



Flight Team Checklist

West Linn-Wilsonville Student Services

Use this Checklist along with the red Crisis Resource Manual to help guide the Flight Team crisis response process.

Before School communication and arrangements

- Contact bus company so drivers are aware
- Inform itinerant staff who may arrive after the before-school staff meeting
- Make sure staff at all schools know (K-12) – principals have a stand up meeting (students or staff at other schools may have unanticipated connections to student/staff member who has died)
- Ensure Flight Team responders have information as soon as possible (whatever communication principal sends out to community/staff)
 - Name of student and school – helps Flight Team members determine whether they can respond and prepare themselves emotionally for anticipated student/staff needs
- Connect with external resources (County Suicide Postvention Team, TIP, Youth Era, Faith communities)
- Turn off automatic attendance notification

Pre-Meeting with Flight Team Members (and school leadership team) – before full staff meeting

- Review norms with Flight Team responders at early morning meeting. Provide text of announcement, map of school and “helpful phrases” handout.
- Assign roles for Flight Team members
- Identify Flight Team members who will be available to be in classrooms to help teachers read statement and respond to students’ initial questions
- Give time to process emotions/concerns – If Flight Team members hear information at the same time that school staff members are learning, they may be experiencing their own grief when they are also needing to support others
- Identify specific staff who Flight Team members and counselors should check in with during the day

Full Staff Meeting Before School

- Acknowledge the importance of the community that teachers have built in their classrooms – safety, trust and stability for students
- Recognize that some students may need familiar routine – others may need significant emotional supports in the Care Room or with counselors
- Acknowledge that stages of grief may come in unexpected waves (for students and staff)
- Give teachers time to turn & talk about questions they anticipate students will have
- Provide explicit permission for staff to engage in self-care (how to ask for help, roving subs to check on staff, acknowledging their own emotional response)
- Allow staff to request support in reading the announcement and leading initial class discussions
- Reminder about confidentiality – and importance of not speculating or filling in the gaps in the story
 - If the death was by suicide, specific guidance to staff about how to talk about suicide and how to pay attention to warning signs and risk factors in students
- Identify specific students who Flight Team and counselors should check in with during the day
- Allow time to gather information from staff (*What might we be forgetting? What don't we know?*)
- Conclude full staff meeting early to allow staff presence in hallways as students arrive at school

Initial Communication to Students

- Welcome students warmly – recognize that many of them may have already heard through social media
- Every teacher reads a scripted announcement to students about the tragic event.
- Flight Team members assist as appropriate
- Class discussion in response to announcement – Consider using existing classroom structures (ex. Circle protocol)
- Teachers inform students about Care Room – expectations and procedures

Guidelines for Care Room

- Use the term “Care Room” instead of “Safe Room” – all rooms in the school are Safe. The Care Room is a place students can go if they need extra support and care.
- If Care Room is a space that teachers use for breaks or planning, be sure to designate another space for teachers



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- If Care Room is a space that other students typically use for sensory breaks (e.g. Resource Room), be sure to designate another space for sensory breaks
- Flight Team member with clipboard to check in & greet students at the door to the Care Room (include time in, time out, teacher name, student name)
 - Class schedules are helpful so Flight Team knows recess and lunch times for each grade level
 - Give sign-in sheets to counselors at the end of the day
- Collect notes/cards that students write for family (in colored folder). Preview notes before giving them to the family
- If a student has been in the Care Room for a long time, encourage them to return to class when they are ready (lunch, recess and passing time are natural times for re-entry)
- If Care Room staff notice a student with particularly intense grief response, walk the student to the counselor

Snacks & Art Supplies in Care Room

- Have a variety of art supplies for students to color/craft while processing their feelings. Consider a tribute project that students can create their own piece.
- Have someone monitor snacks (especially at primary school). Communal eating can be a good social healing time for students. It can also be a distraction to others in the Care Room.
- Only provide one color of play dough per table (otherwise they get mixed together into a brown-gray blob). Trays are helpful to contain play dough (especially for students to play on the floor)

During the School Day

- Counselors in their offices – supporting students with particularly intense grief response
- Assign Flight Team members to be present in staff break room – especially during staff lunch times
- Provide food for Flight Team. Consider providing food for full staff
- Flight Team members check in with staff to ask if they need breaks (rather than relying on staff asking for a break)
- Flight Team members regularly walk through building and fields – including checking bathrooms

After School Staff Meeting

- Principal expresses appreciation for staff support of students
- Brief report from principal about the day and any new information or updates about funeral arrangements, etc.
- Allow time for staff members to share about how students (and staff) experienced the day
- Anticipated concerns for evening activities, the next school day, and upcoming events
- Reminder about Confidentiality
- Reminder about Staff Self-Care
 - Short Term: How will you take care of yourself tonight?
 - Long Term: How will you recognize and manage your own grieving process? (including reminder about Employee Assistance Program)

Flight Team Debrief

- Feedback about systems/structures
- List of specific students for school team to follow up with
- Decisions about the need for additional days of Flight Team response
- Reminders about Confidentiality and Self-Care

Follow-Up After Initial Day of Flight Team Response

- Principal send email to staff and parents at end of the day about how the day went
 - Highlighting role of Flight Team and community support
 - Guidance for parents about how to talk with their students about grief/loss
 - If the death was by suicide, specific guidance to parents about how to talk about suicide and how to pay attention to warning signs and risk factors in their children
- Communicate with school staff about purpose and procedures for Care Room during 2nd day of response
- Connect with Clackamas County suicide experts to implement postvention plan