document is based upon best practices approaches and years of experience. However, recommended response actions may not be indicated in certain cases. Consultation with a member of the District Crisis Management Team may be helpful in determining the best course of action.

For each type of fatality, there are several supportive response documents including a checklist for actions to take; sample email messages for staff; school messenger messages for parents; sample announcements; sample notification letters and recommendations for parents/guardians in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole; classroom scripts designed for use by school based mental health services providers; and other helpful resources. When addressing a crisis in an elementary school, it is strongly recommended that parents/guardians be notified before intervening with students. Thank you for your dedication to the safety, security, and wellbeing of our students and staff.

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. Youth 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, in the community, in our nation, or in a foreign country, they may have significant impact on the entire school community.

- Automobile Accident
- Drowning
- Homicide
- National or International Crisis
- School Bus Accident
- Fire/Explosion
- Contagious Disease
- Hostage Situation
- Natural Disaster
- School Shooting
- Suicide
- Terrorism

CRISIS 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 305-995-1550.
- 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 an 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 Communications 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 Crisis Response Checklist: On Campus Fatality

- Call 911.
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-1550.
- 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.
- Following notification of the family by law enforcement, contact the family of the deceased to offer condolences and 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 Communications 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"/> Messenger Message to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	

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 confirmed 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 emotional shock, fear, anxiety, sadness, 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 most 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.

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 emotional shock, fear, anxiety, sadness, 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 most 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.

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.

Thank you,

Principal's Name

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Student off Campus
Senior High School Students Only

Teachers and students, it is with great sadness that I greet all of you today. As many of you may already know, **(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 teacher will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us now have a moment of silence for **(Name of student)**.

Thank you.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of Student on Campus
Senior High School Students Only

Teachers and students, our school 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 teacher will know how to connect you with an available counselor. Let us now have a moment of silence for **(Name of student)**.

Thank you.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample School Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 Grade 3
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.

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 3
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 3
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 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 Letter to Parents
Death of Student
Grades 4-12
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 bedtime, and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 4-12
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 ayudarle.
- 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 4-12
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.

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, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans ki nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvoulè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, **(Counselor's name)** nan **(School phone number)**.

Sensèman,

Direkte/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- Grade 3

Good morning students. 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 is not always easy to talk about sad feelings but 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 do not 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 us talk about some nice things about your friend.

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 need additional counseling services.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Student
Grades 4-5

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 have never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just do not 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 need 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 these emotions all wrapped in one. You may see that someone may cry a lot and others do not 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 **(Name counselors)** who are here every day for you.

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

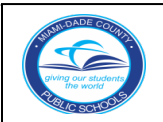
Resources for Responding to an Accidental or Illness-Related Death of a Staff Member

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 -1550.
- 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 Communications at 305-995-1825.
- Contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 305-995-7111 to assist staff that may require 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 305-995-1550.
- Implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures to ensure student and staff safety.
- Secure/control the incident site.
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team.
- Following the notification of the family by law enforcement, contact the family of the deceased to offer condolences and 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 Communications 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 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"/> Messenger Message to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	

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 confirmed 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

Teachers, 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 most 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 _____. 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 Staff Member on Campus

Teachers, we have experienced the loss of a 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 most 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_____.

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
Senior High School Students Only

Students and staff. It is with great sadness that I greet you today. We have received word that the **(Name of school)** family has suffered the loss of one of our 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.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Senior High School Students Only

Students and teachers, it is with great sadness that I inform you that the **(Name of school)** family has suffered the loss of one of our 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 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.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample School Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 nesesè. 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 3
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.

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 3
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 3
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 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

- 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 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 4 -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 4-12
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 4-12
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.

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 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, 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 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 Grade 3

Good morning students. 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 is not always easy to talk about sad feelings; but 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 do not 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 us talk about some nice things about your teacher.

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 need additional counseling services.

Sample Classroom Script
Death of a Teacher
Grades 4-5

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 have never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just do not 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 need 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)**.

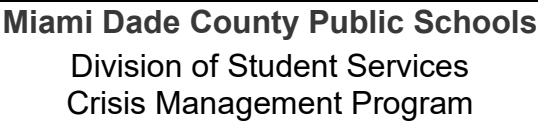
When things like this happen, some people may feel angry, upset, scared, sad, in shock or all of these emotions. You may see that someone may cry a lot and others do not cry at all. Maybe some of you just want to stay quiet for a while, and some of you may want to talk about what happened and want to 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 area to grieve, support each other, or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor please ask your 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.



Complete this form for any students receiving individual and/or group counseling following a school crisis. Use this form to provide follow-up services to students subsequent to a crisis.

Date:

[illegible]

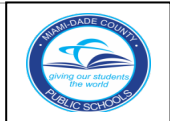
Resources for Responding to the Suicide of a Student

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Suicide

- Verify that the incident occurred.
- Notify District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-1550.
- 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 the 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 Communications 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 305-995-1550.
- Implement Lockdown or Evacuation Procedures to ensure student and staff safety, if appropriate.
- Secure/contain the incident site.
- Following notification of the family by law enforcement, contact the family of the deceased to offer condolences and support. Identify information the 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 Communications 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"/> Messenger Message to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	

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 confirmed 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 most 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. 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 most 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. 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
Senior High School Students Only

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.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Student on Campus
Senior High School Students Only

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 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.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample School Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 3
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.

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 3
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 3
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.

Silvouplè 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, 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 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 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 Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 4-12
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 4-12
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 4-12
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

- 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 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 3

Good morning students. 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 is not 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 do not 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 us talk about some nice things about your friend.

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

Grades 4-5

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 do not 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, 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 have never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just do not 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 do not 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 do not 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, keyword: Besafe. You can contact the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 or the Miami-Dade Helpline at 211 for confidential crisis 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.

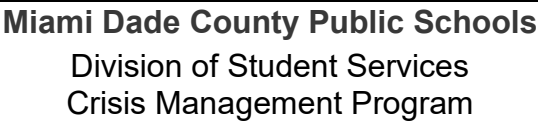
In your school you have **(List counselors)** who are here every day for you.

Today the **(Designated counseling area)** is the area 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 your 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 you about the loss of your classmate, **(Name of deceased)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, and teachers.



Complete this form for any students receiving individual and/or group counseling following a school crisis. Use this form to provide follow-up services to students after a crisis.

Date:

[illegible]

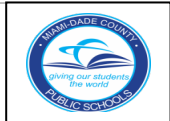
Resources for Responding to the Suicide of a Staff Member

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Suicide

- Verify that incident occurred.
- Notify District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-1550.
- 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 Communications 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 305-995-1550.
- 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 the 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 Communications 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"/> Messenger Message to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	

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 confirmed 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 most 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 _____.

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 most 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 _____.

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
Senior High School Students Only

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.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Senior High School Students Only

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 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.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 nesesè. 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 Grade 3
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.

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 3
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 ayudarle.
- 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 3
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 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

- 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 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 4 -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(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 4-12
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 4-12
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, 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.

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 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, 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 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 terapris.
- 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 3

Good morning students. 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 is not 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 do not 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 us talk about some nice things about your teacher.

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

Grades 4-5

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 do not 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, 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 have never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just do not 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 do not 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 do not 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, keyword: Besafe. You can contact the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 or the Miami-Dade Helpline at 211 for confidential crisis 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 your teacher 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 you about the loss of your teacher, **(Name of deceased)**. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students, and colleagues.

Date:[illegible]

Crisis Helpline Reporting

The crisis helpline 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 Helpline at 305-995-2273(CARE)

Suicide Warning Signs

Early Warning Signs	Late Warning Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Responding to a Student Who is Suicidal: Recommendations for Staff

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not be judgmental. • Do not worry about silence during a discussion. • Do not 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 and hopelessness. |
|---|--|

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 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, fingernails 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 dealing with a difficult or emotional situation.
- Youth seek relief from overwhelming emotional pain, frustration, and other negative feelings.
- Individuals who self-harm often do so because of a need to feel pain externally, rather than internally.
- Inflicting harm on oneself can provide a sense of control over one's pain.
- Youth self-injure to express their anger and/or frustration over a situation and communicate emotional pain to others.
- 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.

- 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.

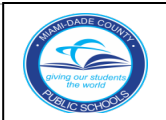
Resources for Responding to the Homicide of a Student

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Homicide

- Verify that incident occurred.
- Notify District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-1550.
- 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 Communications 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 305-995-1550.
- Mobilize School-based Critical Incident Response Team.
- Determine whether the bell schedule should be changed. Prepare the announcement with the new schedule.
- Following notification of the family by law enforcement, contact 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 Communications 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"/> Messenger message 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. Debriefing Date _____ Time _____

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

- Share confirmed 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 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 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 most 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.

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 most 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.

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
Senior High School Students Only

Good morning students and staff. It is with great sadness that I greet you today. We have received word that the **(Name of school/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 teacher will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of student)**.

Thank you.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Student on Campus
Senior High School Students Only

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 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 teacher will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for **(Name of student)**.

Thank you.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample School Messenger Message
Death of a Student on Campus
English

Our (**Name of school or mascot**) family 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 School Messenger Message
Death of a Student on Campus
Spanish

Nuestra familia de (**Name of school or mascot**) 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 School Messenger Message
Death of a Student on Campus
Creole

Fanmi **(Name of school or mascot)** 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 3
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.

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 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.
- 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 3
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 3
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.

Silvouplè 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, 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 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 terapis.
- 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 Student
Grades 4-12
English

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The **(School name)** family sadly announces the death of a beloved **(Student's 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 bedtime and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Student
Grades 4 -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, (**Name of student**). 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 ayudarle.
- 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 4-12
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 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 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 3

Good morning students. 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 is not 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 do not 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 us talk about some nice things about your friend.

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

Grades 4-5

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 do not 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, 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 have never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just do not 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 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.

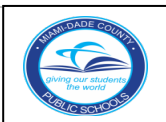
Resources for Responding to the Homicide of a Staff Member

Principal's Crisis Response Checklist: Off Campus Homicide

- Verify that incident occurred.
- Notify the District Critical Incident Response Team (DCIRT) at 305-995-1550.
- 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 Communications 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 305-995-1550.
- Mobilize the School-based Critical Incident Response Team.
- Determine whether the bell schedule should be changed. Prepare the announcement with the new schedule.
- Following the notification of the family by law enforcement, contact the victim's family to offer condolences and 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 Communications 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"/> Messenger Message to Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Home to Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> PA Announcement	

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 confirmed 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 most 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 _____. 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 most 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 _____. 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
Senior High School Students Only

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. He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students, and colleagues. We want to assure all 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.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample PA Announcement
Death of a Staff Member on Campus
Senior High School Students Only

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 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.

Note: We do not recommend making announcements during the morning hours, as that time should be reserved for providing individual and classroom notifications to students and staff who are likely impacted by the loss, including teachers, classmates, and friends of the deceased. An announcement to the entire student body should be made after all students have returned from lunch. This will provide students a few hours to receive support services, should they need assistance. Please avoid making the announcement at the end of the day, as there will not be adequate time to assist upset students.

Sample School Messenger 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 School Messenger 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 necesitan más apoyo o información, por favor, comuníquense con la escuela al (_____).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora

Sample School Messenger 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 nesesè. 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 3
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.

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)** 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 bedtime and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Pre-K to Grade 3
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 3
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 adiit, 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.

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 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 terapis.
- 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 4 -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 bedtime and times of separation.

Sample Letter to Parents
Death of a Staff Member
Grades 4-12
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 4-12
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 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 separasyo

Sample Classroom Script

Death of Teacher

Pre-K to Grade 3

Good morning students. 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 is not 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 do not 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 us talk about some nice things about your teacher.

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

Grades 4-5

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 do not 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 have never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just do not 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 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 a 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 do not 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 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, 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. Like 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 must 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, 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 can 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.
- Learn 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 repeatedly. 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. Amid 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

<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, 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.

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, 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.
- Understand the grief process.
- Know the potential child/adolescent reactions to trauma.

National Association of School Psychologists, 2008

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 overburdened 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 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 everyday 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 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** 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.