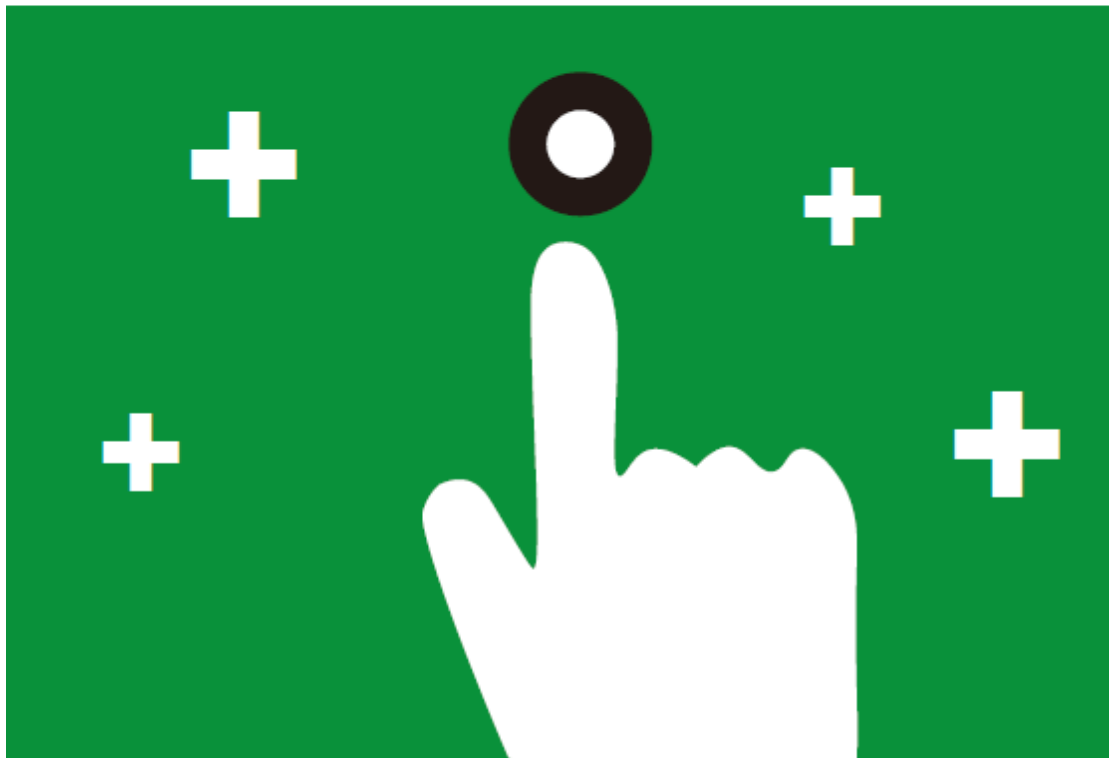


SCHOOL CRISIS MANAGEMENT:

**Handbook of aftermath intervention and psychological support
(Applicable to injury and death of students and staff)**



**Educational Psychology Service (Kowloon 1) Section
Special Educational Division
Education Bureau
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Preface

Crisis management is a challenging task. In order to stay calm in critical situations, we should always be well prepared. The Education Bureau (EDB, the then Education and Manpower Bureau) issued the Ebook on School Crisis Management in April 2005, which provided the education sector and relevant professionals references on crisis management and support. Based on the experiences that the EDB and relevant professionals accumulated over the years in assisting schools in managing crises, as well as the continuous development in the research and studies relating to school crisis management, we have enriched the Ebook on School Crisis Management and published this School Crisis Management: Handbook of aftermath intervention and psychological support. It aims at facilitating schools to match the needs of students, staff, parents and schools with appropriate crisis management and psychological support, with a view to helping these individuals overcome crises and the schools resume normal routine. For immediate handling of accidents or emergency situations, please refer to the related parts of the School Administration Guide. For management of students' suicidal behaviours, please refer to the Resource Handbook for Schools: Detecting, Supporting and Making Referral for Students with Suicidal Behaviours at the following link:

Mental Health @ School Homepage > Early Identification at the Selective Level >
Early Support for At-risk Students

https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/teacher/prevention-of-student-suicides/Resource_Handbook_for_Schools_En.pdf

Chapter 1 of this handbook introduces the basic principles of school crisis management and the arrangement of psychological support. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the establishment, operation and preparatory work of the School Crisis Management Team. Chapter 3 elaborates on the assessment, intervention and support measures which should be carried out following crisis incidents. Relevant forms and templates are included in the Annexes for schools' reference and use.

Schools are encouraged to make reference to this handbook and, when necessary, make appropriate modifications and adjustments according to schools' needs, and formulate support plans for various types of crisis. Before the occurrence of crisis incidents, schools should familiarise themselves with the crisis management and support procedures, as well as the actual operational details that require due attention. Schools are also advised to organise regular

staff training and drills so as to equip staff with the knowledge and skills to help schools get through crises.

Chapter One: Introduction

1. Definition of a Crisis

In the wake of a crisis, an individual's resilience is compromised in a way that the usual coping strategies are inadequate to deal with the threat.

Events that might precipitate a crisis in schools include suicide or self-harm behaviours, sudden or accidental death and critical injury of a student or staff, as well as violent incidents and natural disasters. These incidents may bring chaos to a school and threaten its stability, making students and staff feel threatened, upset, insecure, helpless, etc. Besides, rumours often spread after crisis incidents while subjective and arbitrary remarks may further traumatise students and staff. In the meantime, the school concerned often has to provide information to different stakeholders. All of the above situations may induce great pressure on the school administration system. Schools should implement contingency measures to minimise the negative impacts of the incident.

2. Assessing the Impact of the Crisis Incident on Students and Staff

It is the interaction effects of various factors rather than a single factor that determine the impact of the crisis incident on people. The factors can be grouped into two categories (a) **the characteristics of the crisis incident** and (b) **the personal risk factors**. We also need to understand the responses of students and staff to assess the impact of the crisis on them.

The characteristics of a crisis incident can include the predictability, duration, intensity and consequences of the crisis incident. Generally speaking, crisis incidents that happen unexpectedly, persist for a long time and cause deaths/serious injuries may be perceived as threatening to most people. The estimated degree of impact is also affected by **personal risk factors** which include physical proximity, emotional proximity and personal vulnerabilities. Generally speaking, individuals who have witnessed the crisis or stayed at the scene, individuals who have a closer relationship with the victim, individuals with mental health problems, or individuals with less social support and weak coping skills could be more affected by the incident (Brock, 2011). Schools can assess the psychological and emotional impact of the incident on students and staff with reference to Annex 4 and determine the appropriate support measures for them. For details of support plans and measures, schools can refer to Chapter 3 of this handbook.

3. Basic Principles of Crisis Management and Psychological Support

When facing a crisis, it is common for students and staff to have various emotional, cognitive, physiological, social and behavioural reactions e.g. feeling upset, difficulty in concentration, feeling fatigued, having poor appetite, etc (See Reference 1A, 1B, 1C). In most situations, these reactions subside after a few days or weeks as a process of natural recovery. In the initial stage after the crisis, basic support includes assisting the affected students and staff to clarify facts of the crisis incident and cope with the crisis impact. Teachers or school counsellors should provide appropriate **psychoeducation**, for example teaching coping strategies, and **strengthen their social support system**, for example the support from families, teachers and friends.

However, some students and staff may be more severely affected, such as experiencing persistent difficulty in falling asleep, frequent nightmares, or repeated flashbacks of the incident to the extent that their daily life is affected (See Reference 1D). Therefore, schools need to keep observing and assessing the needs of students and staff. Group or individual counselling may also be provided as deemed necessary to help them relieve their distress and resume normal life.

There are multiple factors determining the crisis impact on students and staff, including the **characteristics of the crisis incident, relationship with the victim, individual's coping skills**, etc. Facing the same crisis incident, different people will be affected to a varying degree. Inappropriate intervention or providing the same mode/ level of support for individuals with different degrees of impact may affect their natural recovery process. On the other hand, the lack of timely/ appropriate support to those in need may delay their recovery process. Therefore, it is important to assess the crisis impact on different students and staff to identify individuals in need and provide them with appropriate support.

In addition, the crisis impact on students and staff may change over time. Schools need to **keep observing and assessing the needs** of individuals at different periods (e.g. a few hours, a few days and a few weeks after the crisis incident) and arrange appropriate support accordingly.

Overall, schools should have adequate preparation to accurately assess the impact of the incident on students and staff, so that timely and appropriate intervention and support can be rendered in time of a crisis.

Chapter Two: The School Crisis Management Team

1. Objectives and Functions of the School Crisis Management Team

According to the “School Administration Guide”, schools have to set up the School Crisis Management Team (SCMT) to establish mechanisms for effective handling of crises and formulate relevant procedures and contingency plans for any potential crises and emergency situations. When a crisis incident takes place, the SCMT is also responsible for coordinating and deploying both internal and external resources, to arrange timely and appropriate psychological support, with a view to minimise the impact of the incident on the school and its students and staff. This chapter provides an overview of the objectives and functions of the SCMT:

I. Objectives of the School Crisis Management Team

- **Safety:** to ensure the safety of all students and staff.
- **Stability:** to re-establish stability of the school routines as soon as possible.
- **Information Dissemination:** to ensure the consistency of information in and outside school and to eliminate the spread of rumours, so as to avoid causing unnecessary distress to students and staff.
- **Identification:** to identify at-risk students and staff for referral to appropriate counselling and follow-up services.
- **Emotional Support:** to provide emotional support to students and staff in distress and help them readjust to their lives.
- **Empowerment:** to enhance the personal growth of students and staff through effective coping with the incident.

II. Functions of the School Crisis Management Team

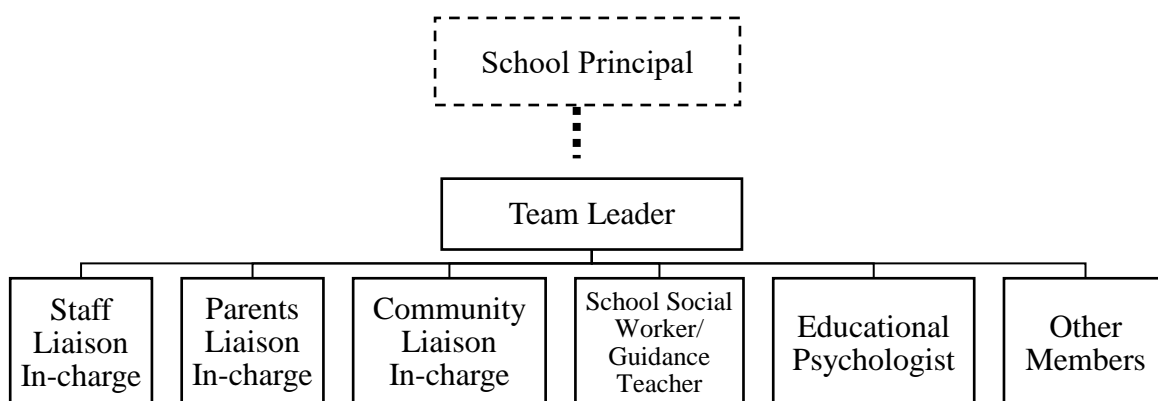
- Formulate a crisis management support plan;
- Assess the impact of the crisis incident on the school;
- Collect and disseminate updated information of the crisis incident and make clarification when necessary;
- Coordinate internal and external resources, and provide timely and appropriate intervention and support;
- Provide support to teachers, students and parents;
- Monitor the progress of crisis management;

- Evaluate the crisis management support plan;
- Coordinate all the follow-up work.

2. Composition of the School Crisis Management Team

The school principal should play a leading and monitoring role in crisis management. He/she has to assign tasks appropriately, have a good grasp of the progress of intervention and handle external enquiries. As the school principal may have to make multiple important decisions within a short period, he/she should reserve adequate time for oneself. We recommend that the team leader of the SCMT to be someone at the school management level, e.g. the vice-principal, or a senior teacher who is familiar with the overall operations of the school. The team leader needs to lead the SCMT and keep close contact with the school principal for making relevant important decisions. Schools should select suitable teachers to work with the team leader. They will be responsible for supporting the staff, communicating with parents, and liaising with supporting agencies etc. School social workers and educational psychologists are required to be members of the team, providing professional advices, support and follow-up services according to the nature of crisis. Schools should nominate at least one or two staff members to join the team as back-up support, so as to enhance the team’s operational flexibility and capabilities in handling crises.

Composition of the SCMT:



3. Members of the School Crisis Management Team

Schools could consider the following factors for selecting appropriate staff to be members of the SCMT:

- Does he/she have the trust of the students and staff?
- Does he/she have the ability to analyse problems and make rational decisions in urgent situations?
- Is he/she equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills related to crisis management?
- Is he/she sensitive to the feelings and needs of others?

4. Roles and Duties of the Members of the School Crisis Management Team

I. Team Leader

Roles:

- Lead the team members to formulate a crisis management support plan;
- Make important decisions relating to the crisis management;
- Oversee and coordinate actions relating to the crisis management.

Duties:

- Verify information from relevant parties (e.g. the number of casualties, the severity of injuries or condition of students);
- Maintain close contact with the school principal and consult his/her advice;
- Seek support from the EDB and/or relevant government departments/other organisations;
- Gather the members of the SCMT and activate the crisis management procedures;
- Consult the staff liaison in-charge about the support to staff;
- Consult the parents liaison in-charge about the support to parents;
- Coordinate responses to the media, assign a spokesperson to disseminate information to and answer enquires from the public;
- Conduct an evaluation meeting of the crisis management and support plan after the crisis is settled.

II. Staff Liaison In-charge

Roles:

Coordinate the support to staff

Duties:

- Establish a phone contact group so that information can be disseminated as soon as possible after a crisis has occurred (e.g. basic information on the crisis incident, arrangements for emergency meetings, etc.);
- Arrange and assist the school principal in conducting the Staff Meeting;
- Keep staff informed of the latest situation of the crisis incident;
- Coordinate the implementation of Brief Class Meeting(s) or Special Class Period(s), including:
 - arrange manpower to support class teachers who need assistance;
 - prepare and distribute materials for use in Brief Class Meeting(s) or Special Class Period(s);
 - oversee the implementation of Brief Class Meeting(s) and/or Special Class Period(s) and provide immediate assistance when necessary.

III. Parents Liaison In-charge**Roles:**

- Coordinate the support to the victim's family;
- Coordinate communication with other parents.

Duties:

- Contact and offer support to the victim's family;
- Contact parents of students affected by the incident;
- Prepare and distribute the Letter to Parents;
- Arrange a spokesperson to answer parents' enquiries and conduct Parent Meetings if necessary.

IV. Community Liaison In-charge**Roles:**

- Coordinate external resources to provide support to the school, staff and students.

Duties:

- Maintain an updated list of community resources, including a directory of support and services (Annex 1);
- Familiarise himself/herself with the referral procedures and services offered by different agencies in the community;

- Discuss with team members to see if external support is needed;
- Make/assist in making referrals for students, staff or parents in need of external support services;
- Keep contact with the related agencies after referrals, so that assistance and follow-up support can be provided at school.

V. School Social Worker/Guidance Teacher

Roles:

- Support the school in crisis management, especially in rendering counselling/guidance to students, staff and parents.

Duties:

- Work together with external support personnel to arrange or provide counselling to students and staff in need, and make referrals for appropriate follow-ups when necessary;
- Assist teachers in conducting Brief Class Meeting(s) or Special Class Period(s);
- Provide emotional support to staff;
- Provide emotional support to parents;
- Arrange practical support to the victim's family, e.g. applying for financial subsidy.

VI. Educational Psychologist

Roles:

- Provide professional advice and support on school crisis management.

Duties:

- Provide professional advice and support to the school on the impact assessment of the crisis, formulation of the support plan and communication with external parties;
- Support teachers in conducting Brief Class Meeting(s) or Special Class Period(s);
- Provide individual or group counselling to students and assist the school in arranging appropriate follow-up services;
- Provide emotional support to staff.

VII. Other Team Members

Roles:

- Share the duties in rendering support related to crisis management.

Duties:

- Designate rooms for different uses and inform the staff concerned of the arrangement (Annex 2);
- Assist class teachers in conducting Brief Class Meeting(s) or Special Class Period(s);
- Assist in preparing and distributing materials for use in Brief Class Meeting(s) or Special Class Period(s);
- Familiarise themselves with all procedures and the locations of relevant materials/forms, and provide the materials to other members promptly when necessary;
- Provide secretarial support, e.g. taking minutes, collecting and compiling relevant information, and drafting relevant letters and notices;
- Assist other team members with their duties when necessary.

5. Preparatory Work for School Crisis Management

Apart from setting up a SCMT, schools should provide training for all staff members to acquire and consolidate knowledge and skills in crisis management. The SCMT should also update relevant reference materials regularly for use by the staff. Schools can make reference to the templates and forms in the Annexes of this handbook:

I. Preparatory Work for School Crisis Management

Annex 1: Directory of Support and Services

Annex 2: Designated Use of Rooms

II. School Crisis Management Team Meeting

Annex 3: Agenda for School Crisis Management Team Meeting

Annex 4: Initial Impact Assessment for Students and Staff

III. Support to Staff

Annex 5: Agenda for Staff Meeting

Annex 6: Reminders for Teachers

Annex 7: Content of Emotional Support Group for Staff

IV. Support to Students

Annex 8: Announcement to Students (Sample 1)

Annex 9: Announcement to Students (Sample 2)

Annex 10: Content of Brief Class Meeting

Annex 11: Content of Special Class Period

Annex 12: Brief Class Meeting/Special Class Period: Teachers' Feedback Form

Annex 13: Content of Group Counselling for Students

Annex 14: Content of Individual Counselling for Students

V. Support to Parents

Annex 15: Special Notice to Parents (Sample 1)

Annex 16: Special Notice to Parents (Sample 2)

Annex 17: Content of Parent Meeting

VI. Handling the Media

Annex 18: Press Release Sample

VII. Evaluation of Crisis Management

Annex 19: Agenda for Crisis Management Evaluation Meeting

Annex 20: Crisis Management and Support Measures Evaluation Questionnaire

Chapter Three: School Crisis Management and Psychological Support

1. Coordination and Division of Work in School Crisis Management

It is essential for schools to coordinate the required crisis management measures systematically, coordinate staff effectively and deploy manpower when necessary for assisting students and staff to tide over crises. Schools should specify the roles and responsibilities of each member of the SCMT in accordance with the manpower allocation and the expertise of the team members, and pay attention to the coordination between each member for effective crisis management and support. Schools may refer to “An Overview of Crisis Management and Psychological Support: Tasks and Persons Responsible” set out below for the allocation of tasks among the SCMT members.

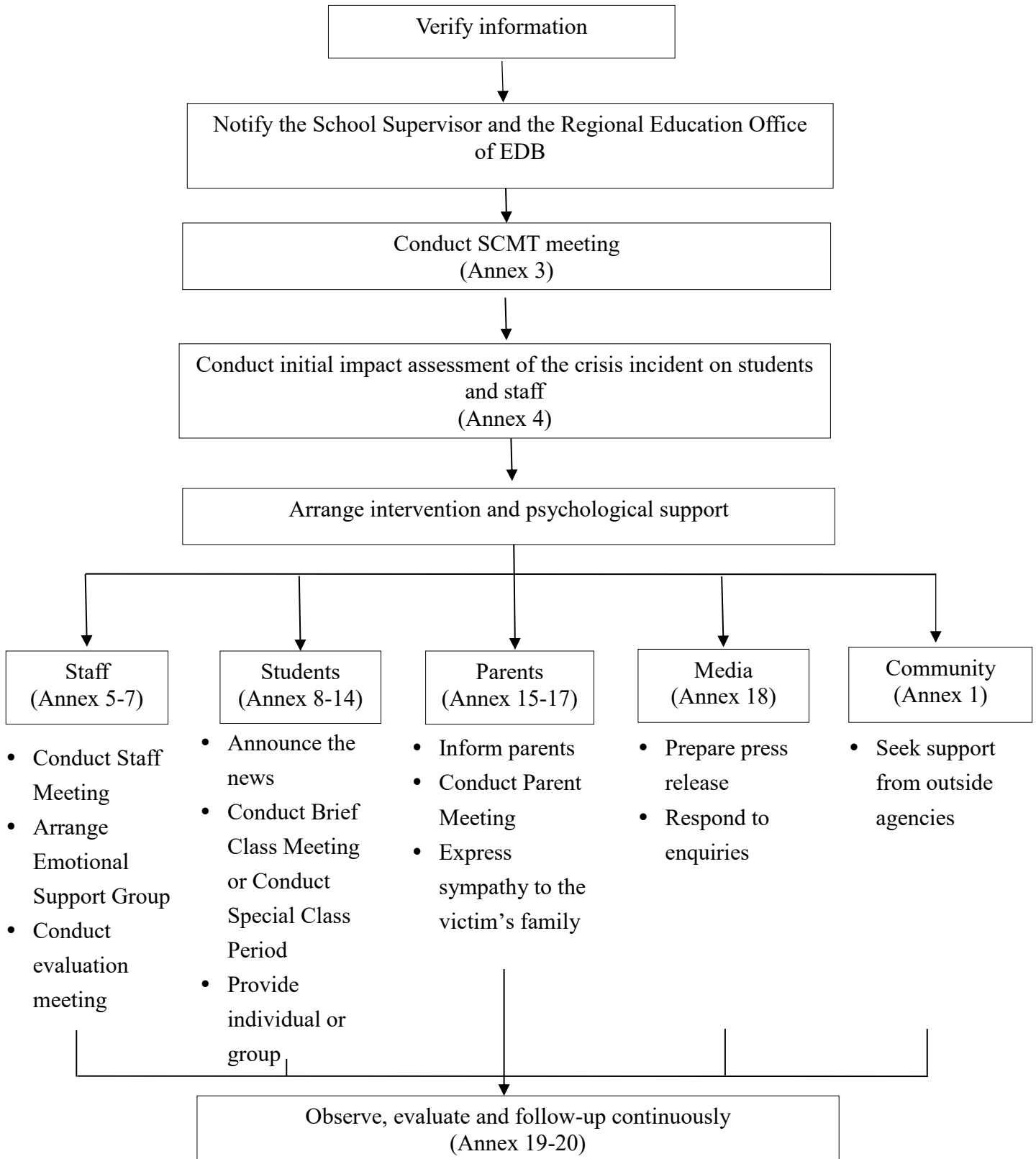
2. An Overview of Crisis Management and Psychological Support: Tasks and Persons Responsible

	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Other Assisting Members
I	Verify information	SCMT leader	Teacher(s) whom the victim(s) is/are close to
II	Notify the School Supervisor and the Regional Education Office of EDB	School principal	
III	Conduct SCMT meeting	SCMT leader	School principal, SCMT members
IV	Liaise with outside agencies for support	Community liaison in-charge, school social worker, guidance teachers	Staff concerned
V	Support to staff		
	1. Conduct Staff Meeting	Staff liaison in-charge, school principal	SCMT members
	2. Conduct Emotional Support Group for Staff	Guidance Master, staff liaison in-charge	School social worker, educational psychologist
VI	Support to students		
	1. Make announcement to students	School principal, class teachers	
	2. Conduct Brief Class Meeting	Class teachers, staff liaison in-charge	School social worker, guidance teachers, educational psychologist

	3. Conduct Special Class Period	Class teachers, staff liaison in-charge	School social worker, guidance teachers, educational psychologist
	4. Provide additional/enhanced support to students and staff in need	School social worker	Guidance teachers, educational psychologist
VII	Support to parents		
	1. Inform parents	Parent liaison in-charge	School social worker, guidance teachers, class teachers
	2. Conduct Parent Meeting	Parent liaison in-charge	School principal, guidance teachers, school social worker
	3. Express sympathy to the family of the victim	Parent liaison in-charge	School principal, class teacher, school social worker, guidance teachers
VIII	Handling crisis during long school holidays	School principal, SCMT leader, class teachers, staff liaison in-charge	School social worker, guidance teachers, parent liaison in-charge, educational psychologist
IX	Participating in memorial activities and funeral	Class teachers, staff liaison in-charge	
X	Handling the media	Spokesperson delegated by the school	SCMT Leader
XI	Evaluation of crisis management		
	Conduct an evaluation meeting	SCMT Leader	School principal, SCMT members
XII	School's follow-up arrangement	School principal, guidance master, staff liaison in-charge	School social worker, guidance teachers, educational psychologist

3. The Flow Chart of Crisis Management/Intervention and Support

Schools should make necessary adaptation to the steps of crisis management and support, depending on the characteristics, severity and actual circumstances of individual incident. Schools can also download and make necessary adaptation to the templates, forms and reference materials set out in the Annexes of this handbook based on their needs.



When a crisis incident takes place, schools should adopt appropriate measures immediately to ensure the safety of students and staff. For example, students and staff should be provided with a safe environment. If necessary, they should be removed from the scene or adjustments should be made to the school routine to minimise the opportunities of witnessing the scene and protect them from harm. Other examples of immediate safety measures include providing food or water to meet their basic needs, and arranging medical care according to individual circumstances.

I. Verifying Information

When a school is informed of a crisis incident, the school concerned should gather basic information of the incident (e.g. persons involved, the time and location of the incident etc.) from reliable sources such as parents of the student concerned, medical or police officers. Schools must verify the information, which will serve as the basis for the crisis' initial impact assessment and the reference for follow-up actions.

II. Notifying the School Supervisor and the Regional Education Office of the Education Bureau

The school principal should notify the School Supervisor or the designated person-in-charge of the school sponsoring body, as well as other management staff if necessary, of the incident. The Regional Education Office of EDB should also be notified as soon as possible so that the EDB can arrange appropriate support, e.g. assisting the school in responding to media enquiries.

III. Conducting a School Crisis Management Team Meeting

After collecting the details of the incident, the school should contact the educational psychologist, and conduct a SCMT meeting as soon as possible (Annex 3). The purpose of the meeting is to inform team members of the incident and clarify the accuracy of information obtained from different sources. The school should gather the concerned student's background information for assessing the impact of the incident on various students and staff members. The school should also address the emotional reactions of the team members during the meeting and ensure that all members are able to carry out different crisis management tasks. The team should draw up a crisis management support plan which includes the implementation schedule, procedures, division of labour, etc.

Agenda for School Crisis Management Team Meeting

1. Verify and update the details of the crisis incident
2. Conduct an initial impact assessment and identify at-risk students and staff (Annex 4)
3. Assess if external support or community resources are needed
4. Determine the scale, scope and target groups of support, and arrange the division of labour
 - Handle enquiries from the media (refer to p.48-49)
 - Handle enquiries from the police
 - Handle enquiries from parents and the public
 - Prepare scripts for information dissemination (Annex 8-9)
 - for the school principal or class teachers to make announcement to students
 - for staff to respond to enquiries
 - Discuss the support format for students
 - Decide on the targets of announcement (e.g. informing all students or only the affected classes)
 - Decide on the format of announcement (e.g. announcement made by class teachers in each class)
 - Arrange Brief Class Meeting or Special Class Period for students according to the assessed needs
 - Arrange counselling services for students who are identified to be more affected by the incident
 - Arrange venues
 - Discuss support formats for staff or parents;
 - Prepare for the Staff Meeting (Annex 5)

Initial Impact Assessment for Students and Staff

(A) Basic information of the crisis incident

Date/Time/Location of the incident: _____

Brief Description of the incident: _____

Significant incident(s) preceding the incident: _____

Media coverage of the incident: _____

School's experience in handling similar incident: _____

(B) Background information of the victim (if applicable):

Name of victim: _____

Sex: _____ M / F (Please delete where appropriate)

Age: _____

Class: _____

Date of birth: _____

Home address: _____

Family background: _____

School performance:

- Academic: _____

- Social relationship: _____

- Extra-curricular activities: _____

Support services received: _____

(C) Identification of at-risk students and staff

The following questions can be used as reference to help identify at-risk students and staff. The impact of a crisis incident is determined by the interaction effects of various factors. Schools should consider the unique nature of each crisis incident when assessing the possible psychological and emotional disturbances incurred on students and staff and determining the corresponding intervention.

I. Physical Proximity

- Who witnessed the incident (e.g. witnessing the moment when the victim falling from height)?
- Who was/were present at the scene (e.g. witnessing the victim receiving first aid after the incident)?

Tips: The closer a person stays at the scene of the incident, the higher the risk of psychological trauma is. For instance, if a student saw a person falling from height or the student was present at the scene, the incident might have a greater impact on him/her.

(List out the at-risk class(es)/ group(s)/ student(s)/ staff)

II. Emotional Proximity

- Who had a close/special relationship with the victim?
- Who participated in the same activity or organisation as the victim did?

Tips: The closer the relationship the person has with the victim, e.g. best friends or family members, or having an unsatisfactory relationship with the victim, the higher the risk of psychological trauma he/she may have. For instance, if a beloved student died, the incident might have a greater impact on students/staff.

(List out the at-risk class(es)/ group(s)/ student(s)/ staff)

III. Personal Vulnerabilities

- Who experienced/ have been affected by a similar critical incident in recent years?
- Who experienced the loss of a significant person or other traumatic incidents in recent years?
- Who used to adopt a more positive (vs. negative) attitude to cope with critical incidents?
- Who could regulate their emotions more properly (vs. easily lose their emotional control)?
- Who could obtain more adequate (vs. less adequate) social and/ or family support?

Tips: The more the vulnerability factors a person has (e.g. having mental health problems, lacking social/ family support or having serious family problems), the higher the risk of psychological trauma he/she may have.

(List out the at-risk student(s)/ staff)

IV. Crisis Reactions (Reference 1A, 1B, 1C & 1D)

- Who exhibited excessive and intense emotional reactions (e.g. excessive fear, anxiety) or even displayed warning signs of psychiatric problems (e.g. severe depression, hallucination and delusion)?
- Who exhibited excessive and intense behavioural reactions (e.g. using brutal ways to ventilate anger or hurt oneself/others)?

(List out the at-risk student(s)/ staff)

Remarks:

1. A person who (1) is closer to the scene of the critical incident, (2) has a closer relationship with the victim, (3) has more personal vulnerability factors or (4) exhibits excessive and intense reactions may be at a higher risk of being affected by the incident. They may require additional support.
2. When a student/staff has some very vulnerable factors (e.g. suffering from mental illness) and/or exhibits excessive and intense emotional or behavioural reactions, even though he/she may not have witnessed the incident or have close relationship with the victim, schools should seek **immediate** advice from professionals (e.g. social workers, psychologists) to assess the impact and determine appropriate support measures.
3. The emotional, cognitive, physiological, social, and behavioural reactions of the at-risk students or staff may change over time. The school needs to **observe and assess their needs continuously** so that appropriate support can be offered.

IV. Liaising with Outside Agencies for Support

When a crisis incident takes place, schools should seek support from their school social workers immediately in providing counselling services to their students and staff. Schools may seek support and services from the EDB or educational psychologists when necessary. When the school assesses that a crisis incident may have a widespread impact on students and staff, additional support from outside agencies can be sought. For example, school social workers may mobilise other social workers of their serving organisation. There are also social service organisations that can provide psychological services to schools. Schools

should learn about the services from relevant organisations in advance, maintain a directory of support and services (Annex 1) and update the information regularly.

V. Support to Staff

a) Staff Meeting

As soon as a crisis management plan is drawn up, the school principal should conduct a Staff Meeting (Annex 5) to inform all staff of the situation; to clarify the accuracy of the information obtained; to answer staff's questions on the incident; to explain the support plan drawn up by the SCMT; and to revise the support plan according to staff opinions as appropriate. Details of the support plan must be finalised at the meeting, including the implementation schedule, procedures and division of labour. If any staff members are found to be emotionally distressed, the school principal may consider assigning other colleagues to carry out their duties. Assistance from school social workers or educational psychologists may also be sought to provide emotional support to them. Follow-up counselling services from outside agencies may be considered depending on the needs.

The objectives of the Staff Meeting are:

- to inform staff of the basic information and facts of the crisis incident;
- to answer queries from the staff and clear their doubts;
- to explain the common emotional reactions in response to a crisis incident and identify staff who are severely affected;
- to explain and finalise the support plan drawn up by the SCMT.

Annex 5

Agenda for Staff Meeting

1. Inform staff of the crisis incident and the school's stance
2. Clarify facts and answer queries
3. Provide emotional support to staff
 - Explain the possible emotional reactions they may exhibit and show understanding on their reactions;
 - Identify staff who are severely affected;
 - Inform staff of the follow-up support available (e.g. Emotional Support Group for Staff).
4. Revise and finalise the support plan:
 - Discuss the support plan drawn up by the SCMT; Finalise the implementation schedule, venues and persons-in-charge.

5. Explain the support work for students (e.g. Brief Class Meeting, Special Class Period)
 - Explain the content and key points;
 - Distribute relevant documents, e.g. “Reminders for Teachers” (Annex 6) and “How Should Teachers Respond to Students’ Possible Reactions towards a Crisis Incident” (Reference 2);
 - Provide assistance to teachers in need.

Annex 6

Reminders for Teachers

1. Obtain all relevant information as far as possible and take care of your own emotions before rendering support to students.
2. If you need additional support to assist you in managing students’ emotions, please inform the SCMT to make the arrangement.
3. Listen to students with patience and understanding. Accept different emotions and observe students’ emotions continuously.
4. Refer all media enquiries to the spokesperson of the school.
5. Make special arrangements and allow flexibility in the school routines if necessary, e.g. allow breaks for students during lessons or postpone tests.
6. Attend staff meetings and evaluation meetings to report and receive updated information.

b) Emotional Support Group for Staff

Emotional Support Group for Staff (Annex 7) may be organised for the affected staff at an appropriate time to help them ventilate their emotions. Follow-up support should be arranged for them after the group meeting when necessary. The Emotional Support Group for Staff can be led by a professional e.g. social worker or educational psychologist. Staff who are affected to a similar extent and/or share similar experiences should be arranged into the same group to ensure that appropriate support is provided.

The objectives of the Emotional Support Group for Staff are:

- to share with staff the basic information and facts of the crisis incident;
- to allow staff to share feelings and ventilate their emotions;
- to provide staff with psychoeducation and familiarise them with common crisis

reactions and warning signs indicating the need for further support (Reference 1C and 1D);

- to equip staff with the coping strategies and information on community services where they can get help from;
- to identify staff who need further evaluation and support; arrange referrals when necessary.

Annex 7

Content of Emotional Support Group for Staff

1. Introduce the content

- Self-introduction by the guidance personnel;
- Briefly introduce the purposes and ground rules (including the principles of confidentiality and mutual respect, etc.) of the group.

2. Provide concise information about the incident

- Report the verified facts gathered by the school;
- Clarify news that are untrue, e.g. information from newspapers and internet/social media;
- If the incident involves suicide, the guidance personnel should explain that the incident is under police investigation, and it is inappropriate to make any speculation. The guidance personnel should also point out that suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors and causal pathways. No single cause or stressor is sufficient to explain a suicidal act in most circumstances. At the same time, the guidance personnel should encourage the staff to seek help when needed.

3. Answer staff's queries

- Let staff ask questions. Avoid describing unnecessary or disturbing details when answering the questions;
- Only provide verified basic information and facts;
- Respond to staff's queries as far as possible. If the answers are uncertain, get back to the staff when the answers are confirmed.

4. Encourage staff to talk about their emotional, cognitive, physiological, social and behavioural reactions

- Find out about their reactions by asking the following (sample) questions:
 - “How is your sleep quality recently? How is your appetite?”
 - “Can you focus on your work recently?”
 - “What are your thoughts and feelings now?”
- Encourage staff to talk about their views and feelings **at the present moment**. Do not ask them to narrate or recall the process of the

incident that they personally experienced. If they start to talk about disturbing details, the guidance personnel should guide them to focus on sharing their reactions **at the present moment**.

5. Help the staff to understand the common reactions after a crisis incident and the warning signs that warrant additional support (Reference 1C, 1D)

- Help them to understand that unsettling emotions such as sadness, guilt, anger are common reactions;
- Help them realise that other people might also have similar experiences and reactions. They are not alone and they can offer mutual support (if applicable);
- Remind them to seek help when they have enduring or intense reactions.

6. Share appropriate coping strategies after crisis

- Encourage staff to share appropriate coping strategies (Reference 3)
 - “What would you do to comfort yourself when you feel emotionally disturbed?”
- Practise relaxation techniques or other related coping strategies (Reference 4) if needed;
- If the crisis incident involves suicidal behaviours, emphasise that committing suicide is not an appropriate strategy to solve problems.

7. Learn about staff’s social support network and ensure that they receive appropriate support

- Find out about their social support network by asking the following (sample) questions:
 - “How did your family react to this incident?”
 - “How did they talk about it with you?”
 - “If your negative emotions persist, whom would you talk to? How would you seek help?”
- Ensure that they can receive appropriate support
 - Tell them that you are willing to render support;
 - Help them identify their social support network, e.g. family members, friends, social worker/guidance teachers at school, so that they know where they can get help;
 - Encourage them to support each other, seek help from colleagues, related staff or social workers when they encounter emotional disturbance or great difficulties. If they notice colleagues who are experiencing emotional distress, they should discuss with the SCMT leader so that appropriate support and work arrangement can be offered for them;
 - Introduce community resources (e.g. mental health information and counseling services, etc.) ;
 - Identify staff who lack social support for further follow-up.

8. Find out about and observe staff's reactions, identify staff in need of additional follow-up and support

- Identify staff who show excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions (e.g. depressed mood, anger, blaming of self or others);
- If the incident involves suicide, be aware if there are staff who identify with the suicidal behaviour of the deceased;
- Refer those staff with intense emotional reactions to social workers or seek mental health/counseling services in the community if needed.

VI. Support to Students

Schools should analyse the needs of individual students, classes and groups based on the characteristics and actual circumstances of individual incidents, so as to evaluate the extent of impacts on students and thus formulate different tiers of support measures for them according to their level of needs. Different tiers of support and their target groups, focus of support and their corresponding formats are listed in the following table:

Tier of support	Target groups	Focus of support	Support format
General Support	Students in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To verify facts 	Announcements to Students
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To verify facts To reinforce social support network To identify students in need of additional support 	Brief Class Meeting
	Mildly affected students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To verify facts To reinforce social support network To identify students in need of additional support To provide psychoeducation 	Special Class Period
Additional Support	More affected students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To verify facts To reinforce social support network To identify students in need of enhanced support To provide psychoeducation To provide emotional counselling 	Group Counselling
Enhanced Support or Referral to Mental Health Services	Highly affected students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To verify facts To reinforce social support network To identify students in need of referral To provide psychoeducation To provide emotional counselling To formulate individual goals and plans 	Individual Counselling
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide professional assessment and psychological and / or medical treatment 	Referral

Attention: In order to render appropriate support to students at different points in time after the crisis (including the same day, a few days or a few weeks later), staff should continue to observe students' reactions and assess their needs, and provide appropriate support at different points in time.

i. General Support

a) Announcements to Students

When the preparation work of crisis management is completed, schools should inform students of the incident as soon as possible. Delayed announcement may cause unnecessary speculation and anxiety. Schools can decide on the appropriate target groups for announcement (e.g. all students or specific classes) in regard to the nature of the incident, actual circumstances, students' needs, etc. Schools should ensure that the information announced to students is accurate and consistent and students in need can receive appropriate support immediately. In most of the circumstances, class teachers can make the announcement to students in the classrooms, especially when suicide is involved or it is very likely that the incident may trigger strong emotional reactions among students, so that class teachers could observe students' response closely and provide support to students in need immediately. Please note the following when making an announcement:

- Keep it simple and direct, so that younger students can also understand the announcement;
- Provide adequate information (such as class and name of the victim) for students to identify the victim, so to facilitate the identification of students in need. If needed, the importance of such arrangement can be explained to the victim's parents;
- Briefly explain what actions the school is taking or going to take;
- Briefly introduce appropriate strategies to cope with the reactions brought by the crisis;
- If the incident involves death, the school principal can give a short memorial speech;
- If the incident involves suicide, the school should avoid describing the details of the suicidal behaviour to prevent unnecessary fear or imitative behaviour. While maintaining a non-judgmental attitude, schools should also avoid glorifying the incident. At the same time, schools should encourage students to face difficulties with positive attitudes and remind them to seek help when needed.

Announcement to Students (Sample 1)

We received a call from the police at 7:30 this morning and were notified that three of our S2A students were injured in a traffic accident while they were on the way to school. They have been sent to the hospital and are now in stable condition. We have expressed our concerns and offered our assistance to their families. The police are investigating the incident at the moment. We should not make any speculation or draw any conclusion on the incident at this stage.

The principal and teachers are deeply shocked and saddened by this unexpected incident. We understand that you may have different feelings after being informed about this. Some of you may feel very sad, some may feel disturbed or panicky, and some of you may not have any special feelings. You may recall this incident from time to time or may be unable to concentrate on your learning temporarily. All of these are common reactions.

The principal and teachers are very concerned about all of you. If you feel like talking about this incident with us, you may come to Room _____. Our school social workers or teachers are all ready to listen to your thoughts and feelings.

At last, I would like to take this opportunity to express our greatest sympathy for the students injured and their families and wish them speedy recovery.

Announcement to Students (Sample 2)

This morning we heard the extremely sad news that a boy was found lying unconsciously on the podium of his residential building. He was sent to a hospital and was subsequently certified dead.

After verification, he is Chan Tai Man, a student from class 5A of our school. We are all saddened by his death. The police are conducting an investigation at the moment. We should not make any speculation or draw any conclusion on the incident at this stage.

We understand that you may have different feelings after being informed about this. Some of you may feel very sad, some may feel disturbed or panicky, and some of you may not have any special feelings. You may recall this incident from time to time or may be unable to concentrate on your learning temporarily. All of these are common reactions.

We may encounter adversity in our life. When you feel stressed, we hope you adopt a positive attitude and seek help from others. You may also talk with your parents, social workers or teachers. If you want to talk to the school social workers or teachers regarding the incident, you may go to _____ (the venue). We are willing to listen to all your thoughts and feelings.

At last, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest sorrow and hope that his family members could settle their emotion soon. Let us close our eyes and offer a moment of silence for him.

b) Brief Class Meeting

Students may have doubts about the crisis after its occurrence. Therefore, schools may organise Brief Class Meeting to give them the basic information of the incident and answer their questions. By doing so, students can acknowledge the facts. The schools can minimise the speculation among students and continue to observe their emotional and behavioural reactions. Schools are advised to gather the accurate information of the crisis incident in advance so that the class teachers can answer students' questions during the Brief Class Meeting. In case of emotional disturbance of students, schools should evaluate students' needs and provide appropriate support to them, e.g. arrange group or individual

emotional counselling.

Objectives of Brief Class Meeting are as follows:

- Inform students of the basic information and facts about the crisis incident;
- Answer questions related to the crisis incident raised by students to dispel their worries;
- Inform students of the ways to seek help;
- Identify students who need further support.

Annex 10

Content of Brief Class Meeting

1. Provide concise information about the incident
 - Report the verified facts gathered by the school;
 - Clarify news that are untrue, e.g. information from newspapers;
 - If the incident involves suicide, teachers should explain that the incident is under police investigation and it is inappropriate to make any speculation. Teachers should also point out that suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors and causal pathways. No single cause or stressor is sufficient to explain a suicidal act in most circumstances. At the same time, teachers should emphasise that students should actively seek help when they encounter difficulties.
2. Answer students' queries
 - Let students ask questions. Avoid describing unnecessary or disturbing details when answering the questions;
 - Only provide verified basic information and facts;
 - Answer students' questions as far as possible. If teachers are uncertain or do not know the answers of the questions instantly, clarify and get back to the students later;
 - Do not ask students to recall/share their crisis experiences.
3. Introduce channels to seek help, for example, they can seek help from the school guidance personnel, teachers or parents.
4. If necessary, teach students how to respond to the media's enquiries
 - Students can choose whether or not to respond to the media's enquiries;
 - Be respectful to the feelings of the victim's family. Students should not disclose private information of the victim and of his/her family;
 - Students should not speculate or make judgement on the incident;
 - If necessary, ask reporters to contact school teachers directly.
5. Understand and observe students' reactions, identify students in need of additional follow-up and support

- Identify students who show excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions (e.g. depressed mood, anger, blaming of self or others);
- Observe reactions of students who have close relationship with the victim (good friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, siblings or peers with unsatisfactory relationship with the victim);
- If the crisis incident involves suicide, be aware if there are students who identify with the suicidal behaviour of the deceased;
- Refer students in need of additional support to school guidance personnel.

c) **Special Class Period**

After the crisis incident, apart from providing basic support to the majority of the students, such as reporting facts in the abovementioned Brief Class Meeting, schools should arrange Special Class Period to students who are possibly mildly affected. At the initial stage after the crisis incident, it is common for students to experience emotional, cognitive, physiological, social and behavioural changes (Refer to Reference 1A and 1B). Schools can make use of the Special Class Period to provide students with psychoeducation, to teach them the common cognitive, emotional and behavioural reactions, coping strategies and ways to seek help, as well as to continue observing their reactions. If it is noticed in the process that some students suffer from more significant emotional disturbance, schools can arrange additional support to them, e.g. arrange group or individual counselling.

In general, it is more appropriate for class teachers to conduct the Special Class Period in the classroom. Since class teachers know the students more and they are the adults whom students are more familiar with, they can notice students' emotional reactions and changes more easily, and students tend to be more willing to express their thoughts and feelings to their class teachers. Thus, it is more appropriate for the class teachers to conduct the Special Class Period. If the teachers in charge need assistance from guidance teachers in conducting the Special Class Period, schools should make arrangements accordingly.

Objectives of Special Class Period are as follows:

- Inform students of the basic information and facts about the crisis incident;
- Provide psychoeducation to students on the common crisis reactions and warning signs indicating the need for further support;
- Inform students of the coping strategies and ways to seek help;
- Identify students who need further follow-up and support.

Content of Special Class Period

1. Provide concise information about the incident
 - Report the verified facts gathered by the school;
 - Clarify news that are untrue, e.g. information from newspapers;
 - If the incident involves suicide, teachers should point out that the incident is under police investigation and it is inappropriate to make any speculation. Teachers should also point out that suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors and causal pathways. No single cause or stressor is sufficient to explain a suicidal act in most circumstances. At the same time, teachers should emphasise that students should actively seek help when they encounter difficulties.
2. Answer students' queries
 - Let students ask questions. Avoid describing unnecessary or disturbing details when answering the questions;
 - Only provide verified basic information and facts;
 - Answer students' questions as far as possible. If teachers are uncertain or do not know the answers of the questions instantly, clarify and get back to the students later;
 - Do not ask students to recall/share their crisis experiences.
3. Prepare students for the common reactions after crisis incident
 - Emphasise shock, sadness, self-blaming, anger and unsettling reactions, etc. are common responses (References 1A and 1B);
 - State that different people react to the same incident in different ways; students should respect the different crisis reactions of peers;
 - Remind students the importance to seek help when they display enduring warning signs or excessively intense reactions (Reference 1D).
4. If necessary, teach students how to respond to the media's enquiries
 - Students can choose to respond or not to media's enquiries;
 - Be respectful to the feelings of the victim's family. Students should not disclose private information of the victim and of his/her family;
 - Students should not speculate or make judgement on the incident;
 - If necessary, ask reporters to contact school teachers directly.
5. Share proper coping strategies and channels to seek help with students (Reference 3 and 4)
 - Teach adaptive coping strategies (e.g. relaxation techniques and seeking social support);
 - If the incident involves suicidal behaviours, emphasise that committing suicide is not an appropriate coping strategy;

- Learn about students' social support network to ensure that they are able to receive appropriate support;
 - Share channels to seek help with students, for example, they can seek help from the school guidance personnel, teachers or parents;
 - Encourage students to seek help from their family or teachers as soon as possible when they experience emotional disturbance or encounter difficulties.
6. Find out about and observe students' reactions, identify students in need of additional follow-up and support
- Identify students who show excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions (e.g. depressed mood, anger, blaming of self or others);
 - Observe reactions of students who have close relationship with the victim (good friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, siblings or peers with unsatisfactory relationship with the victim);
 - If the crisis incident involves suicide, be aware if there are students who identify with the suicidal behaviour of the deceased;
 - Refer students with strong emotional reactions to school social worker or guidance teachers;
 - Teachers can refer to Reference 2 for suggestions for responding to students' emotional reactions towards a crisis incident.

d) Teachers' Feedback after Brief Class Meeting / Special Class Period

After the Brief Class Meeting / Special Class Period, teachers in charge can fill in the Feedback Form and pass it to the SCMT for discussion and follow-up at the Evaluation Meeting.

Brief Class Meeting/ Special Class Period *: Teachers' Feedback Form

(* Delete whichever is inappropriate)

Please complete the following and pass the completed form to _____.

Date: _____

Class: _____

Class Teacher/ Person-in-charge: _____

1. Did any student show strong emotional reactions or unusual behaviours in class periods?

Yes Please specify: _____

No

2. Is/Are there any student(s) in need of referral for follow-up support?

Yes Name of Student(s): _____

No

3. What are students' views or reactions towards this crisis incident?

4. What are your opinions on leading the class periods?

Length of time was appropriate: Agree Disagree

Documents & reference materials provided are useful: Agree Disagree

Did you encounter any difficulties?

Yes, please specify: _____

No

5. Other suggestions/ observations:

ii. Additional Support

Group Counselling

Schools are advised to consider providing additional support to individual students, groups or classes which are much affected. When necessary, students can be divided into groups for small group counselling according to the severity of disturbance, the experiences in the incident or the degree of intimacy with victim, e.g. teammates of school teams and good friends. Group counselling should be led by professionals (e.g. social workers or psychologists). The number of people in a group should be limited to 8 to 10. In addition,

guidance personnel should maintain close communication with parents and provide follow-up support on students' needs after group counselling. If students with significant distress/intense emotional reactions are identified during group counselling, apart from arranging individual counselling conducted by school social workers or psychologists for them immediately, schools may consider referring them to medical or mental health professionals.

Objectives of group counselling are as follows:

- Inform students of the basic information and facts about the crisis incident;
- Let students share their feelings and express their emotions;
- Provide psychoeducation to students on the common crisis reactions and warning signs indicating the need for further support;
- Inform students of the coping strategies and ways to seek help;
- Identify students who need follow-up and support.

Content of Group Counselling for Students

1. Introduce content of the group counselling
 - Self-introduction by the guidance personnel ;
 - Briefly introduce the purposes and ground rules (including the principles of confidentiality and mutual respect) of the group.

2. Provide concise information about the incident
 - Report the verified facts gathered by the school;
 - Clarify news that are untrue, e.g. information from newspapers;
 - If the incident involves suicide, the guidance personnel should explain that the incident is under police investigation, and it is inappropriate to make any speculation. The guidance personnel should also point out that suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors and causal pathways. No single cause or stressor is sufficient to explain a suicidal act in most circumstances. At the same time, the guidance personnel should encourage the students to seek help when needed.

3. Answer students' queries
 - Let students ask questions. Avoid describing unnecessary or disturbing details when answering the questions;
 - Only provide verified basic information and facts;
 - Answer students' questions as far as possible. If teachers are uncertain or do not know the answers of the questions instantly, clarify and get back to the students later.

4. Encourage students to talk about their emotional, cognitive, physiological, social and behavioural reactions
 - Understand their reactions by asking the following (sample) questions:
 - i. “How is your sleep quality recently? How is your appetite?”
 - ii. “Can you focus on your work recently?”
 - iii. “What are your thoughts and feelings now?”
 - iv. “How are you feeling now?”

 - Encourage students to talk about their thoughts and feelings **at the present moment**. Do not ask them to narrate or recall the process of the incident that they personally experienced;

- If the students start to talk about disturbing details, the guidance personnel should guide them to focus on sharing their reactions **at the present moment**;
 - Help them to understand that unsettling emotions such as sadness, guilt, anger are common reactions;
 - Help them realise that other people might also have similar experiences and reactions. They are not alone and they can offer mutual support (if applicable);
 - Remind students to seek help when they have enduring or excessively intense reactions (Reference 1D).
5. Share appropriate coping strategies after crisis
- Share appropriate coping strategies (Reference 3);
 - Practise relaxation techniques (Reference 4) and other adaptive coping strategies if appropriate;
 - If the crisis incident involves suicidal behaviours, emphasise that committing suicide is not an appropriate strategy to solve problems.
6. Learn about students' social support network and ensure that they receive appropriate support
- Find out about their social support network by asking the following (sample) questions:
 - “How did your family react to this incident?”
 - “How did they talk about it with you?”
 - “What do you usually do to help yourself when you feel disturbed?”
 - “If your negative emotions persist, whom would you talk to? How would you seek help?”
 - Ensure that they can receive appropriate support
 - Tell students that you are willing to render support;
 - Help students identify their social support network, e.g. family members, friends, school social worker/ guidance personnel, etc. so that they know where they can get help;
 - Encourage students to support each other and seek help from teachers or school social workers when they encounter difficulties or experience emotional disturbance. If their peers are experiencing emotional distress, students should also inform the teachers and school social workers;
 - Introduce community resources (e.g. mental health information and counseling services, etc.);
 - Identify students who lack social support for further follow-up.
7. Find out about and observe students' reactions, identify students in need of

additional follow-up and support

- Identify students who show excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions (e.g. depressed mood, anger, blaming of self or others);
- If the incident involves suicide, be aware if there are students who identify with the suicidal behaviour of the deceased;
- Observe reactions of students who have close relationship with the victim (good friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, siblings or peers with unsatisfactory relationship with the victim);
- Refer those students with intense emotional reactions to the school social worker and guidance teachers ;
- Teachers can refer to Reference 2 for suggestions for responding to students' emotional reactions towards a crisis incident.

iii. Enhanced Support or Referral to Mental Health Services

a) Individual Counselling

If individual students are seriously affected by the crisis incident, e.g. exhibition of persistent and excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions, schools are advised to arrange individual counselling conducted by school social workers or psychologists for the concerned students. The guidance personnel should continue to observe and provide follow-up support for the students after counselling. If it is noted that some students are tremendously affected, schools should refer them to medical professionals for appropriate and long-term counselling or specialist medical services. Schools should note that individual counselling aims at strengthening students' abilities to cope with the immediate difficulties brought about by crises.

Objectives of individual counselling are as follows:

- Stabilise students' emotions;
- Help students understand the impacts of the crisis incident on them;
- Help students cope with the problems caused by the crisis incident;
- Identify and refer students in need to other organisations for appropriate service.

Content of Individual Counselling for Students

1. Self-introduction
 - Self-introduction by the guidance personnel;
 - Briefly introduce the purposes and ground rules (including confidentiality and mutual respect, etc.);
 - Tend to the student's immediate basic needs, e.g. providing food and drinks, etc.;
 - Build rapport, and show care and concern for the student.

2. Stabilise the student's emotions
 - Observe if student is emotionally stable;
 - Stabilise the student's emotions first, if necessary;
 - Conduct individual counselling when it is certain that the student is emotionally stable.

3. Identify problems faced by the student due to the crisis incident
 - Find out about the student's experience in the incident (*Attention: Avoid asking the student to describe unnecessary or disturbing details);
 - Note if the student has the thought of harming himself/ herself or others, and identify inappropriate coping strategies or solutions;
 - Learn about the student's ways of solving problems and their social support network, such as support from family members or friends.

4. Help the student cope with the problems caused by the crisis incident
 - Learn about and help identify appropriate coping strategies and solutions;
 - Jointly set goals and plans to solve the problems.

5. Conclusion
 - Confirm that the student understands the appropriate coping strategies and actions.

b) Referral to Mental Health Services

If schools notice that some students are seriously affected by the crisis incident, they should refer those students to professionals for long-term counselling or specialist medical

services. After the referral, schools should maintain good communication with the related organisations to facilitate collaboration and arrange necessary support in schools.

VII. Support to Parents

a) Notification to Parents

Schools should inform parents concerned about the crisis incident and the support provided or to be provided by the school. Schools are advised to ask parents to pay attention to the needs of their children. When necessary, schools should invite parents to attend meeting in schools to discuss ways to support their children.

Schools can make reference to the guidelines below when drafting the special notice and disseminate the notice to parents on the day of the incident:

- Respect privacy. Do not disclose personally identifiable information, especially the personal data of the victim(s);
- Report only the facts and avoid making any speculations or assumptions;
- Inform parents of the measures taken by schools to support students and staff concerned;
- Schools are encouraged to attach a translation of the notice for non-Chinese speaking parents;
- Parents may call or go to schools to enquire about the incident after receiving the notice. Schools should arrange staff to answer the enquiries from parents.

Moreover, schools can attach reference information (References 5 and 6) to the special notice to parents.

Special Notice to Parents (Sample 1)

Date: _____

Dear Parents,

Our school was informed by the police this morning that one S.5 student of our school was found lying on the podium of his residential building last night. He was sent to a hospital and was subsequently certified dead. All of us feel deeply saddened and sorry for the loss. The school has immediately activated the School Crisis Management Team. Educational psychologist, school social workers and teachers will continue to provide emotional support to students in need, so as to clear up their doubts and ease their emotions.

We hope you will pay special attention to the needs of your children during this period. Please listen to them, let them talk about their feelings and show them care and support. If needed, please contact class teachers, school social workers, or school general office (Tel _____).

Yours faithfully,

School Principal
XXX Secondary School

(Remarks: Information of other social service organisations of the district is attached for your reference.)

Telephone Hotlines

Health Bureau (Mental Health Support Hotline):	18111
Social Welfare Department:	2343 2255
Hospital Authority Mental Health Direct:	2466 7350
Suicide Prevention Services:	2382 0000
Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong:	3512 2626
The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong:	2389 2222
The Samaritans:	2896 0000 (Multi-lingual services)
Caritas Family Crisis Line:	18288

Special Notice to Parents (Sample 2)

Date: _____

Dear Parents,

The school received a call from the police at 7:30 this morning and was notified that three of our P.6 students were injured at a traffic accident on the way to school. They have been sent to a hospital and are now in stable condition. We have expressed our concerns and offered our assistance to their families. The police are investigating the incident at the moment.

In response to this incident, the school has immediately activated the School Crisis Management Team. Educational psychologist, school social workers and teachers will continue to provide counselling and support to students who are emotionally disturbed. The school will pay close attention to the injured students and all students in school. Follow-up actions will be taken when needed.

We hope you will pay special attention to your children's needs during this period. Please listen to them and let them talk about their feelings and comfort them. At the same time, please communicate with your children to understand their needs and show your care. Please call the class teacher or the school social workers, or school general office (Tel _____) if needed.

Yours faithfully,

School Principal
XXX Primary School

(Remarks: Information of other social service organisations of the district is attached for your reference.)

Telephone Hotlines

Health Bureau (Mental Health Support Hotline):	18111
Social Welfare Department:	2343 2255
Hospital Authority Mental Health Direct:	2466 7350
Suicide Prevention Services:	2382 0000
Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong:	3512 2626
The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong:	2389 2222
The Samaritans:	2896 0000 (Multi-lingual services)
Caritas Family Crisis Line:	18288

b) Supporting the Family of the Student Concerned

The school should keep in close contact with the family and provide appropriate support with regard to the condition of the student concerned. For instance, referral to relevant social service organisations might be necessary.

c) Parent Meeting

If a crisis incident has far-reaching psychological and emotional impacts on students, schools may need to arrange a Parent Meeting to address parents' concerns. The school may inform parents of the meeting arrangements in their special notice to parents.

In the meeting, adequate time should be given to answer parents' enquiries. If needed, counselling can be provided to parents. Schools should arrange sufficient manpower of guidance personnel to provide individual or group meetings with parents in need.

Annex 17

Content of Parent Meeting

1. Update verified information specific to the crisis incident.
2. Explain what have been done or arranged by the school in response to the crisis incident.
3. Let parents know what will be done to avoid similar incidents in the future (if appropriate).
4. Explain the warning signs of suicide (if appropriate).
5. Highlight the key points in the Reference materials for Parents to let them know how to support their children after the incident and how to handle their emotions (Reference 5 and 6).
6. Emphasise the importance of supporting their children.
7. Emphasise the importance of home-school collaboration.
8. Introduce information about organisations or personnel offering support.
9. Arrange to meet with parents in need individually or in a group.

d) Expressing Care and Sympathy to the Family of the Victim

The principal or school representatives can pay visit to the victim's family to express their care and coordinate the support required for them. If needed, the school can provide contact information of counselling organisations to the family. The school should ensure that the school representatives are emotionally stable to handle the visit; otherwise the school can arrange other appropriate staff to take up the role.

VIII. Handling Crisis during Long School Holidays

If a crisis incident happens during a long school holiday, the SCMT can refer to Annex 4 for a preliminary screening of the incident's impact on students and staff. Depending on the severity of the impact, the school can consider making necessary arrangement to the staff on duty, so to support the crisis management work of teachers, parents and students.

a) Support to Students

- The school may try to understand students' condition through various means, such as phone calls and online questionnaires, etc. The school should protect students' privacy if online platforms are utilised;
- For students who are more severely affected, the school can:
 - Invite students back to school to meet with supporting staff for necessary support;
 - Keep in touch with their parents, so they understand their children's condition and can strengthen their social support.
- The school should share with students other counselling provisions in the community, such as online platforms or telephone hotlines;
- Class teachers should continue to monitor students' condition.

b) Support to Staff

- The school can arrange an ad-hoc staff meeting to inform the staff of the incident and the school's support plan;
- The school should share with staff means of supporting students during the long holiday;
- The school can arrange emotional support groups for staff as needed;
- The school should share with staff other counselling provisions in the community, such as online platforms or telephone hotlines.

c) Support to Parents

- The school should disseminate a notice to parents as soon as possible via the Intranet or online platform to clarify the facts and to prevent the spreading of rumours;
- Class teachers can contact individual students' parents to understand their needs if necessary;
- The school should share with parents other counselling provisions in the community, such as online platforms or telephone hotlines.

IX. Participating in Memorial Activities and Funeral

a) Memorial Activities

- The school can organise memorial activities for students to express their grief. The memorial activities should convey positive and hopeful messages, and encourage students to face the incident in a positive manner;
- The school can provide opportunities for students to mourn for the deceased. This can put an end to the incident and show respect to the deceased;
- The school should allow students to express their grief in different ways and choose to attend the memorial activities or not, and leave the memorial activities at any time;
- The school should be cautious when arranging memorial activities that involve suicide. Organising memorial activities or creating memorial in the school may glorify the suicide act. Some students may regard committing suicide as a means to draw attention from others or even imitate the suicidal behaviours. The school should **avoid** any activities that may glorify suicide act, such as:
 - Holding large-scale memorial activities at school;
 - Creating permanent memorial for the suicide incident or the deceased, e.g. memorial statues, art works or condolences in school publications.

b) Funeral

- The school needs to obtain consent from the parent of the deceased before allowing students to attend the funeral;
- The school should allow students to choose to attend the funeral or not;
- Students must obtain the parental consent before attending the funeral. If students choose to attend the funeral, the school should discuss with the parents concerned if needed and provide adequate support, such as explaining the funeral arrangement in advance or provide emotional support at the funeral, etc.;
- Students may express their condolences to the family of the deceased through other ways, e.g. by sending cards of condolence and folding paper cranes.

X. Handling the Media

After a crisis incident, the school should disseminate the information as soon as possible.

Annex 18
Date: _____
Press Release Sample <i>(School's Name)</i>
Press Release on an Incident of Student's Death
<p>The school was informed by the police/parent on _____(date) that a student of our school was found lying on the podium of his residential building last night. He was certified dead afterwards.</p> <p>Our teachers and students were very much saddened by the news. The incident is currently under police investigation and it is inappropriate to make any speculation.</p> <p>The school has activated the School Crisis Management Team. Class teachers made an announcement to students during the class period this morning. Teachers, school social workers/guidance personnel and educational psychologist have offered instant support to students in need to relieve their distress.</p> <p>The school has also issued a letter to inform all parents about the incident and to invite them to keep in touch with us to facilitate the arrangement of timely assistance. They are also encouraged to pay attention to the emotional needs of their children in the coming weeks, show their care and comfort them. If you have any enquiry, please contact _____ (spokesperson), at _____ (tel. no.).</p>
School Principal <i>(School's Name)</i>

When handling the media, schools are advised to make the following arrangements:

- i. **Assign a spokesperson** – The spokesperson should have a full understanding of the incident and the school's stance, and should also have a clear mind and be articulate to answer enquires from the media. Make sure to inform all staff who the spokesperson is, so they can refer all questions of the media to

the spokesperson.

- ii. **Release information proactively** – The school should promptly take the initiative to release information to the media after the crisis incident. The school must determine its stance on the incident as soon as possible, collect information about the incident or the person involved and work out a succinct statement to affirm the nature of the incident. The school may also issue a press release to give a brief account of the incident and the follow up work done by the school.
- iii. **Designate specific venue and time for media interview** – If the school decides to accept interviews, it has to designate an appropriate venue and time to meet the media. The person responsible should advise janitors, staff and students how to handle media’s enquiries and refer all media enquiries to the spokesperson. The school may take the initiative to request the press to respect students’ privacy and take care of their feelings.
- iv. **Inform the Regional Education Office of the EDB that a media interview would be conducted at school.**
- v. **Read the news reported by the media in detail** – If the media reported inaccurate or misleading information, the school may correct them or clarify as needed.
- vi. **Anticipate questions from the press** – Before an interview, the school may request reporters to provide a set of questions, as well as their concerns in advance, in order to facilitate the preparation for the answers.
- vii. **Allow the spokesperson adequate time for preparation** – Before meeting the media, the spokesperson should give himself/ herself sufficient time to think over any possible questions that may be raised by the press. For example, did the staff ever notice any warning signs of suicide of the student? Could it be a negligence? What are the remedial measures? Are there any measures to prevent recurrence of similar incidents?
- viii. **Respect the student involved in the incident and his/ her family** – The school should remind its staff and students to respect the victim involved in the incident and his/ her family, and they should not disclose their information. If there are any media enquiries, they should be referred to the school’s spokesperson.

XI. Evaluation of Crisis Management

a) Evaluation Meeting

The school should call a staff meeting to evaluate the arrangements and effectiveness of crisis management. During the meeting, the school can ask teachers to report students' reactions and remind them of the signs of students who are emotionally disturbed, so as to facilitate observation and identification of students in need of additional support, and formulate short-term follow up plans. Upon completion of the above crisis management tasks, the school should also discuss and work out long-term follow up plans on crisis management with their staff.

Annex 19

Agenda for Crisis Management Evaluation Meeting

1. Evaluate the arrangements, difficulties encountered and areas of improvement
 - Teachers report students' responses (Refer to Teachers' Feedback Form, Annex 12);
 - Staff share their comments with regard to the crisis management and support work (Refer to Teachers' Feedback Form, Annex 12).
2. Remind teachers about the signs of students who are emotionally disturbed and the importance of ongoing observation, as well as monitoring of students' reactions.
3. Discuss short-term follow-up
 - Arrange staff to conduct counselling;
 - Arrange support or provide special arrangement for staff in need;
 - Consider the need for additional staff meetings and set the agenda, time and venue of meetings if necessary.
4. Discuss long-term follow-up
 - Plan for educational activities for the whole school (e.g. life education, suicide prevention activities, guidance/ discipline work);
 - Identify training needs of teachers on crisis management and support.

b) Evaluation Questionnaire

Regarding the post-implementation evaluation on crisis management and support measures, the school can collect views from the staff through questionnaires and analyse the findings for further improvement and follow-up actions to enhance the effectiveness of crisis management.

Crisis Management and Support Measures Evaluation Questionnaire

Thank you very much for your joint effort in managing the recent crisis incident in the school. With your help, students affected and their parents have received appropriate support. Please express your opinions on School Crisis Management Team (SCMT)'s coordination of intervention and support in this crisis by completing this questionnaire, so as to help us evaluate the work of the SCMT. Please return this questionnaire to _____ by _____.

Support from SCMT

(Please circle the appropriate number.)

	Not Helpful	Slightly Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	Not applicable
1. Overall Crisis Management and Support Strategies	1	2	3	4	
Comments:					
2. Arrangements of Counselling for Students					
(a) Brief Class Meeting	1	2	3	4	N/A
(b) Special Class Period	1	2	3	4	N/A
(c) Group Counselling	1	2	3	4	N/A
(d) Individual Counselling	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					
3. Arrangements of Counselling for Staff					
(a) Group Counselling	1	2	3	4	N/A
(b) Individual Counselling	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					
4. Support to Staff					
(a) Staff Meeting	1	2	3	4	N/A
(b) Resources Provided	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					
5. Support to Parents	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					

6. Handling the Media	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					

7. Other Comments:

XII. The School’s Follow-up Arrangement

Following a crisis, the school can review their system, including the mechanisms related to guidance and discipline, crisis management and student support, etc. At the same time, the school can arrange appropriate preventive and remedial work to enhance teachers and students’ resilience. The school can arrange preventive activities that foster teachers and students’ mental health, such as “Gatekeeper” training, mental health talks, etc. Moreover, depending on their needs, the school can arrange trainings that enhance teachers’ capacity in handling crises, such as crisis management talks.

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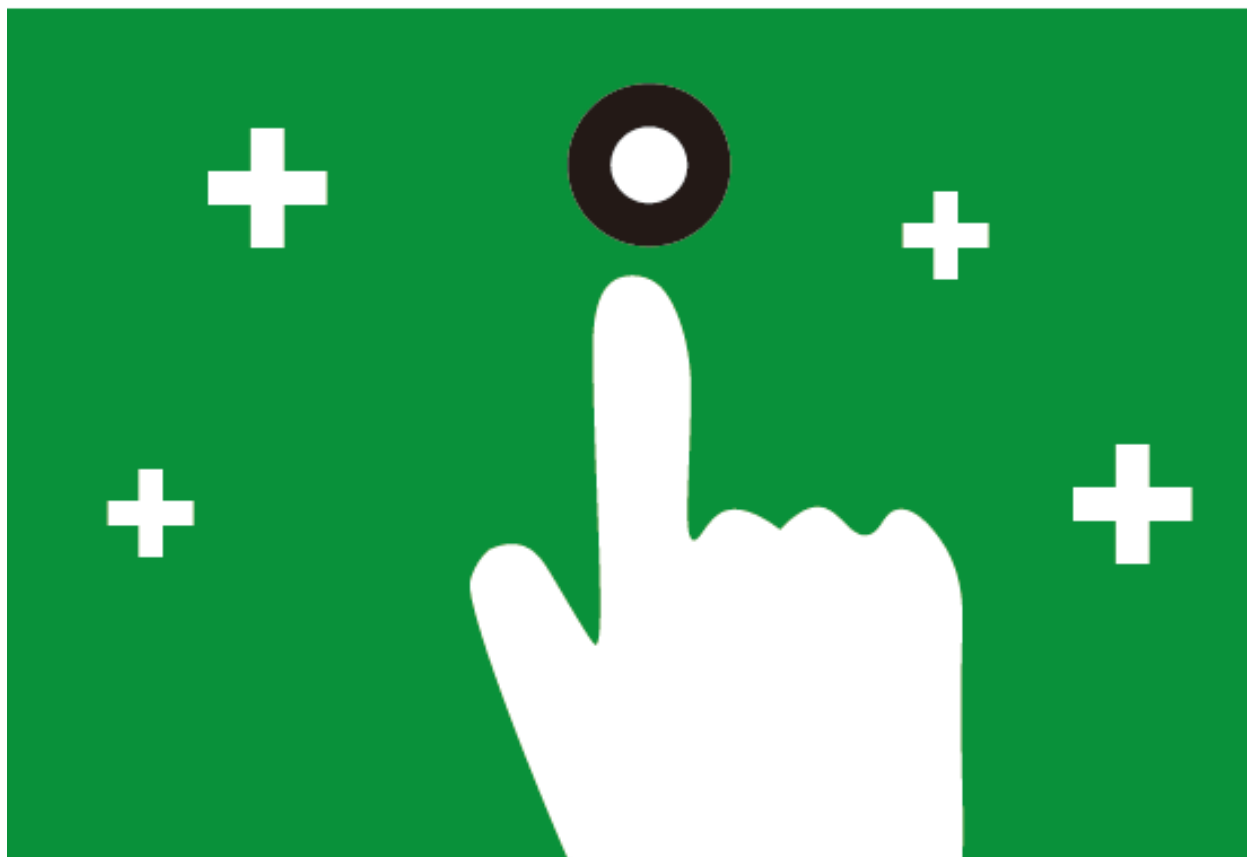
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SCHOOL CRISIS MANAGEMENT:

Handbook of aftermath intervention and psychological support

(Applicable to injury and death of students and staff)



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Directory of Support and Services

Agency	Name	Post	Telephone no.
Education Bureau Regional Education Office (District: _____)			
Social Welfare Department (_____ Section)			
Hong Kong Police Force (_____ District)			
Fire Services Department (_____ District)			
Ambulance Service			
_____ Hospital			
Community Agency (_____)			

*In case of emergency (e.g. someone gets seriously injured or is in a life-threatening/critical situation which warrants immediate medical support), the school should dial 999 for emergency services.

Designated Use of Rooms

Purpose	Person(s) Responsible	Venue(s)
Individual counselling (students)		
Individual counselling (staff)		
Group counselling (students)		
Group counselling (staff)		
Media reception		
Parent reception		
Staff meeting		
Parent meeting		

Agenda for School Crisis Management Team Meeting

1. Verify and update the details of the crisis incident
2. Conduct an initial impact assessment and identify at-risk students and staff (Annex 4)
3. Assess if external support or community resources are needed
4. Determine the scale, scope and target groups of support, and arrange the division of labour
 - Handle enquiries from the media (refer to p.48-49)
 - Handle enquiries from the police
 - Handle enquiries from parents and the general public
 - Prepare scripts for information dissemination (Annex 8-9)
 - for the school principal or class teachers to make announcement to students
 - for staff to respond to enquiries
 - Discuss the support format for students
 - Decide on the targets of announcement (e.g. informing all students or only the affected classes)
 - Decide on the format of announcement (e.g. announcement made by class teachers in each class)
 - Arrange Brief Class Meeting or Special Class Period for students according to the assessed needs
 - Arrange counselling services for students who are identified to be more affected by the incident
 - Arrange venues
 - Discuss support formats for staff or parents;
 - Prepare for the Staff Meeting (Annex 5)

Initial Impact Assessment for Students and Staff

(A) Basic information of the crisis incident

Date/Time/Location of the incident: _____

Brief Description of the incident: _____

Significant incident(s) preceding the incident: _____

Media coverage of the incident: _____

School's experience in handling similar incident: _____

(B) Background information of the victim (if applicable):

Name of victim: _____

Sex: _____ M / F (Please delete where appropriate)

Age: _____

Class: _____

Date of birth: _____

Home address: _____

Family background: _____

School performance:

- Academic: _____
- Social relationship: _____
- Extra-curricular activities: _____

Support services received: _____

(C) Identification of at-risk students and staff

The following questions can be used as reference to help identify at-risk students and staff. The impact of a crisis incident is determined by the interaction effects of various factors. Schools should consider the unique nature of each crisis incident when assessing the possible psychological and emotional disturbances incurred on students and staff and determining the corresponding intervention.

I. Physical Proximity

- Who witnessed the incident (e.g. witnessing the moment when the victim falling from height)?
- Who was/were present at the scene (e.g. witnessing the victim receiving first aid after the incident)?

Tips: The closer a person stays at the scene of the incident, the higher the risk of psychological trauma is. For instance, if a student saw a person falling from height or the student was present at the scene, the incident might have a greater impact on him/her.

(List out the at-risk class(es)/ group(s)/ student(s)/ staff)

II. Emotional Proximity

- Who had a close/special relationship with the victim?
- Who participated in the same activity or organisation as the victim did?

Tips: The closer the relationship the person has with the victim, e.g. best friends or family members, or having an unsatisfactory relationship with the victim, the higher the risk of psychological trauma he/she may have. For instance, if a beloved student died, the incident might have a greater impact on students/staff.

(List out the at-risk class(es)/ group(s)/ student(s)/ staff)

III. Personal Vulnerabilities

- Who experienced/ have been affected by a similar critical incident in recent years?
- Who experienced the loss of a significant person or other traumatic incidents in recent years?
- Who used to adopt a more positive (vs. negative) attitude to cope with critical incidents?
- Who could regulate their emotions more properly (vs. easily lose their emotional control)?
- Who could obtain more adequate (vs. less adequate) social and/ or family support?

Tips: The more the vulnerability factors a person has (e.g. having mental health problems, lacking social/ family support or having serious family problems), the higher the risk of psychological trauma he/she may have.

(List out the at-risk student(s)/ staff)

IV. Crisis Reactions (Reference 1A, 1B, 1C & 1D)

- Who exhibited excessive and intense emotional reactions (e.g. excessive fear, anxiety) or even displayed warning signs of psychiatric problems (e.g. severe depression, hallucination and delusion)?
- Who exhibited excessive and intense behavioural reactions (e.g. using brutal ways to ventilate anger or hurt oneself/others)?

(List out the at-risk student(s)/ staff)

Remarks:

1. A person who (1) is closer to the scene of the critical incident, (2) has a closer relationship with the victim, (3) has more personal vulnerability factors or (4) exhibits excessive and intense reactions may be at a higher risk of being affected by the incident. They may require additional support.
2. When a student/staff has some very vulnerable factors (e.g. suffering from mental illness) and/or exhibits excessive and intense emotional or behavioural reactions, even though he/she may not have witnessed the incident or have close relationship with the victim, schools should seek **immediate** advice from professionals (e.g. social workers, psychologists) to assess the impact and determine appropriate support measures.
3. The emotional, cognitive, physiological, social, and behavioural reactions of the at-risk students or staff may change over time. The school needs to **observe and assess their needs continuously** so that appropriate support can be offered.

Agenda for Staff Meeting

1. Inform staff of the crisis and the school's stance.
2. Clarify facts and answer queries.
3. Provide emotional support to staff
 - Explain the possible emotional reactions they may exhibit and show understanding on their reactions;
 - Identify staff who are severely affected;
 - Inform staff of the follow-up support available (e.g. Emotional Support Group for Staff).
4. Revise and finalise the support plan:
 - Discuss the support plan drawn up by the SCMT
 - Finalise the implementation schedule, venues and persons-in-charge.
5. Explain the support work for students (e.g. Brief Class Meeting, Special Class Period)
 - Explain the content and key points;
 - Distribute relevant documents, e.g. "Reminders for Teachers" (Annex 6) and "How Should Teachers Respond to Students' Possible Reactions towards a Crisis Incident" (Reference 2);
 - Provide assistance to teachers in need.

Reminders for Teachers

1. Obtain all relevant information as far as possible and take care of your own emotions before rendering support to students.
2. If you need additional support to assist you manage the students' emotions, please inform the SCMT to make the arrangement.
3. Listen to students with patience and understanding. Accept different emotions and observe students' emotions continuously.
4. Refer all media enquiries to the spokesperson of the school.
5. Make special arrangements and allow flexibility in the school routines if necessary, e.g. allow breaks for students during lessons or postpone tests.
6. Attend staff meetings and evaluation meetings to report and receive updated information.

Content of Emotional Support Group for Staff

1. Introduce the content
 - Self-introduction by the guidance personnel;
 - Briefly introduce the purposes and ground rules (including the principles of confidentiality and mutual respect, etc.) of the group.

2. Provide concise information about the incident
 - Report the verified facts gathered by the school;
 - Clarify news that are untrue, e.g. information from newspapers and internet/social media;
 - If the incident involves suicide, the guidance personnel should explain that the incident is under police investigation, and it is inappropriate to make any speculation. The guidance personnel should also point out that suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors and causal pathways. No single cause or stressor is sufficient to explain a suicidal act in most circumstances. At the same time, the guidance personnel should encourage the staff to seek help when needed.

3. Answer staff's queries
 - Let staff ask questions. Avoid describing unnecessary or disturbing details when answering the questions;
 - Only provide verified basic information and facts;
 - Respond to staff's queries as far as possible. If the answers are uncertain, get back to the staff when the answers are confirmed.

4. Encourage staff to talk about their emotional, cognitive, physiological, social and behavioural reactions
 - Understand their reactions by asking the following (sample) questions:
 - “How is your sleep quality recently? How is your appetite?”
 - “Can you focus on your work recently?”
 - “What are your thoughts and feelings now?”
 - Encourage staff to talk about their views and feelings **at the present moment**.

Do not ask them to narrate or recall the process of the incident that they personally experienced. If they start to talk about disturbing details, the guidance personnel should guide them to focus on sharing their reactions **at the present moment**.

5. Help the staff understand common reactions after a crisis incident and the warning signs that warrant additional support (Reference 1C, 1D)

- Help them understand that disturbing emotions such as sadness, guilt, anger are common reactions;
- Help them realise that other people might also have similar experiences and reactions. They are not alone and they can offer mutual support (if applicable);
- Remind them to seek help when they have enduring or intense reactions.

6. Share appropriate coping strategies after crisis

- Encourage staff to share appropriate coping strategies (Reference 3)
 - “What would you do to comfort yourself when you feel emotionally disturbed?”
- Practice relaxation techniques or other related coping strategies (Reference 4) if needed;
- If the crisis incident involves suicidal behaviours, emphasise that committing suicide is not an appropriate strategy to solve problems.

7. Learn about staff’s social support network and ensure they receive appropriate support

- Understand their social support network by asking the following (sample) questions:
 - “How did your family react to this incident?”
 - “How did they talk about it with you?”
 - “If your negative emotions persist, whom would you talk to? How would you seek help?”
- Ensure that they will receive appropriate support
 - Tell them that you are willing to render support;
 - Help them identify their social support network, e.g. family, friends, the school social worker/guidance teachers at school, so that they know where they can get help;
 - Encourage them to support each other and seek help from colleagues, related staff or social workers when they encounter emotional disturbance or great difficulties. If they notice colleagues who are experiencing

emotional distress, they should discuss with the SCMT leader so that appropriate support and work arrangement can be offered for them;

- Introduce community counselling resources (e.g. mental health information and counseling services, etc.);
- Identify staff who are lack of social support for future follow-up.

8. Understand and observe staff's reactions, identify staff in need of additional follow-up and support

- Identify staff who show excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions (e.g. depressed mood, anger, blaming of self or others);
- If the incident involves suicide, be aware if there are staff who identify with the suicidal behaviour of the deceased;
- Refer those staff with intense emotional reactions to social workers or seek mental health/counseling services in the community if needed.

Announcement to Students (Sample 1)

We received a call from the police at 7:30 this morning and were notified that three of our S2A students were injured in a traffic accident while they were on the way to school. They have been sent to the hospital and are now in stable condition. We have expressed our concerns and offered our assistance to their families. The police are investigating the incident at the moment. We should not make any speculation or draw any conclusion on the incident at this stage.

The principal and teachers are deeply shocked and saddened by this unexpected incident. We understand that you may have different feelings after being informed about this. Some of you may feel very sad, some may feel disturbed or panicky, and some of you may not have any special feelings; these are all commonly seen reactions. You may recall this incident from time to time or may be unable to concentrate on your learning temporarily. All of these are common reactions.

The principal and teachers are very concerned about all of you. If you feel like talking about this incident with us, you can come to Room _____. Our school social workers or teachers are all ready to listen to your thoughts and feelings

At last, I would like to take this opportunity to express our greatest sympathy for the students injured and their families and wish them speedy recovery.

Announcement to Students (Sample 2)

This morning we heard the extremely sad news that a boy was found lying unconscious on the podium of his residential building. He was sent to a hospital and was subsequently certified dead.

After verification, he is Mr. Chan Tai Man, a student from class 5A of our school. We are all saddened by his death. The police are conducting an investigation at the moment. We should not make any speculation or draw any conclusion on the incident at this stage.

We understand that you may have different feelings after being informed about this. Some of you may feel very sad, some may feel disturbed or panicky, and some of you may not have any special feelings. You may recall this incident from time to time or may be unable to concentrate on your learning temporarily. All of these are common reactions.

We may encounter adversity in our life. When you feel stressed, we hope you adopt a positive attitude and seek help from others. You may also talk with your parents, social workers or teachers. If you want to talk to the school social workers or teachers regarding the incident, you may go to _____ (the venue). We are willing to listen to all your thoughts and feelings.

At last, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest sorrow and hope that his family members could settle their emotion soon. Let us close our eyes and offer a moment of silence for him.

Content of Brief Class Meeting

1. Provide concise information about the incident
 - Report the verified facts gathered by the school;
 - Clarify news that are untrue, e.g. information from newspapers;
 - If the incident involves suicide, teachers should explain that the incident is under police investigation and it is inappropriate to make any speculation. Teachers should also point out that suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors and causal pathways. No single cause or stressor is sufficient to explain a suicidal act in most circumstances. At the same time, teachers should emphasise that students should actively seek help when they encounter difficulties.
2. Answer students' questions
 - Let students ask questions. Avoid describing unnecessary or disturbing details when answering the questions;
 - Only provide verified basic information and facts;
 - Answer students' questions as far as possible. If teachers are uncertain or do not know the answers of the questions instantly, clarify and get back to the students later;
 - Do not ask students to recall/share their crisis experiences.
3. Introduce channels to seek help, for example, they can seek help from the school guidance personnel, teachers or parents.
4. If necessary, teach students how to respond to the media's enquiries
 - Students can choose whether or not to respond to the media's enquiries;
 - Be respectful to the feelings of the victim's family. Do not disclose the victim or his/her family's personal information;
 - Do not speculate or make judgment on the incident;
 - If necessary, ask the media to contact the school directly.
5. Understand and observe students' reactions, identify students in need of additional follow-up and support
 - Identify students who show excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions (e.g. depressed mood, anger, guilt or blaming of self or others);
 - Observe reactions of students who have close relationship with the victim (good friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, siblings or peers with unsatisfactory relationship with the victim);
 - If the crisis incident involves suicide, be aware if there are students who identify with the suicidal behaviour of the deceased;
 - Refer students in need of additional support to school guidance personnel.

Content of Special Class Period

1. Provide concise information about the incident
 - Report the verified facts gathered by the school;
 - Clarify news that are untrue, e.g. information from newspapers;
 - If the incident involves suicide, teachers should point out that the incident is under police investigation and it is inappropriate to make any speculation. Teachers should also point out that suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors and causal pathways. No single cause or stressor is sufficient to explain a suicidal act in most circumstances. At the same time, teachers should emphasise that students should actively seek help when they encounter difficulties

2. Answer students' queries
 - Let students ask questions. Avoid describing unnecessary or disturbing details when answering the questions;
 - Only provide verified basic information and facts;
 - Answer students' questions as far as possible. If teachers are uncertain or do not know the answers of the questions instantly, clarify and get back to the students later;
 - Do not ask students to recall/share their crisis experiences.

3. Prepare students for the common reactions after crisis incident
 - Emphasise shock, sadness, self-blaming, anger and unsettling reactions, etc. are common responses (References 1A and 1B);
 - State that different people react to the same incident in different ways; students should respect the different crisis reactions of peers;
 - Remind students the importance to seek help when they display enduring warning signs or excessively intense reactions (Reference 1D).

4. If necessary, teach students how to respond to the media's enquiries
 - Students to choose whether or not to respond to the media's enquiries;
 - Be respectful to the feelings of the victim's family. Do not disclose the victim or his/her family's personal information;
 - Do not speculate or make judgment on the incident;
 - If necessary, ask the media to contact the school directly.

5. Share proper coping strategies and channels to seek help with students (References 3 and 4)
 - Teach adaptive coping strategies (e.g. relaxation techniques and seeking social support);
 - If the incident involves suicidal behaviours, emphasise that committing suicide is not an appropriate coping strategy;
 - Learn about students' social support network to ensure that they are able to receive

- appropriate support;
- Share channels to seek help with students, for example, they can seek help from the school guidance personnel, teachers or parents;
 - Encourage students to seek help from their family or teachers as soon as possible when they experience emotional disturbance or encounter difficulties.
6. Understand and observe students' reactions, identify students in need of additional follow-up and support
- Identify students who show excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions (e.g. depressed mood, anger, blaming of self or others);
 - Observe reactions of students who have close relationship with the victim (good friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, siblings or peers with unsatisfactory relationship with the victim);
 - If the crisis incident involves suicide, be aware if there are students who identify with the suicidal behaviour of the deceased;
 - Refer students in need of additional support to school social worker or guidance teachers;
 - Teachers can refer to Reference 2 for suggestions for responding to students' emotional reactions towards a crisis incident.

Brief Class Meeting/ Special Class Period *: Teachers' Feedback Form

(* Delete whichever is inappropriate)

Please complete the following and pass the completed form to _____.

Date: _____

Class: _____

Class Teacher/Person-in-charge: _____

1. Did any student show strong emotional reactions or unusual behaviours in class periods?

Yes Please specify: _____

No

2. Is/Are there any student(s) in need of referral for follow-up support?

Yes Name of Student(s): _____

No

3. What are students' views or reactions towards this crisis incident?

4. What are your opinion on leading the class periods?*: _____

Length of time was appropriate:

Agree

Disagree

Documents & reference materials provided are useful:

Agree

Disagree

Did you encounter any difficulties?

Yes, please specify: _____

No

5. Other suggestions/ observations:

Content of Group Counselling for Students

1. Introduce content of the group counselling
 - Self-introduction by the guidance personnel;
 - Briefly introduce the purposes and ground rules (including the principles of confidentiality and mutual respect) of the group.

2. Provide concise information about the incident
 - Report the verified facts gathered by the school;
 - Clarify news that are untrue, e.g. information from newspapers;
 - If the crisis involves suicide, the guidance personnel should explain that the incident is under police investigation, and it is inappropriate to make any speculation. The guidance personnel should also point out that suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors and causal pathways. No single cause or stressor is sufficient to explain a suicidal act in most circumstances. At the same time, the guidance personnel should encourage the students to seek help when needed.

3. Answer students' queries
 - Let students ask questions. Avoid describing unnecessary or disturbing details when answering the questions;
 - Only provide verified basic information and facts;
 - Answer students' questions as far as possible. If teachers are uncertain or do not know the answers of the questions instantly, clarify and get back to the students later.

4. Encourage students to talk about their emotional, cognitive, physiological, social and behavioural reactions
 - Understand their reactions by asking the following (sample) questions:
 - i. "How is your sleep quality recently? How is your appetite?"
 - ii. "Can you focus on your work recently?"
 - iii. "What are your thoughts and feelings now?"
 - iv. "How are you feeling now?"
 - Encourage students to talk about their thoughts and feelings **at the present moment**. Do not ask them to narrate or recall the process of the incident that they personally experienced;
 - If the students start to talk about disturbing details, the guidance personnel should guide them to focus on sharing their reactions **at the present moment**;
 - Help them to understand that unsettling emotions such as sadness, guilt, anger are common reactions;

- Help them realise that other people might also have similar experiences and reactions. They are not alone and they can offer mutual support (if applicable);
 - Remind students to seek help when they have enduring or excessively intense reactions (Reference 1D).
5. Share appropriate coping strategies after crisis
- Share appropriate coping strategies (Reference 3);
 - Practise relaxation techniques (Reference 4) and other adaptive coping strategies if appropriate;
 - If the crisis incident involves suicidal behaviours, emphasise that committing suicide is not an appropriate coping strategy to solve problems.
6. Learn about students' social support network and ensure that they receive appropriate support
- Understand their social support network by asking the following (sample) questions:
 - a. "How did your family react to this incident?"
 - b. "How did they talk about it with you?"
 - c. "What do you usually do to help yourself when you feel disturbed?"
 - d. "If your negative emotions persist, whom would you talk to? How would you seek help?"
 - Ensure that they can receive appropriate support
 - Tell students that you are willing to render support
 - Help students identify their social support network, e.g. family members, friends, school social worker/ guidance personnel, etc. so that they know where they can get help;
 - Encourage students to support each other and seek help from teachers or school social workers when they encounter difficulties or experience emotional disturbance. If their peers are experiencing emotional distress, students should also inform the teachers and school social workers;
 - Introduce community resources (e.g. mental health information and counseling services, etc.);
 - Identify students who are lack of social support for further follow-up.
7. Understand and observe students' reactions, identify students in need of additional follow-up and support
- Identify students who show excessively intense emotional or behavioural reactions (e.g. depressed mood, anger, blaming of self or others);
 - If the crisis incident involves suicide, be aware if there are students who identify with the suicidal behaviour of the deceased;
 - Observe reactions of students who have close relationship with the victim (good

friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, siblings or peers with unsatisfactory relationship with the victim);

- Refer those students with intense emotional reactions to the school social worker and guidance teachers;
- Teachers can refer to Reference 2 for suggestions for responding to students' emotional reactions towards a crisis incident.

Contents of Individual Counselling for Students

1. Self-introduction
 - Self-introduction by the guidance personnel;
 - Briefly introduce the purposes and ground rules (including confidentiality and mutual respect, etc.);
 - Take care about students' immediate basic needs, e.g. providing food and drinks etc.;
 - Build rapport, and show care and concern for the student.
2. Stabilise the students' emotions
 - Observe if student is emotionally stable;
 - Stabilise the student's emotions first, if necessary;
 - Conduct individual counselling when it is certain that the student is emotionally stable.
3. Identify problems faced by the student due to the crisis incident
 - Understand the student's experience in the incident (*Attention: Avoid asking the student to describe unnecessary or disturbing details);
 - Note if the student has the thought of hurting himself / herself or others, and identify inappropriate coping strategies or solutions;
 - Understand the student's ways of solving problems and their social support network, such as support from family members or friends.
4. Help the student cope with the problems brought about by the crisis incident
 - Learn about and help identify appropriate coping strategies and solutions;
 - Jointly set goals and plans to solve the problems.
5. Conclusion
 - Confirm that the student understands the appropriate coping strategies and actions.

Special Notice to Parents (Sample 1)

Date _____

Dear Parents,

Our school was informed by the police this morning that one S5 student of our school was found lying on the podium of his residential building last night. He was sent to a hospital and was subsequently certified dead. All of us feel deeply saddened and sorry for the loss. The school has immediately activated the School Crisis Management Team. Educational psychologist, school social workers and teachers will continue to provide emotional support to students in need, so as to clear up their doubts and ease their emotions.

We hope you will pay special attention to the needs of your children during this period. Please listen to them, let them talk about their feelings and show them care and support. If needed, please contact class teachers, school social workers, or school general office (Tel _____).

Yours faithfully,

School Principal
XXX Secondary School

(Remarks: Information of other social service organisations of the district is attached for your reference.)

Telephone Hotlines

Health Bureau (Mental Health Support Hotline):	18111
Social Welfare Department:	2343 2255
Hospital Authority Mental Health Direct:	2466 7350
Suicide Prevention Services:	2382 0000
Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong:	3512 2626
The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong:	2389 2222
The Samaritans:	2896 0000 (Multi-lingual services)
Caritas Family Crisis Line:	18288

Special Notice to Parents (Sample 2)

Date _____

Dear Parents,

The school received a call from the police at 7:30 this morning and was notified that three of our P.6 students had traffic accidents on their way to school and were injured. They have been sent to a hospital and are now in stable condition. We have expressed our concerns and offered our assistance to their families. The police are investigating the incident at the moment.

In response to this student injury incident, the school has immediately activated the School Crisis Management Team. Educational psychologist, school social workers and teachers will continue to provide counselling and support to students who are emotionally disturbed. The school will pay close attention to the injured students and all students in school. Follow-up actions will be taken when needed.

We hope you will pay special attention to your children's needs during this period. Please listen to them and let them talk about their feelings and comfort them. At the same time, please communicate with your children to understand their needs and show your care. Please call the class teacher or the school social workers, or school general office (Tel _____) if needed.

Yours faithfully,

School Principal
XXX Primary School

(Remarks: Information of other social service organisations of the district is attached for your reference.)

Telephone Hotlines

Health Bureau (Mental Health Support Hotline):	18111
Social Welfare Department:	2343 2255
Hospital Authority Mental Health Direct:	2466 7350
Suicide Prevention Services:	2382 0000
Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong:	3512 2626
The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong:	2389 2222
The Samaritans:	2896 0000 (Multi-lingual services)
Caritas Family Crisis Line:	18288

Content of Parent Meeting

1. Update verified information specific to the crisis incident.
2. Explain what have been done or arranged by the school in response to the crisis incident.
3. Let parents know what will be done to avoid similar incidents in the future (if appropriate).
4. Explain the warning signs of suicide (if appropriate).
5. Highlight the key points in the Reference materials for Parents to let them know how to support their children after the incident and how to handle their emotions (Reference 5 and 6).
6. Emphasise the importance of supporting their children.
7. Emphasise the importance of home-school collaboration.
8. Introduce information about organisations or personnel offering support.
9. Arrange to meet with parents in need individually or in a group.

Date: _____

Press Release Sample

(School's Name)

Press Release on an Incident of Student's Death

The school was informed by the police/parent on _____(date) that a student of our school was found lying on the podium of his residential building last night. He was certified dead afterwards.

Our teachers and students were very much saddened by the news. The incident is currently under police investigation and it is inappropriate to make any speculation.

The school has activated the School Crisis Management Team. Class teachers made an announcement to students during the class period this morning. Teachers, school social workers/guidance personnel and educational psychologist have offered instant support to students in need to relieve their distress.

The school has also issued a letter to inform all parents about the incident and to invite them to keep in touch with us to facilitate the arrangement of timely assistance. They are also encouraged to pay attention to the emotional needs of their children in the coming weeks, show their care and comfort them. If you have any enquiry, please contact _____ (spokesperson), at _____ (tel. no.).

School Principal
(School's Name)

Agenda for Crisis Management Evaluation Meeting

1. Evaluate the arrangements, difficulties encountered and areas of improvement
 - Teachers report students' responses (Refer to Teachers' Feedback Form, Annex 12);
 - Staff share comments with regard to the crisis management and support work (Refer to Teachers' Feedback Form, Annex 12).
2. Remind teachers about the signs of students who are emotionally disturbed and the importance of ongoing observation, as well as monitoring of students' reactions.
3. Discuss short-term follow-up
 - Arrange staff to conduct counselling;
 - Arrange support or provide special arrangement for staff in need;
 - Consider the need for additional staff meetings and set the agenda, time and venue of meetings if necessary.
4. Discuss long-term follow-up
 - Plan for educational activities for the whole school (e.g. life education, suicide prevention activities, guidance/ discipline work);
 - Identify training needs of teachers on crisis management and support.

Crisis Management and Support Measures Evaluation Questionnaire

Thank you very much for your joint effort in managing the recent crisis incident in the school. With your help, students affected and their parents have received appropriate support. Please express your opinions on School Crisis Management Team (SCMT)'s coordination of intervention and support in this crisis by completing this questionnaire, so as to help us evaluate the work of the SCMT. Please return this questionnaire to _____ by _____.

Support from SCMT

(Please circle the appropriate number.)

	Not Helpful	Slightly Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	Not applicable
1. Overall Crisis Management and Support Strategies	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					
<hr/>					
2. Arrangements of Counselling for Students					
(a) Brief Class Meeting	1	2	3	4	N/A
(b) Special Class Period	1	2	3	4	N/A
(c) Group Counselling	1	2	3	4	N/A
(d) Individual Counselling	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					
<hr/>					
3. Arrangements of Counselling for Staff					
(a) Group Counselling	1	2	3	4	N/A
(b) Individual Counselling	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					
<hr/>					
4. Support to Staff					
(a) Staff Meeting	1	2	3	4	N/A
(b) Resources Provided	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					
<hr/>					
5. Support to Parents	1	2	3	4	N/A
Comments:					
<hr/>					

6. Handling the Media 1 2 3 4 N/A
Comments:

7. Other Comments:

Common Initial Post-crisis Reactions (Children)

It is common for children to have the following physiological, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social reactions towards a crisis incident. Under most of the circumstances, with the support from family members, teachers and peers, these commonly seen reactions will abate gradually in a few days or a few weeks. If children are observed to have excessively intense or continuous reactions (refer to Appendix 1D), parents and teachers should seek help from professionals.

Physiological	Cognitive
Somatic complaints (e.g. headaches, upset stomach)	Impaired concentration
Change of appetite (e.g. suddenly eat much more or less than usual)	Repeated flashbacks of the traumatic scene
Sleep disturbance	Nightmares
Fatigue or loss of energy	Self-blaming and feeling worried
Nervousness (e.g. rapid heartbeat, sweating, muscle tension)	Do not understand the concept of death (e.g. believe that the deceased will come back or not aware that all living things will die)
Emotional	Behavioural
Feeling sad (e.g. depressed, being uncommunicative)	Talking about and repeatedly ask about death
Feeling panicked, insecure or fearful (e.g. fear of darkness, monster and strangers)	Repetitive behaviour, e.g. demonstrate the traumatic incident in play, talk about the traumatic incident repeatedly
Feeling angry, disappointed, guilty and helpless	Avoiding places, people, and activities that are related to the traumatic incident
Being emotionally unstable, with more ups and downs than usual (e.g. becoming	Regression in behaviour and exhibiting behaviour that are not age-appropriate (e.g.

irritable, annoyed, tearful and emotional)	bed wetting, soiling, finger sucking and difficulty in speaking)
Feeling emotionally numb	Drop in assessment and homework performance
	School refusal
Social	
More dependent behaviour than usual (e.g. stay closely with parents or carers, have separation anxiety)	
Alienation and opposition (e.g. being uncooperative, showing more frequent temper tantrum, excessive crying, screaming and showing aggressive behaviour)	
Being withdrawn, unwilling to play or talk with other people	

Common Initial Post-crisis Reactions (Adolescents)

It is common for adolescents to have the following physiological, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social reactions towards a crisis incident. Under most of the circumstances, with the support from family members, teachers and peers, these commonly seen reactions will abate gradually in a few days or a few weeks. If adolescents are observed to have excessively intense or continuous reactions (Appendix 1D), parents and teachers should seek help from professionals.

Physiological	Cognitive
Somatic complaints (e.g. headaches, upset stomach)	Impaired concentration, confusion, impaired ability to make judgements and decisions
Change of appetite (e.g. suddenly eat much more or less than usual)	Repeated flashbacks of the traumatic scene
Sleep disturbance	Memory impairment
Fatigue or loss of energy	Nightmares
Nervousness (e.g. rapid heartbeat, sweating, and muscle tension)	Self-blaming and feeling worried
Emotional	Behavioural
Feeling sad (e.g. depressed, being uncommunicative)	Avoiding places, people, and activities that are related to the traumatic incident
Feeling panicked and insecure	Aggressive language and behaviour
Feeling shocked, angry, disappointed and guilty	Demonstrating oppositional behaviour
Being emotionally unstable, with more ups and downs than usual (e.g. becoming irritable, annoyed, tearful and emotional)	Regression in behaviour, exhibiting behaviour that are not age-appropriate (e.g. do not take care of personal hygiene, and avoid responsibility)
Feeling emotionally numb	Drop in assessment and homework performance
	School refusal
Social	

Alienation (e.g. not willing to interact with others)	
Increased interpersonal conflict	

Common Initial Post-crisis Reactions (Adults)

It is common for adults (including parents and staff) to have the following physiological, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social reactions towards a crisis incident. Under most of the circumstances, with the support from family members, colleagues and peers, these commonly seen reactions will abate gradually in a few days or a few weeks. If they feel or observe peers having excessively intense and continuous reactions (Appendix 1D), they should seek help from professionals.

Physiological	Cognitive
Somatic complaints (e.g. headaches, upset stomach)	Impaired concentration, confusion, impaired ability to make judgements and decisions
Change of appetite (e.g. suddenly eat much more or less than usual)	Repeated flashbacks of the traumatic scene
Sleep disturbance	Memory impairment
Fatigue or loss of energy	Nightmares
Nervousness (e.g. rapid heartbeat, sweating, and muscle tension)	Self-blaming and feeling worried
Emotional	Behavioural
Feeling sad (e.g. depressed, being uncommunicative)	Avoiding places, people, and activities that are related to the traumatic incident
Feeling panicked and insecure	Aggressive language and behaviour
Feeling shocked, angry, disappointed and guilty	Decline in work performance, avoid going to work
Being emotionally unstable, with more ups and downs than usual (e.g. becoming irritable, annoyed, tearful and emotional)	
Feeling emotionally numb	
Social	
Alienation (e.g. not willing to interact with others)	
Increased interpersonal conflict	

Continuous and/or Serious Reactions Triggered by Crisis Incident

Schools should **continuously** evaluate the extent of impact of the crisis incident on staff and students so as to identify staff and students who are in need at different stages and to provide them with appropriate support. If students or staff are found to have the following serious reactions, counselling or professional support should be sought.

- **Reactions seriously disrupt their daily functioning** (e.g. suffering from serious insomnia, skipping class/being absent from school or work, memory loss, being emotionally numb or detached, losing interest in most activities and losing appetite, etc)
- **Reactions intensify over time** (e.g. experiencing higher level of fear and anxiety, hypervigilance, excessive self-blaming, feeling helpless and hopeless, etc.)
- **Reactions are excessively intense** (e.g. being extremely frightened and angry), or even showing signs of mental problems (e.g. being seriously depressed, having delusions, hallucinations, bizarre thoughts and images, etc.)
- **Demonstrate maladaptive coping behaviour** (e.g. drug abuse / smoking, serious oppositional behaviour/defying authority, suicidal or homicidal ideation, venting anger in a violent way or hurting others, etc.)

How Should Teachers Respond to Students' Possible Reactions

Guiding Principles:

Listen: Teachers should listen to students and allow them to express their emotions, and accept their thoughts and feelings with empathy.

Understand: Teachers should understand that it is common for students to feel shocked, guilty, angry and sad towards unusual incidents.

Remind: Difficult times will pass. Teachers should remind students to take good care of themselves in times of difficulty and seek help when they feel distressed or encounter difficulties.

Referral: Refer students to school social worker for support if they show strong emotional responses.

Reactions of Students	Words or Acts of Students	Advice to Teachers
No particular reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I don’t know him/her. It is none of my business!” • “I have no feelings!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that some students may not have any reactions to unexpected incidents for the moment or they may have no particular reactions because they do not know the victim. • Do not misunderstand that students are unresponsive or lack compassion. • Tell students that some reactions may emerge later and they may seek help from teachers and social workers whenever necessary.

<p>Disbelieved, Puzzled, Confused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I can’t believe that he/she did this!” • “Is it possible that you’ve got it wrong and identified the wrong person?” • “I don’t know how to say it. I don’t know what I am thinking about!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise that it is difficult to accept what has happened and students need time to accept the facts. • Point out that it is normal for students to have complicated feelings, feel confused or even do not know what to do.
<p>Afraid</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear that similar incident will happen to themselves. • Afraid of ghosts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point out that feeling afraid and panicked is normal. • Students may have difficulties to concentrate, suffer from insomnia and have nightmares. • If these emotions seriously affect the daily functioning of the students, they should seek help. • Explore calming strategies with students.
<p>Sad</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cry. • Miss the deceased. • Some students may be unwilling to discuss the incident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point out that it is normal to feel sad. • Allow students to express their sadness and there is no need to

		<p>stop students from crying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep an eye on students to see if they show excessive sadness and need further support and counselling.
Angry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blame others, such as parents and teachers for failing to prevent the incident from happening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the anger of students. • There is no need to argue who should be responsible for the incident.
Guilty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I should have... ..” • “Why didn’t I” • “If I had known he/she was unhappy, I would have” • “I really should not have always made fun of him/her” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point out that it is common for the good friends of the victim and some schoolmates to feel that they have not done well enough, or feel that they themselves should shoulder the responsibility. • Appreciate their concern for the victim.
Disrespectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being playful or not serious. • Show impatience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not get entangled in the behaviour of these students. • Understand that some students may have difficulties in accepting

		<p>the reality, may not know how to cope with their feelings or deal with their confusion, or may adopt these approaches to repress their negative emotions unconsciously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not tolerate behaviour that have gone too far, e.g. insult of the victim.
<p>If the incident involves death or suicide, students may also have the following reactions:</p>		
<p>Confused about death</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Why didn’t anyone help him/her?” • “What will happen after death? Where will he/she go?” • “Will he/she come back to school?” • “Why do people die?” • “Why did someone die so young?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the confusion of students. • Point out that we only live once, so we must cherish our lives. • Pay attention to different interpretations of death of different religions. • Avoid inappropriate explanation about death, such as the deceased is just sleeping or went to a remote place.
<p>Confused about the incident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Why did he/she die?” • “Why did his/her parents kill him/her and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid discussing details of the death or suicidal incident.

	<p>themselves?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Was it because he/she had no friends to play with?” • “Was he/she unhappy?” • “Why didn’t anyone help him/her?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey the message that life is precious. Remind students that suicide is not an appropriate way to solve problems. • Pay attention to students to see if anyone identifies with suicidal behaviour. Point out that suicide is usually not triggered by a single factor but complex and interrelated factors in most of the cases.
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Coping Strategies

Appropriate coping strategies can help students reduce anxiety and face the stress and distress brought by the crisis incident. Some examples of adaptive and maladaptive strategies are listed below for teachers' reference. Teachers may share the information with students in the Brief Class Meeting or Special Class Period. If students are found to adopt maladaptive strategies, guidance should be given and referral to guidance personnel should be made for follow-up actions when necessary.

Adaptive Coping Strategies	Maladaptive Coping Strategies
Seeking social support	Avoiding social activities
√ Talking to someone (e.g. friends, teachers and guidance personnel) for necessary support	× Withdrawing from social activities × Avoiding contact with family and friends
Healthy Lifestyle	Unhealthy Lifestyle
√ Getting adequate sleep and maintaining a structured schedule √ Maintaining a balanced diet √ Doing appropriate amount of exercise √ Engaging in positive activities (e.g. doing sports, listening to music, reading) √ Doing relaxation exercises	× Working too many hours × Using alcohol or drugs × Spending too much time on TV, mobile phone or computer games × Eating too much or too little × Sleeping too much or too little × Having imbalanced diet × Having not enough exercise
Others	Others
√ Trying to get the necessary information to reduce doubts √ Allowing oneself to be upset for a period of time	× Using violent way to express anger × Engaging in high-risk or dangerous activities

Relaxation Exercise

(I) Deep Breathing			
Step 1: Sit on a chair and feel the back of the chair supporting you.	Step 2: Inhale deeply to let your abdomen gradually expand and keep your whole body relaxed.	Step 3: Exhale slowly to let your abdomen contract and resume to the original level.	Step 4: Repeat the breathing exercise until your heart rate and breathing slow down and you feel calm.
(II) Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise			
Hands and Arms			
Step 1: Clench your fists.	Step 2: Bend your arms with your fists as close to your shoulders as possible.	Step 3: Put your hands down slowly and relax.	
Head			
Step 1: Tilt your head backwards as far as possible.	Step 2: Resume the original head position slowly and relax.	Step 3: Tilt your head down and move your chin as close to your chest as possible.	Step 4: Resume the original head position slowly and relax.
Mouth			
Step 1: Clench your jaw as tight as possible.	Step 2: Press your lips as tight as possible.	Step 3: Stretch your chest as wide as possible.	Step 4: Relax your jaw, lips and chest.

Shoulders

1st set of exercise

Step 1:

Lift your shoulders up and make it as close to your ears as possible.

Step 2:

Lower your shoulders slowly and relax.

2nd set of exercise

Step 1:

Pull your shoulders back and stretch your chest.

Step 2:

Relax gradually.

Legs

Step 1:

Stretch your legs and lift them up.

Step2:

Point your toes.

Step 3:

Flex your feet.

Step 4:

Relax gradually.

How Can Parents Help their Children Cope with Crisis Incident

Crisis incident may make your children feel sad, angry, anxious or fearful. These are common reactions. You may help your children handle sadness or unsettling feelings by listening to them, talking to them and giving them support. Some ideas about how you can help your children cope with crisis incident are listed below:

Security and support

- Stay calm and stabilise your own emotion.
- Pay more attention to your children.
- Spend more time with your children and give them a sense of security.
- Do not hide the facts from your children.
- If your children want to participate in funerals, you need to make sure that they are well prepared and emotionally supported. If needed, they can be accompanied by you or other adults when attending funerals.
- Be aware of the emotional or behavioural changes of your children.
- If your children fear of darkness, are afraid to sleep alone or have nightmares, do not laugh at them or just comfort them by telling them not to be afraid.
- Discuss possible management strategies with your children, such as keeping him/her company, letting him/her go to bed with the light on, and opening the door of the room. For young children, you may give them a doll to accompany him/her to sleep.

Listen to your children

- Do not ask your children not to talk or mention the incident again. Suppressing their unsettling feelings may have adverse effects on their psychological well-being in the long run.
- Offer opportunities for your children to share how they feel, listen to them with patience and comfort them. Avoid giving unsolicited advice.
- Encourage your children to express their feelings by different means (e.g. storytelling, drawing and doing crafts, etc.)

- If your children feel regretful (e.g. blame herself/himself for not aware of the suicidal ideation of the deceased or not being able to stop the incident from happening), you should listen to them and console them. Tell your children that signs of suicide sometimes may not be noted easily, and accidents sometimes might not be avoided. They may feel sorry about the unfortunate incident, but they do not need to be responsible for other people's choices or behaviour (if applicable).
- Tell your children that their feelings are normal so as to relieve their anxiety.

Stabilise the environment

- Encourage your children to continue with the normal routines and activities as soon as possible. Avoid repeatedly watching or reading related news or online information.
- Arrange activities that are good for the body and mind, such as listening to music and doing exercise to help your children relax and focus on other matters.

Seek help

- If you have any doubts about your children's emotional responses, please contact the teachers or guidance personnel of the school.

Frequently Asked Questions on How Can Parents Help their Children Handle Emotions

I. What should parents pay attention to when helping children handle their emotions?

The views and emotional responses of adults towards the incident would significantly affect the children, therefore parents need to:

1. Stay calm and stabilise your own emotion.
2. Avoid spreading rumours. Provide facts and select appropriate information in the news reports to share with your children.
3. Listen to your children and accept their emotions.
4. Pay more attention to your children and spend more time with them to re-establish sense of security.
5. Be aware of the emotional or behavioural changes of your children.
6. Facilitate your children to express their feelings and understand the facts by different means, such as storytelling, drawing and doing crafts.

II. Will the crisis incident affect my child psychologically?

After the incident, your children may feel insecure, frightened, cry easily, feel nervous, etc. These are all natural responses. With parents' care, reassurance and support, most children can handle the changes and difficulties brought about by the incident and resume their normal lives. During this period, you are encouraged to spend more time to accompany and talk with your children. If you notice that your children still show signs of emotional distress after a period of time (e.g. a few weeks), you should contact the school social worker and guidance teachers.

III. If my child is terrified (e.g. having nightmares, fear of darkness, being afraid of going out), what should I do?

Studies showed that after crisis incidents, children's ability to handle the crisis is relatively weaker initially. Hence parents should pay due attention to the emotions of their children and listen to them. Parents should not blame them or deny their feelings (e.g. saying that "there is nothing to be afraid of" or "boys should not be afraid"). Parents should

encourage their children to express their inner feelings gradually and give them support, comfort and help (e.g. tell them that “if you are afraid of sleeping alone, I can keep you company.”) Parents may also teach their children to do some light exercises or take deep breaths to calm down.

IV. How should I respond to the doubts or fears of my child towards death?

You may say to your children, “the death of this student is an unfortunate incident. His life is over and he will not come back to school. We will never see him again. We feel sad and sorry for his death and we have to treasure our lives.”

(Remarks: If you have a religion, you may explain the meaning of death to your child according to your religious belief.)

V. My family is under some pressure, what should I do?

1. Stay positive and take good care of yourself.
2. Talk to your relatives and friends.
3. Seek help from others, e.g. social worker, counsellor, Social Welfare Department or Non-Governmental Organisations.

VI. How to contact the school?

- If you need any help, please contact _____ of the school (Tel.: _____).