Action Plan
The Principal will establish a Traumatic Event Management Team appropriate to the situation. When the school is notified of a traumatic event this team will meet as soon as possible.

Purpose of the meeting
To ascertain the facts relating to the event.
To ensure that family requests are respected.
To allocate specific duties to each team member.
To consider the role and level of involvement of other school personnel.
To consider the need to allocate additional staff and resources.
To plan a home visit to the family affected by the event.
To plan communication to staff, students, parents & media.
To establish an Action Plan for the first 24 hours, 48 hours and 7 days.

General Guidelines
Communicate accurate and precise information to the school community and the media. Communication of information from the school needs to be handled by one designated member team member only.
Provide regular, accurate updates of information to combat rumours / misinformation.
Hold regular staff meetings to keep all staff informed. Written updates may be helpful especially for part-time staff.
Allocate additional staff if needed to support class groups most affected.
Discuss the incident openly and enlist the help of counsellors if necessary.
Identify siblings, relatives, close friends, staff and others in the school most likely to be affected by the incident. Establish an “At Risk” register.
Set up recovery rooms for students and staff groups.
Assign a team member to work with others to prepare liturgy etc.
The level of school involvement should be determined by the team members assigned to the home visit.
Contact external agencies as needed for support and counselling; e.g. Principal Consultant at the Catholic Education Office, Parish Priest, other schools.
Inform parents / caregivers in writing of the precise nature of the event and give clear and accurate details with respect to the wishes of the family.
Appoint one person as the school spokesperson for the media. This person may only provide information to the media after consultation with the Director of Catholic Education.
Return the school to normal functioning as soon as possible.
Attend to the spiritual and emotional needs of the community.
Be aware that there may be a ripple effect for staff, students and families because an incident may trigger strong feelings relating to a previous trauma.
Document the event and actions taken as soon as possible after the event. A record of staff and student responses and the needs identified, also needs to be kept.
# Checklist for Administrators

**After a Traumatic Event Affects a School**

## First 24 Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Find Out the Facts</strong></td>
<td>Collect information about the incident from reliable sources as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establish a Management Plan</strong></td>
<td>Contact the Principal Consultant at the Catholic Education Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convene a meeting immediately with the Traumatic Event Management Team and the relevant support personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inform All Staff</strong></td>
<td>Provide the facts of the incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outline the proposed management plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suggest sources of personal support for teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide professional assistance as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inform All Students</strong></td>
<td>Visit classrooms and outline the facts of the event at the earliest opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set Up a Recovery</strong></td>
<td>Provide, where possible, tea/coffee,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ROOM IN THE SCHOOL

comfortable chairs and an appropriate support person.

Allow distressed students and staff access to this room for several days after the event.

LIAISE WITH THE MEDIA

Minimise media contact with staff and students. Inform all staff to direct any media enquiries to the Principal. All media statements will be prepared and released by the Principal after consultation with the Director of Catholic Education.

IN THE LONGER TERM

MONITOR STAFF FOR SIGNS OF STRESS

Encourage stressed staff to seek professional help provided by the school.

Provide a supportive Environment.

Provide for an increased demand on teacher relief time.

MONITOR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY FOR SIGNS OF STRESS

Feelings related to past events may be triggered and current life issues will be felt strongly.

Encourage those affected to seek support and/or professional help.

BE ALERT FOR AND SENSITIVE TO THE DISTURBING INFLUENCES OF ANNIVERSARIES

Be aware that special support for those affected may be needed again at these times.
INQUESTS AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Make extra staff and services available if necessary.

ADAPTED FROM: “TRAUMATIC INCIDENTS AFFECTING SCHOOLS”,
K Bidwell and T McManus, Queensland, 1990
TRAUMATIC EVENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES
(For example death of a student, staff member.)

Traumatic Event Management team meets
Core team: Leadership Team and Counsellor

Inform all staff
Assemble all available staff at the next scheduled break
(May be appropriate to telephone staff closest to the student, or visit them at home.)

Inform close friends
This may be done by staff closest to student.

Teachers inform all students
Present statement prepared by Principal

Set up counseling for staff and students
Phone the Principal Consultant at the Catholic Education Office to organise ACCESS team.

Organise recovery rooms

Visit family as soon as possible
Discuss information for letter to families, arrangements for liturgy and who attends the Church service.

Letter to parents
Prepared by Principal and sent home at the end of the day. May be different letters to different year levels.
**Media response**
Any media enquiries to be directed to Principal. Principal to check with the Director of Catholic Education before responding to the media.

**Funeral arrangements**
Decide who will attend the service. Free the Religious Education Coordinator and helpers to assist with the liturgy if the family wishes

**Death notice for the Advertiser**
Principal & REC will share the responsibility for writing and delivering this

**Special assembly/memorial**
Principal, REC and Class Teacher will schedule this with the appropriate group (or groups) of students and classes in negotiation with others.
CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

HOME VISIT
The child’s teacher, and/or School Principal/Deputy should visit the family as soon as possible after hearing the news. While this is never easy and may be uncomfortable and distressing, it is an appropriate gesture of support and respect.

ATTENDANCE AT FUNERALS
If the family consents to close school friends and staff attending the funeral, details of funeral arrangements will need to be known and made available to parents. Students who attend need to be prepared and supported. Students who do not attend could be encouraged to contribute to a group card expressing condolences. Student messages of condolence should be checked to ensure content is appropriate and sensitive.

RETURN OF STUDENT’S SCHOOL WORK
Return of the student’s school work should be handled sensitively within the first two to three weeks following the death. The class teacher could visit the family at home or the family may wish to visit the school, meet with other students or attend the memorial activities.

ONGOING SUPPORT
Some students will need ongoing support and opportunities to talk about their feelings, thoughts and memories which may persist for some months. The class teacher could consider appropriate activities such as a memorial book.

The staff members may need ongoing support for themselves in dealing with their own feelings, while at the same time helping the students come to terms with their loss.