The Chignecto-Central Regional School Board believes that every individual has the right to be educated and/or work in an environment that is safe, secure and supportive.

Furthermore, the Board recognizes that from time to time crises and/or tragic events will occur that may disrupt and/or threaten the feeling of safety and security for members of the school community.

In such circumstances, the Board acknowledges that it has a responsibility to provide members of the school community who may be affected by a crisis/tragic event with assistance and support necessary to enable them to cope with such events.

To this end, the Board expects the Superintendent of Schools (or designate) to prepare, implement and monitor procedures that:

- provide the school community with appropriate support in order to prevent students from struggling in isolation and falling victim to their imagination and perceptions of life and death;
- maintain regular school schedules and programs.
- provide students and school personnel with the opportunity to explore their feelings and express their grief in a safe and comfortable environment;
- reduce confusion, prevent the spread of rumors and offer counselling to control anxiety and/or inappropriate behaviors arising from the crisis/tragic event;
- provide a network of support for students, school personnel and parents to draw upon during or following a crisis/tragic event; and
- ensure liaison with appropriate community agencies (e.g. Mental Health agencies, churches, etc.) in an attempt to minimize immediate and/or long-range traumatic stress.
CRISIS RESPONSE/TRAGIC EVENT RESPONSE INTERVENTION

POLICY #ES-SS-01

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

**Authorization**
These Administrative Procedures have been authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

**Scope**
Policy #ES-SS-01 and these Administrative Procedures apply to all Principals, the Coordinator of Student Services, and all staff who may be involved with crisis/tragic event response intervention.

**Responsibility**
It is the responsibility of the Director of Education Services to ensure that Policy #ES-SS-01 and these Administrative Procedures are implemented.

**Implementation**
The Coordinator of Student Services and each school Principal shall implement Policy #ES-SS-01 and these Administrative Procedures.

**Procedures**

1. The Coordinator of Student Services shall ensure that three types of crisis/tragic event response teams are established within the Regional school system:
   
   **A. A Regional Team**
   
   **B. Family of Schools Teams (one in each Family)**
   
   **C. School-based Teams (one in each school)**

2. The Coordinator of Student Services (Regional Team), the Family of Schools Supervisor (Family of Schools Team) and the school Principal (School-based Team) shall organize the respective team(s) per the document Guidelines for Crisis/Tragic Event Response Intervention (Appendix “A” attached)

3. In the event of a crisis/tragic event, affecting the school, the Principal (or designate) shall initiate appropriate actions to minimize the negative impact of the crisis/tragic event on the school community per the guidelines in the document Guidelines for Crisis/Tragic Event Response Intervention.
4. In the event of a crisis/tragic event that affects the **Family of Schools**, the **Family of Schools Supervisor** shall initiate actions per guidelines in the document **Guidelines for Crisis/Tragic Event Response Intervention**.

5. In the event of a crisis/tragic event that affects the **Region**, the **Coordinator of Student Services** shall initiate actions per guidelines in the document **Guidelines for Crisis/Tragic Event Response Intervention**.

6. In the event of a crisis/tragic event **involving the death of a member of the school community**, the **Principal** in consultation with the **School Crisis Response Team and the Family of Schools Supervisor**, shall:
   a) determine an appropriate number of staff representatives to attend the funeral;
   b) rearrange staff assignments and schedules to accommodate funeral attendance by staff representatives while maintaining, to the extent possible, regular programs and schedules for students; and
   c) consult the **Family of Schools Supervisor** if consideration of further action is warranted.

7. In the event of a crisis/tragic event **involving the death of a staff member at the Family of Schools Office/ Central Office/ or other designated work-site**, the **Family of Schools Supervisor / Senior Office Administrator / or work-site supervisor** shall:
   a) determine an appropriate number of staff representatives to attend the funeral;
   b) arrange staff assignments and schedules to accommodate funeral attendance by staff representatives while maintaining, to the extent possible, regular office/work-site activities; and,
   c) consult with the **Superintendent of Schools** if consideration of further action is warranted.

**Related Guidelines**

**Guidelines for Crisis/Tragic Event Response Intervention**

**Distribution**

All Policy and Procedure Manual holders
CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL
REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

GUIDELINES FOR CRISIS/TRAGIC EVENT RESPONSE INTERVENTION

RATIONALE

The policy and procedures of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board are formulated on the basis of the following objectives:

1. To provide the school community with necessary support in order to prevent students from struggling in isolation, and falling victim to their imagination and perceptions of life and death.

2. To provide students and school personnel with the opportunity to explore their feelings and express their grief in a safe and comfortable environment.

3. To reduce confusion, prevent the spread of rumors and offer counselling to control anxiety and/or inappropriate behaviors arising from the crisis/tragic event.

4. To provide a network of support for students, school personnel and parents to draw on during or following the crisis/tragic event.

5. To liaise with appropriate community agencies (e.g. Mental Health and churches), in an attempt to minimize immediate and/or long-range traumatic stress.

CRISIS/TRAGIC EVENT RESPONSE TEAMS

Three levels of crisis/tragic event response teams will be established within the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board.

A. Regional Team
B. Family Teams
C. School-based teams
Each team is responsible for certain aspects of responding to/or intervening in the event of a crisis/tragic event as outlined in the procedure below:

**School Team**

This team serves on the front line of Crisis/Tragic Event response and intervention. The team is comprised of school personnel and concerns itself with its own school community.

*Leader:* Principal (or designate)  
*Members:* Vice-Principal (or designate)  
Counsellor/CARES Personnel  
Other teachers/support personnel as appropriate  
Outside Agencies as appropriate (i.e., Drug Dependency, clergy, police)  
School Psychologist(s)

**Family Team**

This team is designated to assist School Teams as appropriate, on a highest priority first basis. The team is responsible for organizing and providing appropriate counselling services and any other needs identified in consultation with School Teams.

*Leader:* As determined by the Family Team  
*Members:* School Psychologist(s)  
Family of Schools Supervisor  
Other individuals as necessary

**Regional Team**

The Regional Team is designated to deal with regional crisis/tragic events. The team’s mandate will be to provide leadership across the region in both a reactive and proactive manner.

*Leader:* Coordinator of Students Services  
*Members:* Family of Schools Supervisors
In the event of a crisis/tragic event, the procedures outlined below will be followed:

ACTION PLAN

In the event of a crisis/tragic event, the Principal or designate becomes the key player in the initiation, organization and control of actions to minimize the negative impact on the school. He/She will ensure that the procedures are carried out as determined by the nature of the crisis/tragic event. The following are suggested steps to undertake:

a) the **Principal** will confirm the event and attempt to verify relevant details through direct contact with authorities (i.e. police). In the event of a student death, the family should be contacted as appropriate to offer condolences;

b) the **Principal** will mobilize the **School Team** to determine the roles and course of action;

c) the **Principal** will notify the **Family Team Leader**;

d) the **Principal and Family Team** will review the situation and determine the level of involvement of outside personnel and course of action;

e) the **Family Team** will alert, if necessary, other school(s) likely to be affected by the crisis/tragic event (i.e., school of deceased student’s sibling);

f) A staff meeting will be called to discuss:
   - all factual information relevant to the event
   - how the school day will proceed
   - identification of at-risk individuals
   - role of the **Family and School Teams**, and staff
   - areas to be designated for group and individual meetings

If a staff meeting is not immediately possible a memorandum will be circulated to all staff. A meeting should be held as soon as possible (e.g. recess).

g) **Teachers** will disseminate confirmed information to their classes and inform them of location of resource persons. Opportunity should be given to students to discuss their feelings about the crisis/tragic event and then normal classroom instruction should resume as soon as possible. For those teachers who do not feel comfortable discussing the event, replacements should be found.
h) Teachers and/or school personnel should monitor student and colleague reactions and behaviors. Concerns should be shared with a member of the School/Family Team. Special care must be taken to ensure that at-risk students do not leave the school without parental permission - they are not to go home or be alone! If any high risk students are not in school, their parents/caregivers should be contacted.

i) The Family of Schools Supervisor or the Principal will be responsible for media liaison.

j) A brief staff meeting will be held at the end of the day to debrief school personnel and to assess experiences and the status of students.

k) School Team will meet to discuss possible follow-up actions.

l) A documented report of the response will be provided by the Principal (designate) to the Family Team.

SCHOOL TEAM CRISIS/TRAGIC EVENT RESPONSE MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

1. Confirm event.

2. Inform/Consult School/Family Team.

3. Brief Team members and review action plan.

4. Provide information to staff and students.

5. Carry out team action plans.

6. Follow-up actions (e.g. debriefing).

Each school shall establish a list of possible support personnel (names and phone numbers). Such lists should include representation from: Police/RCMP, Clergy, Medical Personnel, Government agencies (i.e. Mental Health, Social Services, etc.).
SPECIFIC ROLES OF HELPERS

Principal

The principal becomes the pivotal player during a crisis/tragic event which has school-wide impact. He/She is usually the first to receive a call from the outside about the incident and should proceed to implement the school’s crisis/tragic event plan accordingly. The Principal does the following:

a) Confirms the event with responsible authorities.

b) Calls Family Team.

c) Notifies and mobilizes the School Team.

d) Reviews the situation with the Family Team as they arrive.

e) Calls a general staff meeting to review the situation.

f) Determines possible cancellation of scheduled events (i.e. tests, social functions, etc.)

g) Determines schedules of resource teachers and support staff and assesses the need for substitute teachers.

h) Ensures that all appropriate confirmed information is passed on to the teachers and students as it becomes available.

i) Determines services which will be available to students and arranges locations for School and/or Family Team members to operate.

j) Ensures that all at-risk individuals are identified and accounted for.

k) Arranges for staff meetings as necessary following the crisis/tragic event.

l) Ensures that the proper “follow-up” activities are undertaken.

Vice-Principal

a) Assumes the duties of the principal in running the school during the crisis/tragic event if the principal is unavailable.

b) Provides structure necessary to maintain the integrity of the school day.

c) Works with the principal as directed to ensure that all procedures have been undertaken.
Psychologists/school Counsellors/CARES Personnel

a) Help to identify at-risk individuals.

b) Contact parents of at-risk students who are not in school.

c) Move to designated areas as necessary to provide counselling and/or support to students and staff.

d) Plan and carry out a follow-up program as necessary.

e) Work with the Principal, School Team and Family Team as necessary.

School Team

a) Help to identify at-risk individuals.

b) Work with the Principal and School/Family Team members as necessary.

Teachers

a) Disseminate information confirmed by the principal to students on a class-by-class basis. Also, inform them if no new information has come to light.

b) Allow students to discuss their feelings about the crisis/tragic event for the first few minutes of class and then return to instruction as soon as possible.

c) Inform students of psychological and/or counselling services which are available to them, and allow them to access these services.

d) Help to identify at-risk individuals.

e) Provide structure to help maintain the integrity of the school day.

Secretaries

a) Assist administrators and crisis team members as needed.

b) Help identify at-risk individuals.

c) Handle the phones.
d) Provide callers with only the information approved by the Principal. Ensure that the Principal is aware of any inquiries from the press.

**Family Team Members**

a) Respond to each crisis/tragic event in the Family.

b) Determine the highest priority school and concentrate service there.

c) Monitor other schools affected by the crisis/tragic event.

d) Call in outside supports and agencies as needed.

e) Direct follow-up activities and ensure a debriefing process and post-crisis/tragic event procedures are in place in each affected school.

f) Provide resources, as needed, to **School Teams**.

g) Ensure that all schools which may be affected by the crisis/tragic event are notified and given any confirmed information which may be available.

h) Prepare press statements and alert Principals of any information which is or is not to be passed on to the media.

**Regional Team Members**

a) Respond to each regional crisis/tragic event.

b) Determine priority areas/families/schools and concentrate leadership efforts as appropriate.

c) Monitor activities of **Family/School Teams** as appropriate.

d) Provide regional resources, as required, to **Family/School Teams**.

e) Prepare regional media releases.

f) Receive/review information provided by **Family/School Teams** regarding impact of crisis/tragic event on the region.

g) Inform Senior Administration and/or Board Members as appropriate.
AT-RISK INDIVIDUALS

The role of the School/Family/Regional Team is to help the school community cope with a given crisis/tragic event. Certain individuals, however, may require more intense or special consideration in a crisis/tragic event situation. The following individuals must be identified and accounted for early on in the school day:

a) In the event of a student death, at-risk individuals may include teachers and classmates, very close friends of the deceased, and family members of the deceased who may be attending school. The latter is especially important if the family support mechanisms for these people are not adequate.

b) Any students in the school who are known to have had psychological difficulties that would seem to make them more vulnerable.

c) Any student or staff member who has recently experienced the loss of a relative or close friend.

d) If the crisis/tragic event is the result of a suicide, special attention must be given to students who may have previously been identified as high, moderate or low-risk individuals in relation to suicide.

e) Any students who seem to be assuming some guilt about the occurrence of the crisis/tragic event.

f) Any students or staff members who seem to be having difficulty coping with the situation.