

NORTHEASTERN CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
TRAGIC EVENTS PROTOCOL





We know that a school community is deeply impacted by times of unexpected tragedy or loss through the death of a loved one, friend, colleague, or classmate.

Any tragic situation must be addressed with compassion and our responses must be based on the teachings of our Catholic faith. There is not one standard way to help each other through times of sadness, my hope is that this resource will be a support to all of you who are serving in our schools.

Let us always be mindful of our faith and the companionship we have in our Lord, Jesus Christ. We ask for the blessings of strength to console those who mourn and the wisdom to speak words of comfort, even in the darkest of times.

*Tricia Stefanic Weltz
Director of Education*



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Loss, Grief and Growth – Education Program Incorporated (Resource)



RESPONSE TO TRAGIC EVENTS

Policy Number: E-20

Authority: 06-155/14-05/17-219/20-112

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeastern Catholic District School (NCDSB) is committed to assisting our school communities touched by a traumatic event or crisis that occurs in a family, in the local area or in the broader global environment. As a Catholic community of believers, we are called to show empathy and compassion to our students and staff members who may be affected emotionally by tragedy or crisis. The NCDSB believes that our response to tragedy must reflect our Catholic beliefs, values, and traditions, while respecting the increasing diversity of our community.

REFERENCES

NCDSB Administrative Procedure APE035
NCDSB Tragic Events Protocol

DEFINITIONS

Crisis

An unexpected event that cannot be prevented and which causes deep emotional reactions within the school or community.

Tragic Event

A serious illness, accident, death, or traumatic event that affects more than one student or staff member, and that goes beyond the school resources in terms of coping and responding.

POLICY REGULATIONS

- 1.0 The Northeastern Catholic District School Board's *Tragic Events Protocol* and attendant administrative procedures will help to ensure that there is consistency in our response and actions to tragedy and/or crisis.
- 2.0 The *Tragic Events Protocol* and attendant administrative procedures shall include suggestions on ways to deal with grief, including faith-based resources, as well as appropriate communication strategies to consider.
- 3.0 In the instance of a tragic event, the Principal or Administrator shall consult with the Superintendent of Education and refer to the *Tragic Events Protocol*.
- 4.0 The Superintendent of Education will communicate the tragic event to the Director of Education as soon as possible, who will then share the information with the NCDSB community accordingly.



- 5.0 The Principal or Administrator will implement the protocol accordingly, and will seek the assistance of system leaders and/or support workers, parish partners, or agencies as required.
- 6.0 Resources will be deployed to the school as required to support the grieving process of the community, as determined by the Principal and/or Superintendent of Education.
- 7.0 At least once annually, the Principal shall review the *Tragic Events Protocol* and attendant administrative procedures with staff members.
- 8.0 A Superintendent of Education shall provide the resources to ensure the proper implementation of the Board's Tragic Events Protocol and Procedures.



RESPONSE TO TRAGIC EVENTS

Administrative Procedure Number: APE035

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeastern Catholic District School (NCDSB) is committed to assisting our school communities touched by a traumatic event or crisis that occurs in a family, in the local area or in the broader global environment. As a Catholic community of believers, we are called to show empathy and compassion to our students and staff members who may be affected emotionally by tragedy or crisis. The NCDSB believes that our response to tragedy must reflect our Catholic beliefs, values, and traditions, while respecting the increasing diversity of our community.

REFERENCES

Nil.

DEFINITIONS

Crisis

An unexpected event that cannot be prevented and which causes deep emotional reactions within the school or community.

Tragic Event

A serious illness, accident, death, or traumatic event that affects more than one student or staff member, and that goes beyond the school resources in terms of coping and responding.

PROCEDURES

1.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Principal

- i) advise a Superintendent of Education of the situation as soon as possible;
- ii) work in partnership with the Superintendent of Education to prepare the school community and response to the tragic event;
- iii) maintain active lines of communication with all stakeholders as necessary;
- iv) seek the advice and guidance of the Superintendent of Education throughout the process of responding to the tragic event;
- v) serve as the primary liaison with the family affected by the tragic event;



- vi) direct office staff to make necessary adjustments in the student information system;
- vii) work in collaboration with staff to set up a prayer table in honour of the tragic event.

1.2 Superintendent of Education

- i) shall advise the Director of Education of a tragic event upon learning of the situation;
- ii) coordinate the response in a particular school with the school principal or designate;
- iii) maintain active lines of communication with all stakeholders as necessary.

1.3 Director of Education

- i) communicate the tragic event to the Board of Trustees and NCDSB community as promptly as possible;
- ii) work in conjunction with the Superintendent of Education and Principal as required to implement the protocol and support the community in any way possible.

2.0 RESPONDING TO VARIOUS TRAGIC EVENTS

- 2.1 The Tragic Event Protocol will be created and reviewed regularly to ensure the most appropriate measures are suggested to respond to tragedy or crisis in our Catholic school communities.
- 2.2 The Tragic Event Protocol will outline possible actions to be taken in response to a tragic event. The Principal will have discretion to modify or adjust the actions based on the incident and the surrounding circumstances, as discussed with the Superintendent of Education.
- 2.3 The Tragic Event Protocol will provide support in a manner that is consistent with Christian beliefs and values in the Catholic tradition that respects the dignity of each school community.

3.0 SCHOOL TRAINING AND READINESS

- 3.1 At least one time annually, the Principal will review the Tragic Events Protocol with staff.
- 3.2 The Director of Education will engage members of school communities in regular review of the protocol to ensure that our system is able to respond to a tragic event or crisis accordingly.

Director of Education:

Tricia Stefanie Welz

Date:

December 2020



RESPONDING TO THE DEATH OF A STUDENT

Possible Actions/Requirements

1. Upon learning of the death of a student, the Principal should immediately notify the Superintendent of Education.
2. The Principal should contact the family and determine their wishes regarding:
 - Facts of the death
 - Details about funeral arrangements
 - Visitation to home and funeral home
 - Wishes about donations or flowers
 - Wishes about phone calls home
 - Details concerning letter to be sent to class and/or school
 - Schools' plan of response
 - Calls from the media
3. The Principal will personally inform the student's teacher(s) about the death.
4. The Principal conducts a staff meeting as soon as possible to deal with:
 - Facts of death
 - Family wishes
 - Funeral arrangement details
 - Staff response to death
 - Review of the grief process
 - Outline plan of action to notify students of death and how to support them
5. As Principal, be prepared for calls from the media. All calls will be referred to and handled by the Community Relations Officer at the Board Office.
6. In response to parent phone calls, state only the known facts, funeral arrangements, and school response. This could be clearly articulated in a written statement prepared by the school Principal and circulated to all staff.
7. Personal classroom visits to share the following information:
 - Correct facts about the death
 - Parents' wishes
 - Funeral arrangements
 - A description of student and what he/she meant to the class/school
 - A moment of prayer

A PA announcement can be used as an alternative, at the Principal's discretion.
8. Keep the day as normal as possible.



9. Determine the names of students who were close to the deceased and offer counselling support. Be sure to contact the student's parents accordingly.
10. Where needed, provide support for staff by most appropriate person. Ensure that staff are given time and a place where they can go when needed. Offer Employee Assistance Program (EAP), as needed.
11. If desired, set up a visible memorial to remember the deceased. Use discretion.
12. If desired, send flowers and/or donation to the funeral home.
13. Send sympathy card to the family of the deceased.
14. Send letter home to class and/or school community outlining the school response to the death.
15. Arrange for students who wish to attend Funeral Mass/Service. Normally, students from the class (grade three and up) would attend the Funeral Mass/Service. Prior to the Funeral Mass/Service a letter should be sent home advising parents that their child will be attending the Mass/Service unless the parent makes other arrangements. See Appendix B for sample letter.
16. Arrange for staff who wish to:
 - Visit the funeral home.
 - Attend the Funeral Mass/Service.
 - Ensure some staff representation at each.

Teachers and support staff with immediate contact with the student as well as the Principal should attend the funeral home and the Funeral Mass/Services to support the grieving family and student.

17. Plan to have a brief prayer at school on the day of the funeral. Samples can be found in Appendix C.
18. After a few days allow students to:
 - Discuss alternative uses for the desk of the deceased.
 - Help collect belongings of the deceased prior to returning items to the family.
19. Have a Memorial Mass approximately one week after the funeral for the school community.
 - Consult Parish Priest to determine date, time and location.
 - Invite the deceased's family to be present for the Mass.
 - Adapt Memorial Mass (Appendix F) to meet particular needs.
 - Determine an appropriate way to remember the deceased.
20. Evaluate the situation to determine need for follow-up.



21. Determine if further recognition is needed in yearbook or graduation ceremony (if applicable).
22. At the end of day one, meet with staff to allow them to share about the day, review what was done and prepare for the next day, next week, etc.
23. Be prepared to provide further support to students and staff at significant points in the school year (i.e. Christmas, school trip, graduation, deceased's birthday, anniversary of death).
24. Ensure that the name of the deceased is removed from relevant computer lists at the school (e.g. Attendance registers).



RESPONDING TO THE DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER

Possible Actions/Requirements

1. Upon learning of the death of a staff member, the Principal should immediately notify the Superintendent of Education. The Superintendent of Education should notify the Director of Education.
2. The Principal should contact the family and determine their wishes regarding:
 - Facts of the death
 - Details about funeral arrangements
 - Visitation to home and funeral home
 - Wishes about donations or flowers
 - Wishes about phone calls home
 - Details concerning letter to be sent to class and/or school
 - Schools plan of response
 - Calls from the media
3. The Principal conducts a staff meeting as soon as possible to deal with:
 - Facts of death
 - Family's wishes
 - Funeral arrangement details
 - Staff response to death (how they are feeling)
 - Review of the grief process
 - Outline plan of action to notify students of death and how to support them

If the death occurs when the staff is not at school (i.e. weekend or holiday), the Principal should call all staff to inform them of the death.

4. As Principal, be prepared for calls from the media. All calls will be referred to and handled by the Community Relations Officer at the Board Office.
5. In response to parent phone calls, state only the known facts, funeral arrangements, and school response. This could be clearly articulated in a text prepared by the school Principal and circulated to all staff.
6. Notify former staff who worked with the deceased staff member about his/her death. This includes staff who have retired as well as those who have been transferred to another school/board.
7. School announcement to student body over PA system and to each classroom individually by the classroom teacher including the following information:
 - Correct facts about the death
 - Family's wishes
 - Funeral arrangements
 - A description of staff member and what he/she meant to the school
 - A moment of prayer



8. Keep the day as normal as possible.
9. If the staff member who has died was a classroom teacher, ensure that there is a “familiar face” in the classroom to notify the students about the death.
10. Determine the names of the students who were close to the deceased and offer counselling.
11. Where needed, provide support for staff by the most appropriate person. Ensure that staff are given time and a place where they can go when needed.
12. If desired, set up a visible memorial to remember the deceased.
13. If desired, send flowers and/or donation to the funeral home.
14. Send sympathy card to the family of the deceased.
15. Send letter home to school community outlining the school response to the death.
16. Arrange for students who wish to attend Funeral Mass/Service. Normally, students from the class (grade three and up) would attend the Funeral Mass/Service. Prior to the Funeral Mass/Service a letter should be sent home advising parents that their child will be attending the Mass/Service unless the parent makes other arrangements. See Appendix B for sample letter.
17. Arrange for staff who wish to:
 - Visit the funeral home.
 - Attend the Funeral Mass/Service.
 - Ensure some staff representation at each.

Teachers and support staff with immediate contact with the staff member as well as the Principal should attend the funeral home and the Funeral Mass/Services to support the grieving family and staff member.

18. Plan to have a brief prayer at school on the day of the funeral. See Appendix E.
19. Have a Memorial Mass approximately one week after the funeral for the school community.
 - Consult Parish Priest to determine date, time and location.
 - Invite the deceased’s family to be present for the Mass.
 - Adapt Memorial Mass (Appendix F) to meet particular needs.
 - Determine an appropriate way to remember the deceased.
20. Evaluate the situation to determine need for follow-up.
21. Determine if further recognition is needed in yearbook or graduation ceremony (if applicable).



22. At the end of day one, meet with staff to allow them to share about the day, review what was done and prepare for the next day, next week, etc.
23. Be prepared to provide further support to students and staff at significant points in the school year (i.e. Christmas, school trip, graduation, deceased's birthday, anniversary of death).



RESPONDING TO THE DEATH WITHIN A STUDENT'S FAMILY

(Immediate Family – mother, father, brother, sister)

Possible Actions/Requirements

1. Upon learning of the death within a student's family, the Principal should immediately notify the Superintendent of Education.
2. The Principal should contact the family and determine their wishes regarding:
 - Facts of the death
 - Details about funeral arrangements
 - Visitation to home and funeral home
 - Wishes about donations or flowers
 - Wishes about phone calls home
 - Details concerning letter to be sent to class and/or school
 - Schools plan of response
 - Calls from the media
3. The Principal informs directly and personally the student's teacher(s) about the death.
4. The Principal conducts a staff meeting as soon as possible to deal with:
 - Facts of death
 - Family's wishes
 - Funeral arrangement details
 - Staff response to death (how they are feeling)
 - Review of the grief process
 - Outline plan of action to notify students of death and how to support them
5. As Principal, be prepared for calls from the media. All calls will be referred to and handled by the Community Relations Officer at the Board Office.
6. In response to parent phone calls, state only the known facts, funeral arrangements, and school response. This could be clearly articulated in a text prepared by the school Principal and circulated to all staff.
7. School announcement to student body over PA system and to each classroom individually by the classroom teacher including the following information:
 - Correct facts about the death
 - Family's wishes
 - Funeral arrangements
 - A moment of prayer
8. Keep the day as normal as possible.
9. Determine the names of the students who were close to the deceased and offer counselling.



10. Where needed, provide support for staff by the most appropriate person. Ensure that staff are given time and a place where they can go when needed.
11. If desired, set up a visible memorial to remember the deceased.
12. Send sympathy card to the family of the deceased.
13. Send letter home to school community outlining the school response to the death.
14. Arrange for students who wish to attend Funeral Mass/Service. Normally, students from the class (grade three and up) would attend the Funeral Mass/Service. Prior to the Funeral Mass/Service a letter should be sent home advising parents that their child will be attending the Mass/Service unless the parent makes other arrangements. See Appendix B for sample letter.
15. Arrange for staff who wish to:
 - Visit the funeral home.
 - Attend the Funeral Mass/Service.
 - Ensure some staff representation at each.

Teachers and support staff with immediate contact as well as the Principal should attend the funeral home and the Funeral Mass/Services to support the grieving family and student.

16. In the affected classroom(s), provide opportunities for students to express emotions of grief and loss.
17. In the affected classroom(s), send a sympathy card to the student and his/her family.
18. Following the funeral, prepare staff and students for the return of the bereaved student. Help staff and students with their concerns of what to say, what to do, etc., See Appendix D.
19. Following the funeral, the Principal/Teacher should make contact with the parents to discuss the re-entry plan for the student affected by the death. Accommodation and modification to workload should be discussed as well as offering counseling services and support at school for the child. An open sharing about how the child is dealing with the death would be helpful for all.
20. At the time of the student's re-entry, the Teacher(s)/Principal should meet individually with the student to touch base with him/her about the entry plan and offer whatever support is needed.
21. Be prepared to provide further support to students and staff at significant points in the school year (i.e. Christmas, school trip, graduation, deceased's birthday, anniversary of death).
22. In the case of the death of a parent, ensure that the name of the deceased is removed from relevant computer lists at the school.



RESPONDING TO THE DEATH WITHIN A STAFF MEMBER'S FAMILY
(Immediate Family – spouse, mother, father, brother, sister, child)

Possible Actions/Requirements

1. Upon learning of the death within a staff member's family, the Principal should immediately notify the Superintendent of Education.
2. The Principal should contact the family and determine their wishes regarding:
 - Facts of the death
 - Details about funeral arrangements
 - Visitation to home and funeral home
 - Wishes about donations or flowers
 - Wishes about phone calls home
 - Details concerning letter to be sent to class and/or school
 - Schools plan of response
 - Calls from the media
3. The Principal conducts a staff meeting as soon as possible to deal with:
 - Facts of death
 - Family's wishes
 - Funeral arrangement details
 - Staff response to death (how they are feeling)
 - Review of the grief process
 - Outline plan of action to notify students of death and how to support them
4. As Principal, be prepared for calls from the media. All calls will be referred to and handled by the Community Relations Officer at the Board Office.
5. In response to parent phone calls, state only the known facts, funeral arrangements, and school response. This could be clearly articulated in a text prepared by the school Principal and circulated to all staff.
6. School announcement to student body over PA system and to each classroom individually by the classroom teacher including the following information:
 - Correct facts about the death
 - Family's wishes
 - Funeral arrangements
 - A moment of prayer
7. Keep the day as normal as possible.
8. Determine the names of the students who were close to the deceased and offer counselling.



9. Where needed, provide support for staff by the most appropriate person. Ensure that staff are given time and a place where they can go when needed.
10. If desired, set up a visible memorial to remember the deceased.
11. Send sympathy card to the family of the deceased.
12. Arrange for students who wish to attend Funeral Mass/Service. Normally, students from the class (grade three and up) would attend the Funeral Mass/Service. Prior to the Funeral Mass/Service a letter should be sent home advising parents that their child will be attending the Mass/Service unless the parent makes other arrangements. See Appendix B for sample letter.
13. Arrange for staff who wish to:
 - Visit the funeral home.
 - Attend the Funeral Mass/Service.
 - Ensure some staff representation at each.

Teachers and support staff with immediate contact as well as the Principal should attend the funeral home and the Funeral Mass/Services to support the grieving family and staff member.

14. In the affected classroom(s), provide opportunities for students to express emotions of grief and loss.
15. In the affected classroom(s), send a sympathy card to the staff member.
16. At the time of the teacher/support staff member's return to school, the Principal should meet individually with the person to touch base with him/her.
17. Following the funeral, prepare staff and students for the return of the bereaved staff member. Help staff and students with their concerns of what to say, what to do, etc. See Appendix D.



RESPONDING TO A DEATH WHEN SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED

PREAMBLE

There will be occasions when tragic events affecting the life of students and staff members occur when classes are not in session (i.e., Christmas holidays, March Break, summer holidays). As followers of Jesus and compassionate members of the family of God it is important for us, as schools and administrators, to respond to these situations when they occur. In many ways, our response and outreach is even more critical since traditional supports (i.e., classroom teacher, school friends, child and youth worker) are not as readily available.

- During school holidays it is particularly important for school Principals to keep their ears open to hear of news affecting members of their school community.
- Principals should encourage all staff members to do the same.
- School staff should notify the Principal immediately upon hearing about tragic news affecting a member of the school community. If the Principal cannot be reached, the staff member shall notify the Superintendent of Education.
- Principals should remind staff of this important responsibility before any major holiday.
- Upon learning of a tragic event affecting the life of either students or staff members, the Principal will immediately notify the Superintendent of Education. If the Superintendent of Education is unavailable, the Principal will notify the Director of Education.
- With regard to the death of a student, staff member or member of their immediate family, the Principal will contact all current staff members.
- In addition, in the case of the death of a current staff member, the principal will also attempt to contact former colleagues (i.e., retired or recently transferred) and inform them of the death.
- Every effort should be made by the Principal and those staff members directly involved to attend both the funeral home visitation and the Funeral Mass or Service.
- If the death is learned about after the Funeral Mass or Service has taken place, the Principal will immediately send a card of sympathy to the affected family.
- In addition to expressing the school's sympathy and prayers, the note should express regret that the school was not represented at the Funeral Mass or Service.
- The Principal should also indicate that soon he or she will be calling the family to arrange a mutually agreeable time for a visit with them.
- As traditional supports for students are not available during holiday times, being able to visit with the student and his or her family following the death of a loved one is important in establishing a plan for re-entry to school.
- It is also extremely important for the school Principal to consider how the death will be acknowledged when the holidays are over and the students return to school.
- The school Principal will consider how students will be notified of the death and what type of memorial service will be held at the school.
- Decisions about these issues should be discussed with the affected family involved as well as the Superintendent of Education.

The use of the word Principal is intended to refer to the school principal, the acting administrator or the interim principal, as appropriate.



APPENDIX A - EXTERNAL RESOURCES

TIMMINS/SOUTH PORCUPINE	
Timmins & District Hospital	705-267-2131
Timmins Police Department	705-264-1201
NEOFACS	705-360-7100
Sacred Heart Parish	705-268-3053
St. Anthony of Padua Cathedral Parish	705-264-0587
St. Joachim Church	705-235-3025
Stinson Funeral Home	705-235-2900
Miron Wilson Funeral Home	705-264-4444
Lessard-Stephens Funeral Home	705-268-4488
KAPUSKASING	
Sensenbrenner Hospital	705-337-6111
Ontario Provincial Police	705-335-2238
NEOFACS	705-335-2445
St. Patrick's Church	705-335-4673
Guenette Funeral Home	705-335-2433
COCHRANE	
Lady Minto Hospital	705-272-7200
Ontario Provincial Police	705-272-4391
Jeanne Sauve Family Services	705-272-2449
Transfiguration Parish	705-272-4072
Les Maisons Funeraires Genier Gauthier Funeral Homes	705-272-5726
Irvine & Irvine Limited	705-272-3239
IROQUOIS FALLS	
Anson General Hospital	705-258-3911
Ontario Provincial Police	705-2324087
NEOFACS	705-360-7100
St. Anne Parish	705-258-3243
Irvine & Irvine Funeral Home	705-232-4006
KIRKLAND LAKE	
Kirkland Lake & District Hospital	705-567-5251
Ontario Provincial Police	705-567-5355
NEOFACS	705-567-9201
Holy Name of Jesus Parish	705-567-3932
French Family Funeral Home	705-567-3565
ENGLEHART	
Englehart & District Hospital	705-544-2301
Ontario Provincial Police	705-544-2233
NEOFACS	705-567-9201
Holy Trinity Parish	705-544-8023
McDonald Funeral Home	705-544-2257



NEW LISKEARD/COBALT	
Temiskaming Hospital	705-647-1088
Ontario Provincial Police	705-647-8400
NEOFACS	705-647-1200
Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish	705-647-5035
St. Patrick Parish	705-647-5035
Perrin Funeral Chapel Ltd	705-647-5020
Buffam Leveille Funeral Home	705-672-3122
MOOSONEE	
Weeneebayko General Hospital	705-658-4544
Moosonee Health Centre	705-336-2341
Ontario Provincial Police	705-336-2320
Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service	705-658-4886
Payukotayno Child Care Agency	705-336-2229
Christ the King Cathedral	705-336-2908



APPENDIX B – LETTER TO PARENTS

Date

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

It is with great regret that I inform you of some very sad news concerning the death of ____ (name) on ____ (date). ____ (name) was a student/staff member in grade ____.

Words cannot express the depth of our sympathy for his/her family at this time. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the ____ (family's last name) family at this time.

The news of ____ (name) death was shared with your child at school today. In the midst of this, students were able to share their thoughts and feelings, not only about ____ (name) death, but many also shared stories and memories about loved ones they have known who have died. It was a very rich and profound experience. However, as a result, your child may come home with some questions or unresolved feelings and thoughts about life and death. I invite you to continue this dialogue and sharing with your child should he/she desire to.

Visitation will be at ____ (name of funeral home) on ____ (date and time). The Funeral Mass/Service will be celebrated at ____ (name of church/funeral home) on ____ (date and time).

In accordance with our Board's policy and procedure, *Response to Tragic Events*, students (grade three and up) who were in ____ (student/teacher's name) class will be attending the Funeral Mass/Service. If you should prefer that your child not participate in the funeral liturgy, please contact the school to make alternative arrangements.

We invite you to continue to remember ____ (name) and his/her family in your prayers at this difficult time of loss. May the gift of our faith and the promise of the resurrection be a source of hope and consolation to all of us.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the school. We welcome your questions or comments at any time.

Sincerely,

Principal



APPENDIX C – SAMPLE SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT

Guidelines

The method used to inform students will vary according to the situation.

1. Disclosure of any information must be consistent with the wishes of the family.
2. Certain students should be notified privately.
3. Students in the primary division should be informed personally.
4. If an announcement must be made on the P.A., it is important that it be made to the students not later than fifteen minutes before the end of class. This will give time for some discussion. The teacher should be sensitive to their reaction and allow time for support. The availability of support staff and the location of care stations should be given to the students at that time. If support personnel could be available to meet with students or staff individually, this could be made known at this time.
5. The announcement should be shared with staff prior to any public sharing.
6. The announcement should include:
 - Who died
 - An accurate account of the circumstances of the death (to avoid rumour, speculation or exaggeration)
 - The individual's relationship to the school
 - A personal sharing of feelings of grief and remembrance
 - A prayer or a minute of silence as appropriate.

ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SCHOOL

Good morning, boys and girls.

We at ____ (name of school) are a family.

Families share their good times as well as their sad times.

Today is a very sad day for all of us because ____ (student's name), who is in Mr./Mrs. ____ (name of teacher) died very suddenly last night.

Your teacher will be talking about this with you in a few moments.

(If there are any external support staff present in the school (i.e. parish priest), it would be appropriate to mention this).

This morning ____ and ____ are with us in the school to help us during this sad time. They may be visiting your classroom later today.

This is a great shock to all of us and we are going to miss ____ (name) as part of our school family. His/her own family will need our prayers and kinds words. Please remember ____ (name) and his/her family as we say this prayer together:

Heavenly Father, please give us the help to cope with our sadness today.

Bless ____ (name of family) and help them to be able to give each other the support and the love they need at this time. May ____'s (name) soul rest in peace. Amen.



APPENDIX D – DO’S AND DON’Ts

Do’s	Don’ts
Do acknowledge that all people grieve differently; affirm and support individual expressions of grief, including the absence of grieve.	Don’t disclose any information other than that which has been formally made public, particularly hearsay.
Do increase your awareness of potentially dangerous behaviour among students.	Don’t pretend that you have all the answers to the questions raised by death.
Do allow students to leave class to attend a care station or visit support personnel.	Don’t deny your own need to grieve.
Do promote other community resources.	Don’t idealize the deceased as a way to comfort the bereaved, particularly in the event of a suicide.
Do be sensitive to the environment in which students can ask questions and express their feelings.	Don’t force participation in any grief response activity.
Do attend to your own feelings; seek professional help as required.	Don’t link suffering and death with guilt, punishment, or sin.
Do create a safe and supportive environment in which students can ask questions and express their feelings.	Don’t give into any temptation to moralize or lecture.
Do use correct terminology related to death. Avoid using terms that may deny the reality of death and its impact on the bereaved.	Don’t say, “I know how you feel”.
Do be an attentive listener. Avoid making judgements and using clichés. Silence may be an effective tool.	Don’t assume that because you may see something positive in the situation that others share the same view.
Do share your own feelings and memories of the deceased.	Don’t expect adult responses from children.
Do say, “I don’t know” when you really don’t know; you do not have to have all the answers.	Don’t use clichés (e.g. “You should be happy; they are with God now.” or “It must have been God’s will.” or “They have gone to a better place.”
Do share in a gently and discerning way your own faith with others to facilitate their own grieving.	Don’t be judgemental with regard to a person’s grief response(s).
Do maintain a sympathetic attitude toward a person’s age-appropriate responses.	Don’t assume that all deaths will elicit the same grief response.
Do be aware of the creation of dependencies.	Don’t feel you must handle this alone. Ask for help.



APPENDIX E – SAMPLE PRAYERS AND LITURGIES

Suitable Prayer Following the Initial Announcement of a Death

(Suitable Song)

Let us begin ... In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit amen.

Let us pray ...

Loving God, You are the source of all life and the font of compassion. It is with truly heavy hearts that we gather here today as we mourn the sudden death of our friend ____ (name). In our grief we are at a loss to understand how someone with so much to give could be taken so suddenly from us. We wonder at the justice of leaving a family without a (son/daughter; mother/father).

So Lord, we know that You will understand that for us, right here and right now, our sense of loss may seem bigger than Your gift of life; our questions may seem to echo louder in our hearts than any words of consolation. Yet the comfort of Your words still reaches us:

Insert suitable scripture reading.

God of compassion, to whom can we go? Sustain us as we struggle to come to grips with this tragedy. For those of us who believe in Your love, we know that death is not an end, nor does it destroy the bonds that You have forged between ____ (name) and ourselves. We share the faith of Your Son's disciples and the hope of the children of God. Bring the light of Christ's resurrection to this time of pain as we pray for ____ (name), his/her family, and his/her friends.

And so it is with confidence in Your sustaining grace that we pray together ... Our Father

We offer our prayers this morning in the name of Jesus, our brother and first born from the dead, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

(Suitable Song)



Prayer of Loss

Merciful God, this morning we grieve the loss of our friend____ (name) whose (sudden) death has caused us all to experience a sense of loss.

Tender as a parent with a child, You are gracious to us, O Lord. We know how we are fashioned and sustained by Your love; each of our names are written on the palm of Your hand. Continue to care for our (brother/sister/friend) ____ (name) in death and bring him/her into the everlasting peace of heaven. Bless his family as they mourn the loss of a (son/daughter; mother/father). We make this our prayer in the name of Jesus, our risen brother, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer During a Time of Loss

Loving God, our hearts are sad because____ (name) has died.

We know in our hearts that she/he lives now with you forever in heaven.

We are comforted by the promise that____ (name) lives beyond the experience of all physical pain in the eternal peace and joy of your loving embrace.

Thank you for the gift of love and happiness she/he so often shared with so many of us.

Please give us the courage to live now as she/he did with great love and happiness.

And let us all be together again someday. Amen.



Prayer for Consolation

Lord Jesus, you cried when your friend Lazarus died.

You understand our grief.

Please help us in these difficult times
and teach us how to help one another.

Give a special comfort to ____'s family
who are going to feel very sad and lonely.

Help us all find consolation
in the hope that ____ is now
happy with you forever. Amen.

When Someone I Love Dies

God of kindness and mercy,
You created us so we could share
in your eternal life and happiness.

Please welcome into your loving arms ____ who
has just left this physical world.

God our Father,
help us to remember that
death is like a door we need to go through to get to heaven.

It is really a mysterious part of all of our lives.

When someone goes through the door of death help us to accept
that that does not mean that ____ no longer loves us.

Help us to remember that your love is stronger than death,
that you always care for us.

We trust in you.

We love you. Amen.



Prayer for a Staff Upon Learning of a Death in The School Community

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of compassion, we have gathered here this morning as a community, broken by the news of the death of ____ (name).

Truly, our questions weigh heavily upon us this morning.

Again it is to you, the God of the living, whom we turn to for consolation.

We ask you to send your Spirit among us that we might open our hearts and our arms to all those who mourn, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Guide us through the experiences of our grieving to the place not where our sense of loss is no more, but rather where we are able to share that burden with Jesus who has conquered death and restored all life. Give to us a renewed vision of your kingdom, where there is no more pain, no more suffering, and where the mourning veil will once and for all time be lifted from your people.

We pray for the repose of the soul of our brother/sister ____ (name). May your infinite mercy be a beacon of hope, guiding him/her into your eternal embrace of love.

Sustain ____ (name)'s family throughout this time of great sorrow. May they come to know ever more profoundly the depth of your love for them.

In confidence that you know our needs even before we know them ourselves, we say together ...

Our Father, who art in heaven, ...

May God bless us, this day and always ...

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Prayer for The Dead

(Book of Blessings, CCCB)

Lord Jesus, have mercy on all who have died.

Bring them into the fullness of your joy and let them live with you in heaven.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer, for you are our Saviour and our Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, listen to our prayer for____(name).

Have mercy on him/her, and in your love lead him/her to the unending joys of the kingdom.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer. Amen.

Heavenly Father, be merciful to____ (name) whom you have called into eternity.

Forgive all his/her sins, and let him/her live with you in joy.

Father, we ask this grace through Christ our Lord. Amen.



APPENDIX F – SAMPLES OF MEMORIAL CELEBRATIONS

Memorial Celebration (#1)

(Please stand.)

Leader: We pause today as a school community to remember and pray for the repose of the soul of ____ (name).

Opening Prayer: In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray ...

Heavenly Father, you have called ____ (name) from this world, into the glory of the Resurrection. He/she loved and served you on earth, with joy, humility and commitment. He/she believed and trusted in your abundant love for all of us. May he/she enjoy the fullness of the Kingdom, where you live forever and ever. Amen.

(Please be seated as we listen to the Word of God.)

Reading: (1 Thessalonians 4: 13 - 14)

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians: We want you to be quite certain, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him.

The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: *Psalm 23: The Lord is My Shepherd* *(Come and See: Year 4, Program Cassette Tape Song #11) **or** CBW II # 146 **or** CBW III # 53.

(Please stand.)

Leader: Let us pray together in the words Jesus taught us:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Leader: Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

(A sign of peace may be offered at this time.)

Concluding Prayer

Leader: Let us pray...

God of kindness and mercy,

You created us so we could share

in your eternal life and happiness.

Please welcome into your house, ____ (name),

who has left this world.

We ask you this, through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Memorial Celebration (#2)

Introduction:

Leader: Welcome everyone, to this special celebration to remember _____. We honour her/his memory today, and entrust her/him to be with God, our Father. We gather here in faith, to pray for _____ and for her/his family, and for those who mourn her/his passing. As believers in Jesus, who know the power, light, and triumph of the Resurrection, let us stand and sing together:

Be Not Afraid (Rise up and Sing, #214)

Opening Prayer:

Leader: We begin ...

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray ...

Heavenly Father, Lord and Giver of life, we thank you for the gift of _____. Her/his presence among us will always be treasured. We praise you, Lord Jesus, and give you thanks, through Christ our Saviour, in the love and unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

(Please be seated.)

First Reading: *(Phil 1. 3-7, 9-11)*

A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians: I thank my God whenever I think of you; and every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes... My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognize what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the glory and praise of God.

The Word of the Lord: R. Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm: *Psalm 91 – On Eagles Wings (Glory and Praise 2, #126)*

(Please stand.)

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia

Gospel: John 14: 1-6

General Intercessions:

Let us turn to Christ Jesus, the Resurrection and the life, as we present our petitions.

The response is: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

1. For the Church, the People of God, that we have the courage to share and live the Word of God with others, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

2. For world leaders, that they may learn to "see" with the eyes of Jesus, the value and dignity of all persons, we pray to the Lord. **R.**



3. For those among us who are suffering in any way...whether through illness, sadness, rejection, or loneliness...that the healing power of God working through us will bring strength and comfort, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

4. In particular, we remember____, who has been called from this world. May the power and victory of the Resurrection bring hope and healing to her/his family and to all of us who grieve her/his loss, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

5. Christ Jesus, You promised to be with us always. Guide us in being Your faithful witnesses. Increase our faith and cradle us in Your love, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

Leader: We make these petitions and all those that echo in the silence of our hearts, with confidence in the name of Jesus, our risen brother. Amen.
(Please be seated.)

Gesture: Lighting of the Tapers

Leader: ____ is no longer with us. She/he remains, however, in our memories, as a friend, and a person of faith and light. As we reflect on and remember her/him today, perhaps we are inspired to be people of light and faith ourselves. We are challenged to be the “light of Christ” to others. We are called to be instruments of God’s love, right here in this school.

Let us light these candles as a sign of our commitment to further “light up” the world, by the power of God, at work in our lives. May we brighten up the lives of those around us by being people who can forgive, heal, serve, and indeed love others.
(Candles are lit.)

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Let us pray ...

In gratitude, then, we commend _____ to her/his just and heavenly reward. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for gifting the world with her/his life. May her/his memory enrich our determination to do God’s work in the world. We make this prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.
(Please stand.)

Concluding Song: *Children of the Light (Come and See: Year 4, #12)*



Memorial Celebration (#3)

(Reflective background music as everyone enters the school gymnasium.)

Introduction: Welcome everyone to this celebration as we honour our friend/classmate _____. Christ is our light and promises to be with us - where two or more are gathered in His name, Jesus, our friend and saviour, is there with us. The light of Christ takes away our darkness, sadness, and fear. He is our comfort and our strength. The light of Christ is our hope and our promise of new life.

Children of the Light (Come and See: Year 4, #12) is sung while the Christ candle is lit.

(Invite the assembly to stand and join in the singing.)

Opening Prayer:

Let us begin: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Lord Jesus, you call us together to be a family. We gather together in love. _____, your little friend and loved one has died. Our hearts are troubled and anxious. We gather today, then, because we want to express our love for _____ and support his/her family during this sad time. Be with all of us today, Lord. Be gentle with us. Soothe our brokenness with the power of Your love and belief in You. Help us to know that lives with You forever in heaven. Amen.

(Please be seated.)

Psalm Refrain: O God, You chose us in Jesus, to be Your children.

Psalm 84: (Paraphrased)

How lovely is Your home, O God,
Of everyone, my whole being wants to be with You
My heart and lips sing for joy to You, the living God. **R.**

Even the sparrow finds a home.
And the swallow, a nest for herself, where she can lay her babies.
Blessed are those who live with You.
They will always sing Your praise. **R.**

You make them strong and happy.
And fill their lives with joy.
All sadness is turned into happiness.
They are strong and have no fear. **R.**

Hear us, God as we sing Your praise.
Look upon us as your friends.
One day with You is better than a thousand with anyone else.
I would rather be with You than to be with those who choose
to do wrong.
O God our God, blessed are those who hope and trust in you. **R.**



(Please stand.)

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia

Gospel: (Select one of these gospels to proclaim)

The story of Lazarus - John 11: 17-27 **or**

Jesus and the children - Matt. 19: 13-15 **or**

House with many rooms – John 14: 1-6

The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Response Song: *My Shepherd is the Lord (In the Spirit We Belong: Year 3, #62)*

Special Words

General Intercessions:

Let us pray for an increase of faith in Jesus, the Resurrection and the life. The response to each petition is:

R. O God, hear us.

In death, O Christ, life is changed, not taken away. _____ lives with You now, in heaven. Keep him/her safe in Your home, we pray... **R.**

When Your friend Lazarus died, you cried and shared Your sorrow with Lazarus' sisters. Help us to comfort each other in our sadness and loneliness. May we bring life and hope to one another through our belief in You and the power of Your love working in us, we pray... **R.**

You promise that we will be with You always, even when we die. Teach us how to love as you love, we pray... **R.**

We pray for those who do not know You. We pray for those who have no hope. We ask that Your spirit take away their darkness, we pray... **R.**

Christ Jesus, You promised to be our light. Please be with us when we are lonely or afraid. Help us to walk in Your light, we pray... **R.**

Leader: We make these petitions and all those that echo in the silence of our hearts, with confidence in the name of Jesus, our risen brother. Amen.

Presentation of Class Remembrances. Students from different classes will present their remembrances.

Gesture: Lighting of the Candles

Three students from each class will come forward and light their individual candles from the Christ candle on the center prayer table as the song, *Children of the Light (Come and See: Year 4, #12)* is sung. Students form a semi-circle in front of the assembly.



Leader: Let us pray...

We are the light of Jesus and we choose, through the gift of our faith, to believe in the power of Jesus in our lives. ____ and her/his family believed and hoped in Jesus. We remember and celebrate her/his presence with us by being “light” to each other.

As believers in Jesus, let us journey on in hope and be comforted by our belief in the power of Jesus, who is alive and among us, through His presence in one another. Please join in singing our closing song: ***New Hope***. (*Hi God 2: pp.104-105.*)

Classes leave gradually during song, starting with those closest to the exits.



APPENDIX G – LOSS OF A PET

The death of a pet can be a very significant loss for a child of any age. Pets are often considered to be cherished “people” or “friends” by children. As such, children can suffer and grieve deeply. Children need to be told simply and honestly, in age-appropriate and sensitive language, what happened to the pet.

Process the loss with the child. Help the child to “absorb” the death of the animal by talking with him/her and by encouraging him/her to express feelings. Support the child in his/her feelings and perhaps even use the word “grief” to describe what the child is going through. Explain the variety of feelings associated with grief. Hug the child; share favorite memories of the pet. Ritualize the death in some way through a formal sharing of memories of the pet, a burial, or a brief service.

Grieving pet loss is an opportune moment to teach children about death, in general, the unique sense of loss, emptiness, anger, and sadness associated with it and the movement beyond death into life.

Encouraging children to express their feelings about the loss is particularly therapeutic. Reassuring them that time will heal and that they will feel better again are important realities to affirm in children.

Some excellent resources can further assist teachers in supporting children with pet loss:

When a Pet Dies by Fred Rogers

I’ll Always Love You by Hans Wilhelm

Badger’s Parting Gifts by Susan Varley

Lifetimes by David L. Rice and Michael S. Maydak

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Viorst



Sample Prayer Celebration on the Loss of a Pet

Opening: We gather in prayer today, as we remember our special pet _____ who has died. He/she was like a friend to us and was a special part of our lives. We had fun playing with him/her and will certainly miss him/ her. Let us bow our heads in prayer.

Loving Father,
you have given us
everything good – the nights and days,
the sun and moon, the lakes and rivers,
the trees and every kind of flower.
You have given us every creature,
and you gave us _____,
our pet.

But now _____ has died
and gone back to the earth.
_____ gave us great fun
and was such a good friend.
_____ even helped us to share our love.

We miss _____ very much.
We ask you to fill up
the empty space in our hearts.
We ask you to let
something beautiful grow from the earth
where _____ rests.

Thank you, Father,
for all your gifts.
Amen.

(Adapted from **Prayer After Rainy Days and Other Family Prayers** by Pat Corrick Hinton, Winston Press, Inc., Minneapolis, MN 55403.)

Song: Let us join together in singing a little song:

All your gifts of Life (Hi God II: p.126) or Signs of New Life (Song #20, We Belong to God: Year 1, 1983)

Story Recitation: The Tenth Good Thing About Barney, by Judith Viorst

Response Activity: Make a class memory book about the animal. Draw pictures or write stories about each person's special memories of the pet; organize them into a booklet. Include this finished product in the class library.

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