

Office Personnel Phone and Visitor Response Protocol

Idaho Youth Suicide Prevention Program

The following is a best practice to use for incoming phone calls during a crisis. Please know and follow confidentiality protocols.

Take messages on non-crisis related calls.

For crisis-related calls, use the following general protocol:

- **Police or other security professionals:** immediate transfer to principal.
- **Family members of the deceased:** immediate transfer to principal or anyone else they want to reach at school. If a principal is not available immediately, ask if they would like to speak to the school counselor, psychologist, or social worker.
- **Other school administrators:** Give out basic factual information about the death and crisis response and offer to transfer calls to the principal or others.
- **Persons who call with information about others at risk or who may be at risk themselves:** Keep the person on the phone until the appropriate crisis team member is available, then transfer them to the team member. If the caller is in crisis and an appropriate crisis team member is not available, send an office person to find someone from the team with an emergency message. Meanwhile, give the caller the Suicide Prevention Lifeline number, 988, AND take down the caller's name, phone number, and location. Inform the caller that the purpose for asking for their personal information is to give it to a crisis team member if one cannot be found while they are on the phone. If the person seems very agitated or has lethal means, keep talking and ask someone to call 911 to request a wellness check, relaying the information that the caller shared.
- **Media:** Take phone messages and refer to the principal. If the media come into school, have them meet with the principal and wait in a separate room away from students, if necessary. The principal should offer to be a liaison for information in exchange for their not interviewing students and staff on the school grounds. Media cannot attend meetings among students/staff/parents and should receive information about safe messaging and the hotline numbers. Check with district legal experts before sharing the name of the deceased.
- **Parents regarding their child's immediate safety:** Reassure parents if you know their child was not involved and outline how children are being served/supported. If their

child may have been involved, transfer to a crisis team member who may have more information.

- **Parents wanting to know how to respond:** Explain how children and staff are being supported. Take messages to give to Student Services staff from parents needing more detailed information.
- **Where to send parents who arrive unannounced on the scene:** Set aside a space for parents to wait and get information. Any person removing a student from school must be on the registration form as the parent or guardian. Remind parents who take their children from school, whether in-person or on the phone, that they need to stay with them for safety reasons. All other students will be required to remain in school.
- **Document all actions.**

The Idaho Youth Suicide Prevention Program is a partnership between the Idaho Department of Education and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The program is funded by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Suicide Prevention Program and the Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

This publication was supported by the Grant Number 2 801 OT 009017, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.