

Preface:

Unanticipated tragic events can quickly escalate into a school-wide catastrophe if not dealt with immediately and effectively. Knowing what to do when a crisis occurs can minimize the chaos, rumors, and the impact of the event on students and community.

When a disaster strikes teachers and school staff members must provide assistance to students who may be dealing with emotional and physical distress at the same time as they are dealing with the same distresses. This time often proves to be a time that they are least prepared to think quickly. With some advance planning, this process can be much more effective.

Definitions:

Crisis: A sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death. A large number of students and staff will be affected. The psychological and emotional impact will be moderate to severe. Outside assistance will be needed.

Crisis Team: A group consisting of administrators, school psychologists, counselors, and other designated persons to handle media, traffic, logistics and information. The superintendent will make the determination to activate the Crisis Team. The Crisis Team will have a direct line to the code.

NOTE: Classroom teachers who have regular charge of students should not be on this team.

Auxiliary Team: This pre-established and trained group includes representatives from law enforcement, mental health agencies, medical clergy, Arkansas Department of Education, Attorney General's office, parents, patrons, and school personnel from other districts.

Calling Tree: This mechanism allows the team to be notified immediately. This list of numbers will be located in the superintendent's office as well as in all principals' offices. The secretary to the superintendent will provide training for other secretaries to ensure that all necessary communications are planned. This also includes a plan for internal communications among staff.

Crisis Kit: Each principal's office will have a container which will have name tags, notebooks, pens, markers, handheld radios, batteries, first aid supplies, and tape. Separate place cards with directional words such as "parents, counselors, media, clergy, volunteers, keep out, caution tape, etc." should be in the kit. Copies of student records, especially health and identification need to be readily accessible to send to the hospital if needed. (i.e.: a current yearbook for help with identification) Fanny packs are useful to replace purses. A laptop computer, printer, and access to a copier need to be available for immediate use.

Training: All staff members will be trained concerning the crisis plan. This includes teachers, clerical staff, aides, bus drivers, custodians, and maintenance staff.

- The school nurses will be trained to deal with trauma. They, in turn, will provide staff training.
- Ministers who are providing counseling need to be trained in dealing with trauma.
- The entire staff needs training in emergency first aid.
- All secretaries need training in information management.

Authorized Crisis Team for Melbourne School District:

Directors of Crisis Team

Dennis Sublett, Superintendent: 870.368.7070
Jaden Whitfield, School Resource Officer: 870.656.5420

Assistant Directors

Jim Carroll, MHS Principal: 870.368.4500
Lori Loggains, MES Principal: 870.368.4365
Amanda Bledsoe, Bearkatz Academy Director: 870.368.0380

Nursing

Jessi Johnson, MES Nurse: 870.368.4365 or 501.454.8435
Emily Delgado, MHS/Bearkatz Academy Nurse: 870.368.4500 or 870.373.0866

Counseling

Janet Yancey, MHS Counselor: 870.368.4500
Cindy Poole, MHS Counselor: 870.368.4500
Amanda Grant, MES Counselor: 870.368.4365

Media Relations

Blake Smith: 870.368.4365
Trey Lamb: 870.291.7363

Important Phone Numbers

EMS Ambulance	911
Izard County Ambulance	911 or 870.368.4203
Melbourne Fire Dept.	870.368.4333
Attorney General	501.448.3014
AR Dept. of Education	870.682.4204
DHS	870.972.1732
Melbourne High School	870.368.4500
Melbourne Elementary School	870.368.4365
Bearkatz Academy	870.368.0380

Auxiliary Team Members

Gene Baird 870.368.4508 or 870.368.7630
Jess Sumral 870.368.7785 or 870.291.7027
Ricky Burke 870.368.7770 or 870.291.1795
Tobin Shelton 870.368.7785 or 870.373.0417
Bruce Qualls 501.454.9093 or 870.346.5486
John Higgins 870.750.0607
Alan Miesner 870.612.3936
Clan Weatherford 870.291.3404
Cameron Hames 870.384.2016
Randy Bailey 870.759.2341

First Aid Teams:

Bearkatz Academy:

- Amanda Bledsoe
- Amber Garris
- Annette Mitchell
- Lindsey Phipps
- Sydney Shrable

Melbourne Elementary School:

- Melanie Cornelius
- Dencil Johnston
- Amanda Miller
- Blake Smith

Melbourne High School:

- Tanner Hoskinds
- Nichole Parks
- Cindy Poole
- Janet Yancey

MSD PLAN of Action:

WHAT DO WE DO FIRST?

Protect Students

- Follow lock-down or evacuation procedures.
- When instructed to do so, refer to flip chart for additional instructions.
- Call 911 (368.4203 - IZARD COUNTY Sheriff's Department) and EMS (EMS 368.4203) and continue providing first aid to the victims.
- Designee obtains Crisis Kit.
- Continue first aid for victims until EMS is on the scene. If possible, identify students by using name tags or markers on their wrists or ankles. Be careful not to make alterations to surroundings, since it will be investigated later as a crime scene. Clear uninjured students out of the immediate area to pre-designated gathering area of safety.
- Have secretary begin the calling tree before the lines get overloaded.
- Principal may need the rest of the students to go the pre-designated location. It may be back to classrooms or cafeteria; the principal will make that determination based on the situation. The principal needs to notify the building, by the way of a bell, etc..., that all is safe. Teachers and staff not tending to the victims need to be with the rest of the students giving support. If possible, one staff person needs to be at the hospital to help with identification and to support parents. That person needs to take the information notebook from the Crisis Kit.

ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR CRISIS TEAM

Crisis Team Directors (Dennis Sublett 870.368.7070 and Jaden Whitfield 870.656.5420) will direct and coordinate all activities dealing with the crisis at hand. These individuals also have authority to make decisions on the use of facilities, staff and equipment.

Immediate Decisions for Crisis Team

- Decide about scheduling changes. Decide, after consultation with the superintendent, whether or not to maintain normal schedules or set aside regular scheduling in an all-out effort to handle the crisis.
- Follow the schedule of the deceased and visit classrooms of close friends.
- Support the faculty (provide counseling as needed).
- Keep records of the affected students and provide follow-up services.
- Establish a self-referral procedure. Make referral forms available.
- Review and distribute open-ended questions to assist teachers with classroom discussion.
- Assign a counselor or responsible adult to follow the deceased student's schedule for the rest of the day.
- Monitor grounds for students leaving the building without permission.
- Arrange routing for the masses of parents who will pick up their children early.
- Ensure that students who are closest to the victims are picked up by their parents at school.
- Notify bus drivers of the victims in order for them to adjust and be aware of student emotions.
- Notify feeder schools so they can prepare siblings and other students regarding the crisis.

PRINCIPAL'S ROLE

- Provide information to teachers.
- Inform victim's family
- Support response efforts, be available for consultation and defer to decisions of Team Director.
- Be visible, available, and supportive to empower staff.
- Provide direction for teachers to alter the curriculum. (Consider postponement of testing, if necessary.)
- Communicate with central administration and other affected schools.
- Contact family of deceased and inform staff and students about funeral arrangements.
- Practice avoiding different areas of the building during routine evacuation drills.
- Consider an area on campus to land an emergency helicopter.
- Provide accurate information to students that may dispel rumors.
- Lead classroom discussions, when warranted, that focus on helping students to cope with loss.
- Answer questions without providing unnecessary details.

- Recognize and honor the various religious beliefs that may help the students to cope.
- Be understanding and receptive to students' expressions of various emotions.
- Be careful of the use of TV broadcasts in the classroom. Live newscasts can be traumatizing; especially if the students are still in school.
- Identify students who need counseling and refer them to building support personnel.
- Provide activities to reduce trauma, such as artwork, music and writing.
- Alter the curriculum as needed.
- Discuss the funeral procedures when appropriate.
- Know how to get assistance from other professionals should the need arise.

SCHOOL NURSE'S ROLE

- Monitor reactions of traumatized children.
- Keep a record of frequency of visits and complaints.
- Inform teachers and children about physical manifestations of grief.

CONSIDERATIONS

- MSD school campuses are closed providing for much more control in the event of an emergency. The media will have severe limitations.
- Principals will have posted an emergency evacuation plan which will also include a manner to evacuate the playgrounds.
- Principals will have locations identified for the use of media, family, friends, and workers. Alternate locations will be made available.
- The transportation director will have copies of a county/city map highlighting the bus route.
- A predetermined team of parents and patrons will be assigned to bring meals to people who work late into the evening. This will be coordinated by the MSD Parent Center Coordinator and the MSD Food Service Director.
- Teacher/parent handouts of typical reactions to various disasters appropriate for different grade levels will be available through the building counselor's office.
- Librarians will have a list of relevant books and materials available to provide for information and healing.
- It is not unusual for old issues to resurface. Each student should be given permission to feel a range of emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Typically, individuals go through a sequence of emotional reactions following a crisis such as
 - high anxiety
 - denial
 - anger
 - remorse
 - grief
 - and reconciliation.

LONG-TERM/ON-GOING INTERVENTION

- Provide on-going opportunities to deal with the crisis such as
 - continuing to have additional support staff and outside professionals available to students,
 - making additional resources available to teachers who will be dealing with student reactions,
 - providing a list of suggested readings to teachers, parent, and students
 - amending crisis response procedures as necessary,
 - supporting the hospital's policy for visitation to victims' rooms,
 - writing thank-you notes to out-of-building district and community resource people who provided (or are still providing) support during a crisis, and
 - being alert on crisis anniversaries and holidays. Often students will experience an "anniversary" grief reaction the following month or year on the date of the crisis, or when similar crises occur that reminds them of the original crisis. Holidays are often difficult for students who have experienced loss.
 - After one week, consider raising the flag back to full mast. Remove the flowers, cards, displays, etc., to get building back to normal.

DETERMINING THE FACTS OF THE CRISIS

- The person with a first-hand source of information about the crisis is not to repeat it elsewhere in the school. This information needs to be verified and designated by school administrator. If there is concern regarding the reporting person in the office, have said person come to the office until appropriate steps are taken.
- Office staff members are not to repeat or give information within or outside the school unless specifically instructed to do so. They are to direct inquiries to an administrator or designee until told otherwise. In schools using student office help, only adults should answer the phone for the remainder of the day.
- Verification is very important. In case of a reported student death, verify the reported incident by calling the police or coroner. **DO NOT DISTURB THE VICTIM'S FAMILY.** Give everyone the facts as quickly as possible to dispel rumors.
- NOTE: The timing of the notification of a crisis may alter the order of the initial steps taken.
- The following questions will help the administrator anticipate the amount of emotional trauma:
 - Was the person a long-time popular member of the school?
 - What happened?
 - Murder and suicide are unexpected and violent, and thus more difficult to deal with than, for example, a death from a long-term serious illness.
 - Where did the death occur?
 - A death that occurs on school grounds is more difficult to deal with than one that does not. It is important to find out who witnessed the death and provide them with counseling. Students may also express concerns with personal safety.
 - What other tragedies have impacted this school recently?
 - If the person believed to be responsible for the death is also a member of your school community, emotions may run higher.

GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA RELATIONS

- The print and broadcast media have the responsibility to accurately and fairly report noteworthy events, including those that occur in your school district. This includes any event that significantly impacts the schools and communities that the school serves. These events will include such “crises” as the violent death of a teacher or student, a shooting near campus, or a man-made or natural disaster. You must prepare for the media before a crisis occurs.
- Your cooperation with the press is both desirable and necessary to ensure the story gets told as completely and accurately as possible.
- If you or your designated spokesperson do not help media representatives, they will turn to less reliable sources who do not have all the facts. Your goal is to ally the media as an educational and information tool in communicating the situation and the efforts of the district.
- The overall accuracy and completeness of media coverage depends in a large degree upon getting the maximum amount of information out to the media—and thus to the public—as rapidly as possible. Emphasize and strongly encourage parents, students, and staff that they can say “NO” to an interview.
- If media makes reporting errors, the spokesperson should name the specific reporting agency in correcting the facts.
- General principles that can positively affect your actions and communication in a crisis situation:
 - Bring the situation under control if possible. Always protect people first and property second.
 - Analyze the situation to judge its newsworthiness. Don’t create a crisis jumping the gun. Many times the situation doesn’t warrant media attention.
 - Act quickly to distribute the information you determine the media and others should have.
 - Before the crisis, prepare a one-page handout with basic information about each building and the school district in general.
 - Set the ground rules for the media.
 - Have a pre-assigned place for media to meet when an event occurs.
 - If space is limited, consider asking the media to arrange pool coverage.
 - Appoint someone to be spokesperson for the district who has these attributes:
 - Comfortable before the camera
 - Knowledgeable with subject matter
 - Smart enough to know when to refer a question
 - Able to think on his/her feet
 - Familiar with district
 - Areas for school spokesperson to avoid
 - Speculation as to the cause of the incident
 - Allocation of blame
 - Gather the facts—who, what, where, when, why, how, and what’s next.

- Give the media as much information as possible to avoid inaccurate information from other sources.
- Be truthful.
- Never answer “no comment” as that can imply a lack of cooperation, a lack of concern, or an attempt to hide something.
- If you won’t comment on the situation, you can be sure someone else will.
- Never go “off the record”. Most reporters respect an “off the record” comment and will not quote you, but they will get the information to someone else.
- A reporter’s job is to get the story and to provide reliable information to their audience.
- Remain open and accessible.
- Keep no secrets from the public.
- Report your own bad news. Don’t allow another source to inform the media first.
- Conduct frequent news conference with media representatives.
- More appropriate responses are:
 - “I’m not the authority on the subject. Let me have our Mrs. Jones call you right back.”
 - “All our efforts are directed at bringing the situation under control, so I’m not going to speculate on the cause.”

REMEMBER:

Trust is the bedrock of the relationship between the press and the community

MEMORIALS AND FUNERALS

- Funerals should not be held on the school premises.
- Memorials are not recommended to be built on school premises.
- Banquets, dinners, or assemblies shall not be held to honor a student death, either at the time of death or an anniversary.
- A monetary donation to a general scholarship fund may be accepted in place of a memorial.

STAFF MEETING I

A facilitator from the Crisis Team must do the following at the first staff meeting during a crisis:

- Review facts of crisis and dispel rumors.
- Help staff members process their responses to a situation.
- Describe the feelings that students may experience and suggest how teachers might handle specific situations.

- Provide guidelines for helping students who are upset.
- Encourage teachers to allow for expressions of grief, anger, etc., in the homeroom or class in which the announcement is received or in other classes throughout the day. Emphasize the acceptability/normalcy of range of expressions. The guiding principle is to return to normal as soon as possible within each class and within the school. The structure of routing provides security and comfort to all members of the school community.
- Encourage staff to dispel rumors whenever possible and discourage any glorification of the event (especially in suicidal death).
- Request staff to meet 30 minutes early the next school day to review procedures plan for the day.

STAFF MEETING II

- Assign a strong team in the class where the tragedy occurred, or in the classes where the student(s) was in attendance.
- Determine the need for law enforcement personnel, if any, and their location for that day.
- Questions to be considered in classroom discussion include the following: Are students sleeping? Eating? This may determine the level of stress they are experiencing.
- Provide stress reduction techniques to the teachers to share with the students.
- Prepare the students for the injured returning or visiting the school.
- Encourage the teachers to put structure back into the classroom.
- Place the “high risk” students and teachers on a list so they may be followed.
- Set up regular meetings with teachers and staff.
- Stick to the program schedule that will be provided, and have the teachers offer the grief activities.
- In case of death, provide funeral/visitation information/procedures.

DEBRIEFING FORMAT FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

- Daily review of intervention process and events of the day.
- Ensure that key school personnel attend debriefing.
- Review status of referred students and staff that needed follow up attention.
- Identify and prioritize needs for the following day.
- Provide opportunities for the staff to express feelings and request support.

DEBRIEFING/WRAP-UP FOR CRISIS TEAM

- Brainstorm ways to meet identified needs.
- Provide mutual support.
- Write a detailed summary report of events of the day to present to administrators.

THE INTERVIEW INTERVENTION

The goal of the interview is not only to identify the immediate effects of the trauma but also to assist the student in the mastery of the traumatic experience and help the student with general solutions to the problem. In some cases, a single interview may be the only intervention needed. In other cases, further services may be warranted, i.e. counseling, referral to community agencies.

Children have different skills for dealing with information and reacting to events, depending on their age and developmental level. Counseling with younger children requires involvement and use of nonverbal material and very directive ways to elicit and reflect feelings. Frequently, facts and fantasy are intermingled, and young children have difficulty acknowledging a crisis. With adolescents, however, a discussion format can be possible as a means to focus on problem-solving and crisis-coping skills.

The Interview Risk Screening form provides a “mental checklist” on essential information to obtain during the student interview.

Students who need further assessment or more in-depth intervention should be referred to school personnel who hold credentials and/or licenses to provide counseling services to students or should be referred to a community agency. It is district policy to obtain written parental consent prior to the delivery of ongoing counseling services.

MELBOURNE SCHOOL DISTRICT INTERVIEW RISK SCREENING

Name _____ M___ F___ Date _____

Referred by: _____

Language: English _____ Spanish _____ Other: _____

Interviewed by: _____

INTERVIEW OUTLINE (Ask for details, clarifications of thoughts and feelings)

- Degree of Risk? _____
- Where were you when the event occurred? _____
- What did you see and/or hear? _____

- How do you feel now? _____

- How well do you know the victim(s)? _____

- Have you or any of your family had a similar experience? _____

- How do you think this will affect your family? _____

- Do you think your life will be different now? If yes, in what way(s)? _____

- Do you think you could have done anything to prevent this incident? _____

- What are you angry/guilty about? _____

- What is bothering you now? _____

- Has there been any changes in your life/daily routine because of the event? _____

- What is the most pressing problem for you right now? _____

PLAN OF ACTION

- What has worked for you in the past when there has been a problem? _____

- What is the problem you would like to work on at this time? _____

- What is the first step you can take? _____

- Who would you like to help you? _____ Who can you talk
 to in your family? _____ In your circle of friends? _____

- What will you do when you leave school today? _____

- Would you like to talk again? _____

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Colored Card System Will Be Utilized As Appropriate IN ALL SITUATIONS:

- RED: Place on exterior window and slide under door/hold up at evacuation site to signify situation requiring immediate attention.
- YELLOW: Place on exterior window and slide under door/hold up at evacuation site ONLY to signify missing or additional students.
- GREEN: Place on exterior window and slide under door/hold up at evacuation site to signify no immediate attention is required.

ONLY School Resource Officer Jaden Whitfield or a school administrator (Dennis Sublett, Jim Carroll, Kelly Don Webb, Lori Loggains, Steven Chaney, Amanda Bledsoe) will be in charge of contacting the Sherriff's Office or dialing 911 for these emergencies.

LOCKDOWN:

- Critical Situation Inside/Outside of the Building
- Announcement- "Lock all doors—Situation Inside (Outside)"
- Lock interior/exterior doors. Staff members with lockdown assignments will check assigned doors and rooms
- Instructions for further communication will be announced.
- Inside Situation Only– Students outside building should be evacuated off site.
- Teachers will close blinds and windows and will cover interior windows.
- Students will be directed to sit in the floor away from windows. NO ONE will enter rooms without authorization from law enforcement or administrators.
- Barricade rooms and wait for further instructions.

EARTHQUAKE:

- Inside Procedure:
 - Drop, Cover, Hold
 - Stay Inside: Do NOT go immediately outside.
 - Take cover under sturdy table, desk, chair, supported doorway, or along an inside wall.
 - Have students hold desk/chair legs for security.
 - Students should use severe weather kneeling position if unable to get under table, desk, etc. Remember to cover head with book or book bag.
 - Strive to stay clear of potential DANGER zones.
 - Once shaking and movement has ceased, move outside quickly.
- Outside Procedure:
 - Stay outside. Do NOT go inside.
 - Move away from buildings, trees, and utility wires.
 - Do NOT run. Sit/lie down and cover head.

FIRE:

- Alarm will sound.
- Evacuate building to pre-designated locations or closest to location.
- Take attendance.
- Wait for further instructions.

SEVERE WEATHER/TORNADO:

- Alarm will sound or announcement will be made over intercom system.
- Evacuate to safe room or pre-designated locations.
- Take attendance.
- Wait for all clear announcement.
 - Bearkatz Academy – Take shelter in classroom bathrooms or big room.
 - MES –
 - MHS – Take shelter under the gymnasium bleachers.

BOMB THREAT:

- INSTRUCTIONS WILL INCLUDE “DO NOT USE CELL PHONE” - Student Cell Phones MUST Be Taken Up.
- Individual Classrooms will be notified by word of mouth, note, or e-mail. The alarm will NOT sound.
- Evacuations will be at least 300 feet from vehicles and buildings, preferably the back of the building away from parking lots.
- As teachers are preparing students for evacuation, visually survey room for suspicious packages or materials. Do not touch any suspicious items. Report them immediately to the office.
- If evacuation procedures are implemented, take attendance before leaving classroom AND at evacuation site.
- Wait for further instructions.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

- Announcement- “Hazardous Materials Situation—Secure the Building.”
- Lock exterior doors, close outside windows and blinds.
- Keep students in classrooms. Students outside building should be evacuated off site.
- Teachers will be advised if exterior doors/windows need to be sealed with duct tape.
- Wait for further Instructions.

In all emergency/evacuation situations, teachers should be the last ones out of the room, so that they can visually inspect the room for anything unusual or out of place.

AIRPORT CRISIS:

- Considering MES and MHS are in close location to the airport, there is always a possibility of an incident on or close to these campuses.
- These kinds of incidents will probably fall under the Hazardous Materials, Severe Weather, or Earthquake procedures. Follow protocol as announced via administration.

GENERAL MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:

- Remain calm.
- Contact administrator of building and school nurse.
- Give accurate and complete information about the emergency.
 - Where are you?
 - Who is in need of assistance?
 - What type medical problem is it?
 - Is the subject conscious or unconscious?

FINAL NOTES:

- Simply be aware of your surroundings!
- Remember most crisis situations are unexpected and evolving!
- There is no one perfect answer to prevent a crisis, but in the event of a serious situation be ready to evolve with it!
- Utilize mental scenarios. What If?????????
- To be a warrior you must first prepare! Don't be a victim!

SHELTER IN PLACE

All campuses have posted fire escape routes signaling designated meeting places in the event of evacuation due to fire.

The following locations will be used as safety zones in the event of a tornado or severe weather event:

- Bearkatz Academy – If time allows, students may be transported to the tornado shelter on campus. Otherwise, all students will be placed in the bathroom nearest their classroom.
- Melbourne Elementary School – Kindergarten through 3rd grade will be placed in the Music classroom, and 4th – 6th grades will be placed in the Counselor's classroom as these are both safe shelter rooms.
- Melbourne High School – Students will be placed under the bleachers in the high school gymnasium.

In the event of an evacuation from the buildings regularly in use, the following areas will be used:

- Bearkatz Academy – Bearkatz Academy Cafeteria. If this area has been compromised, students will be bused to Melbourne Elementary Cafeteria.
- Melbourne Elementary School – MHS Cafeteria. If this area has been compromised, students will be bused to Bearkatz Academy Cafeteria.
- Melbourne High School – MES Cafeteria. If this area has been compromised, students will be bused to Bearkatz Academy Cafeteria.