



SUICIDE POSTVENTION POLICY (OFF COLLEGE CAMPUS)

Date Implemented 20th February 2024

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Approved By School Council

Consultation is Mandatory Date: 19/08/2024 Consulted: School Council

Next Scheduled Review Date January 2025



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Rushworth P-12 College on (03) 5856 1230

EMOTIONAL SAFETY

This resource refers to the topics of self-harm and suicide and may elicit an emotional response as you engage in the material. It is important to recognise when you become triggered by the content of this resource and prioritise your mental health and wellbeing needs first and foremost.

PURPOSE

This document provides a structured framework aimed to assist in the college delivering a coordinated and consistent response to suicide or suspected suicide of a student or staff member that has occurred within the college community, but off campus (not on College grounds).

The Principal and staff have a duty of care to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect students from risks that are reasonably foreseeable. Duty of care is non-delegable and may extend beyond school hours and the college grounds.

AIM

This policy's aim is to provide:

- Support to all vulnerable and/or affected students and staff in a supportive and timely manner.
- A clear outline of the roles and responsibilities within the college.
- Clear direction of actions that are to be taken along with a time frame for these actions to occur.

Please refer to the Colleges “Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) and Suicide Postvention Policy (On College Campus)” policy for further information regarding NSSI and suicide on College campus.

DEFINITIONS AND KEY TERMS

The below definitions and key terms listed are intended to enhance confidence and understanding of the signs that may indicate a student is at risk;

- **Suicide:** Refers to the act of intentionally causing one's own death.
- **Suicide Attempt:** Refers to an act carried out by an individual with the intention to end their life (but where death does not occur). A suicide attempt is an act of self-harm with the intended outcome being death.
- **Suicidal thoughts/ideation:** Refers to thoughts about how to kill oneself. Suicidal thoughts range in intensity and frequency from fleeting to more concrete, well thought out plans for killing oneself, or complete preoccupation with self-destruction.
- **Self-harm or Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI):** Refers to people deliberately hurting their bodies with the intended outcome being to cope with the experience of distress. Intent is the defining factor differentiating a suicide attempt from self-harm. For some young people, engaging in self-harm will be a once-off and for others it will become a pattern of behaviour. Self-harm is a coping strategy in response to intense emotional pain or being overwhelmed by negative thoughts, feelings or memories. NSSI can present in many ways, including, but not exclusive to, cutting, burning, picking at wounds or scars, hitting oneself, deliberating overdosing on medications, drugs or other harmful substances.

GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

Incident Management Team (IMT)

The IMT for incidents covered in this policy, will consist of the following members.

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Lead Teacher(s)
- Social Worker
- Mental Health Practitioner
- Business Manager

If it is not reasonable/possible for any of these IMT members to be involved, then the remaining members will form the team.

The role of the IMT is to coordinate the response to the suicide. This will include coordinating staff briefings and to distribute action plans.

Considerations to be made prior to College responding to the suicide of a student off campus:

- Whether support will be available onsite or remotely offered and the resources required to do this safely and effectively to reduce the potential for suicide contagion
- How the school can support the needs of students and staff immediately upon hearing the news:
 - is it possible to convene an all-staff meeting (onsite/remotely)?
 - do we have staff capacity to inform the families of students most impacted?
 - what support (remote or in-person) are we able to offer our community immediately following news that our school has been impacted by the suicide of a student?
- How the ongoing support needs of students and staff will be managed by the school and whether it is more appropriate for this to be managed by community services such as Headspace, Lifeline, Kids Helpline
- Has this occurred during school holidays, weekend, or otherwise outside of school hours?
- Does the person who has suicided identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Cultural needs to be considered to ensure cultural safety.
- Does the person who has completed suicide identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ Community? Considerations to be made into the impact of identity to ensure safety.

Responding to the death of a College member during the school holidays will require increased collaboration with external services as there are reduced opportunities for schools to observe the signs that indicate a student or staff member requires additional support.

Informing the parent community in a timely manner is also critically important as it increases the likelihood for support to be offered early, reducing the ongoing impact to a young person’s mental health and wellbeing.

Responding to a suicide impacting primary school-aged children:

Although the immediate urge might be to shield children from news of a suicide, they respond to the behaviours and emotions of those around them and will likely sense that something has occurred. Preparing to tell a child about suicide can be daunting and requires consideration of the child’s age, developmental stage, personality, and experiences of adversity and/or death. It is important to use language that the child will understand and allow them to ask questions.

Suicide (at the College):

DO	DON'T	WHY
Liaise with the bereaved family and offer your condolences; however, respect their wishes if they request no further contact from the College.	Assume that the family will be available and/or willing to speak with the College. It is important to approach all contact with the bereaved family with compassion and sensitivity.	After suicide, as with any death or sudden loss, it is respectful to offer your condolences and acknowledge a family’s grief and loss.
In the event you have determined it appropriate and necessary to inform your school community of the death, confirm the language that the bereaved family would prefer you to use to refer to the cause of death in communications to your community.	Not Applicable.	It is important that you obtain <u>explicit</u> rather than implied consent before assuming the language they use with you during the conversation is how they would like the death to be referred to in broader communications.
Liaise directly with the parent/carer of the deceased’s child’s closest friends in person or via phone.	Assume that parents will not be available and/or willing to support their child when you share information regarding the suicide with them.	Hearing news that their friend has died by suicide will likely elicit an emotional response and students may prefer to be supported by family at home, particularly in the event they become distressed
Use existing communication processes to share this information. This applies to contacting staff and convening a staff meeting and sharing information with parents/carers. (For example, email, other online platforms or hardcopy letters home).	Attempt to use new methods to bring staff together and to communicating important information to staff and parent/carers.	Using communication processes that parents/carers are familiar with will increase likelihood that all families receive the information in a timely manner, providing them with the opportunity to appropriately support their children.

<p>Provide the details of what supports will be available onsite or remotely and the duration of this support (if at all).</p>	<p>Provide contact details unless staff have the capacity to respond to requests from parent/carers. It might be more appropriate to provide the contact details of a staff member who can coordinate the requests and provide the information and/or access to an appropriate member of staff as needed. Regardless of the approach you take, it is essential that staff are aware of what information they have consent to share and the process for passing on requests they are not able to provide an answer to.</p>	<p>It is essential that all communication about the critical incident impacting the schools is consistent and people are clear on what information they have consent to share. It is recommended that all staff, including administration staff, have a script they can refer to that includes the confirmed language. It may also be necessary to provide additional support to staff about how they can refer to more senior members of staff and/or the IMT if they feel overwhelmed by the number and type of requests they are receiving.</p>
<p>Provide the details of youth-specific mental health community supports and the process for accessing this support over the school holidays, and outside of school hours.</p>	<p>Assume these services have the capacity to provide support. Before sharing the details with parents/carers it is important to liaise with the service and seek clarification for the process for accessing support and the opening hours of the service.</p>	<p>The goal of providing access to appropriate mental health services is to enhance the help-seeking behaviours of young people in distress. This is strengthened by minimising the potential barriers to accessing support, such as providing all relevant contact details and providing young people with a positive experience of engaging with services.</p>
<p>Promote messages of help-seeking and strategies to support students during the school holidays on your school's website and/or social media pages.</p>	<p>Underestimate the role that schools play in providing information and support to their community. In the event the College is impacted upon by a critical incident, such as a suicide, the community will often look to the College for guidance about 'how' and 'where' to access support. For example, during the holidays it may be appropriate to promote help-seeking messages and contact details for community-based supports via the school's website and/or social media pages.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Ensure accurate and timely documentation of relevant actions, interactions and person responsible for following up if appropriate.</p>	<p>Assume that someone else has recorded the details of interactions and relevant actions between yourself, students and/or parent/carers if you have provided a verbal handover to another member of staff. If you have reason to believe a student requires additional support (i.e. you have noticed changes in behaviour, emotions, social connections) it is important to record relevant details and the actions you will/have undertaken to share your concerns with an appropriate member of staff (e.g. wellbeing).</p>	<p>All staff employed by the department have a <u>duty of care</u> to students.</p>
<p>Report for support by reporting the incident to the Incident Support</p>	<p>Not Applicable.</p>	<p>All incidents impacting staff and student health, safety and wellbeing</p>

Operations Centre (ISOC) on <u>1800 126 126</u> as soon as practicable to activate additional support from area and regional staff.		should be reported to the ISOC.
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Responding to a suicide of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, considerations:

Aboriginal cultures throughout Australia often have unique mourning and healing processes following death or suicide. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people call times and practices associated with death, grief, and bereavement ‘Sorry Business’. There may be specific responsibilities and obligations that family and community members, including other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, need to follow.

Before initiating the school’s response, it is important to:

- think about students’ specific cultural needs
- contact the Koorie Engagement Support Officer for support and advice
- not assume you know what the student’s family and community will need and the cultural protocols that will apply
- respect the wishes of the student’s family and community
- provide a safe and supported space at school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This could be a safe place or room supervised and coordinated by an appropriate staff member where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students of all ages can come together to receive and offer support. A safe place will allow reflection and grieving in a culturally appropriate setting.
- consider engaging an Aboriginal mental health practitioner and/or an Elder or respected person to meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families and provide culturally safe supports.

Responding to a suicide of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer and Questioning (LGBTIQ+) person, considerations:

- understanding the impacts of bullying and discrimination on LGBTIQ+ student mental health
- planning communication and notifying kin or chosen family
- being aware of LGBTIQ+ students when there has been a high-profile or recent suicide of an LGBTIQ+ community member
- providing emotional and psychological support from staff who have a lived experience or significant understanding of LGBTIQ+ identities
- considering LGBTIQ+ community memorials or tributes, including if your school has an LGBTIQ+ student group (for example, Stand Out Group or Rainbow Club)
- considering marking anniversaries and important dates (for example, trans day of remembrance, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia (IDAHoBIT)).

If available, engage with a local LGBTIQ+ organisation or support service for further advice or student support. To find a local service visit Rainbow Network (<https://www.rainbownetwork.com.au/>).

APPENDICES, RESOURCES AND LINKS

- There are checklists and resource materials attached to this policy as Appendices that outline the immediate and longer-term actions that should be taken in order for the aims to be achieved.
- There are also scripts and letters to ensure that information is communicated effectively and respectfully throughout the college community.
- All decisions, actions, phone calls, significant discussions and correspondence must be documented clearly and precisely. This documentation should be given to the Principal at the end of the day before the IMT meets. The checklists will assist in this task.
- When the name of a staff member or role changes, the Appendix will be updated without the policy needing to be reviewed.
- The checklist/resource items should be considered in the context of suicide occurring off-college-campus, as some items are general to the emergency response to incidents (on and off campus).

POLICY LINKS

It is recommended that all staff be familiar with and review the below policies and resource guides.

- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/responding-to-self-harm-including-suicide-attempts-in-students-a-guide-to-assist-secondary-schools.pdf>
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/responding-to-the-suicide-of-a-secondary-student-guidelines.pdf>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/self-harm-attempted-suicide-response/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suicide-response-postvention/policy>

Other Useful Links

- https://conversationsmatter.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CM_Fact_sheet_When_telling_a_child_about_suicide_Final.pdf
- https://www.grief.org.au/ga/Content/Information-Sheets/Adolescents_and_Grief.aspx
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suicide-response-postvention/guidance/nuanced-suicide-postvention-responses>
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/responding-to-the-suicide-of-a-secondary-student-guidelines.pdf>

Further Information

The following phone numbers will assist in making contact with these essential services as and when appropriate.

CONTACT NAME:	CONTACT NUMBER:
Emergency Services	000
Rushworth Police Station	(03) 5856 1000
Waranga Medical Centre Goulburn	(03) 5851 8400
GV Health Waranga	(03) 5851 8000
Child Protection	1300 664 977 (13 12 78 after hours)
Psychiatric Services Triage	1300 650 172
CAMHS	(03) 5440 6506 (call triage if after hours)
Headspace	Shepparton (03) 5823 8800 Bendigo (03) 5806 1400 Echuca (03) 5485 5048
Bendigo Community Health Services	(03) 5430 0500
Centre Against Sexual Assault	Shepparton (03) 5831 2343 Bendigo (03) 5441 0430
Centre for Non-Violence	Bendigo (03) 5430 3000
The Orange Door	Shepparton 1800 634 245 Bendigo 1800 512 359

APPENDIX LIST:

- Appendix A – Principal Class Immediate & 24 hr Response Checklist
- Appendix B - IMT Immediate & 24 hr Response Checklist
- Appendix C – Lead Teachers Immediate & 24 hr Response Checklist
- Appendix D – Business Manager’s Immediate & 24 hr Response Checklist
- Appendix E – Draft Letter to Parent/Caregivers
- Appendix F – Draft script to read to students
- Appendix G – Draft scripts for Front Office staff
- Appendix H – Draft script for following up on student absences
- Appendix I – Individual Staff Responsibilities details
- Appendix J – 48 to 72 hour follow up
- Appendix K – In the first month
- Appendix L - Longer term

APPENDIX A: PRINCIPAL CLASS IMMEDIATE & 24-HR RESPONSE ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

Liaise with police and obtain / provide accurate details of incident.

- Police Officer Name: _____
- Badge No.: _____
- Station and Phone No.: _____

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

Establish contact with DET

- Contact DET Security Services Unit 9589 6266
- Seek additional Wellbeing support.
 - Rick Simms 5440 3152 Peter Milich
- Speak with DET Media Unit Ph. 9637 2871 (available 24/7)

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

Call immediate meeting of the IMT.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

Nominate the College's Primary Contact who will be the sole liaison with the family (Principal class or Wellbeing and Engagement Coordinator)

Staff member nominated: _____

- Establish contact with the family.
 - Offer supports
 - Establish which details the family feels comfortable sharing with the college community.
 - If parents are unable/unwilling to speak with the college, identify an alternative family contact (emergency contact list for student)
- Family Contact: _____
- Phone No.: _____
- Relationship to Student: _____

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

Provide front office administration staff with the standardised scripts to manage incoming calls and inquiries (both general calls and those from media).

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

Organise staff briefing

- Inform all staff before holding student briefings where possible.
- Make EAP information available.
- Ensure staff are aware of who will be the sole liaison person with media and what to do if approached.

- Ensure staff are aware of who will be the sole liaison person with the family. If not yet known, advise that this will be shared as soon as decision has been made.
- Advise staff of arrangements for student briefing.
- Advise staff of the support available to them in the college at this time.
- Advise staff of the arrangements for students in the college at this time.
- Advise staff of the arrangements for the teaching and learning program on this day.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Ensure 'Initial Report of Incident Form' is completed by staff member who received the initial report of the incident.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Liaise with Principal class or Business Manager in relation to monitoring and restricting social media use.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Liaise with front office administration staff re alternate teaching and learning program, staff who require coverage, roll marking etc.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Ongoing visits by Principal class and Wellbeing and Engagement Coordinator to check the wellbeing of staff. Support highly affected staff to attend the wellbeing space in the staffroom.

Visits completed by: _____ Time _____ am/pm

Time _____ am/pm

Time _____ am/pm

- Ongoing support in having students remain under direct supervision of staff at all times by completing regular walks around the college throughout the day.

APPENDIX B: IMT IMMEDIATE & 24-HR RESPONSE ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

- Collate list of highly affected/vulnerable staff and students to ensure these people are monitored and given priority support.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Liaise with extra DET support (SSSOs) and external support (CAMHS, headspace, EAP, Child Protection) to ensure supports are being provided and that their network of staff are alerted to incident.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Establish staff and students wellbeing spaces.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Arrange mandatory staff debriefing at the end of the school day.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Share/distribute information about IMT roles and responsibilities for all staff to access e.g. who is the sole contact with the family, coordination of wellbeing support, etc.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

APPENDIX C: YEAR LEVEL COORDINATOR / LEAD TEACHER(S) IMMEDIATE & 24-HR RESPONSE ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

- Identify and develop a list of close friends, vulnerable students, students who have an extreme reaction to news, staff who are significantly impacted. Initial list to be returned to IMT within 30 minutes of delivering student briefing.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Secure student's locker and contents.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Ensure all advisory rolls are marked and submitted **immediately** to office staff to indicate which students were present for the student briefing. It is imperative that these rolls are marked accurately.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Assist in following up unexplained absences for students using script that is provided to you.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Organise designated quiet areas for affected staff and students.
- Ensure less affected students and staff have space to carry on with activities/work.
- Where possible, rotate teaching staff with available staff to give them time to process and regroup.
- Distribute letters and information sheets to every student in your community prior to the end of the day. These will be provided by the front office.
- In the event of a completed suicide, develop a memorial space.

APPENDIX D: BUSINESS MANAGER'S IMMEDIATE & 24-HR RESPONSE ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

- Distribute the scripts provided by the principal to office staff explaining that this script is to be strictly adhered to when responding to all enquiries and phone calls.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Letter and information sheet given to Business Manager by Principal class to be printed and collated in advisory groups so that it can be distributed to every student along with an email sent to families.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Above information packs distributed to Year Level Coordinators prior to day's end to be distributed to students.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Assist in the following up of unexplained absences for students in the communities using script that is provided (liaise with Lead Teacher(s) and/or Year Level Coordinators).

Task completed by: _____

- Liaise with the Principal in relation to informing the bus companies.
- Provide the daily absences to the IMT.

APPENDIX E:

DRAFT LETTER TO PARENT/CAREGIVERS

*This letter should be copied to the College's letter head before distributing

Document all information received, and actions undertaken.

ENSURE EXPLICIT CONSENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE BEREIVED AS TO WHAT INFORMATION (IF ANY) THEY ARE COMFORTABLE SHARING AND WHAT LANGUAGE THEY WISH TO BE USED IN COMMUNICATING THEIR LOSS.

Insert date

Dear Parent/Caregiver

I am writing to you with some sad news about a member of our college community.

One of our Year **{insert level}** students tragically died **yesterday/today/Saturday/during the holidays**.

Our thoughts and heart-felt sympathy are with the student's family and friends.

Today and over the coming weeks, you may be concerned about the reactions of your son/daughter to this news. Many students will wish to talk with their parents, so I have attached some general information which may assist you in those conversations. I also encourage you to let your son/daughter know that you are aware of this incident and that you will listen to their concerns at any time they wish to share them. Staying connected and engaged with your son/daughter is one of the best ways to support them. When talking about the issue of suicide try to include discussion about positive ways of managing problems.

Two important messages to promote are that all of us should seek help from others when we feel down or vulnerable and that young people should tell an adult if they are worried about a friend or themselves expressing suicidal thoughts.

Our college will be concentrating on supporting our students and staff over the next months. This means, among other things, returning the college to normal routines as soon as possible and recognising that students can be affected by this event for many months to come. If your son/daughter is already using the services of a mental health professional or a General Practitioner, you should ensure this information is passed on to that professional. A list of helpful websites and services is included in the attachments to this letter.

Please feel free to contact myself, **{insert principal name}**, Assistant Principal, **{insert name}**, or Lead Teacher, **{insert name}** on 5856 1230 for further information or if you have any concerns about your son/daughter. Contacting the nominated staff is an important way of ensuring you receive consistent and accurate information and for us to be aware of all parent concerns.

Warm Regards,

{insert principal name}
Principal

When talking with your children remember...

Each child's or adolescent's response will be unique and a wide range of reactions are possible.

Their reaction will be influenced by their personality, their past relationship with the deceased or injured person, what is happening in their life now and their ability to adjust to change. Your child, whatever age, needs to find safe ways to express their feelings. They may feel confusion, anger, aggression, withdrawal, fear, guilt, denial, blame, betrayal, abandonment, hurt and sadness. Parental understanding, reassurance and attention are very important at this time. Be guided by your child's need to talk but make it clear to them that you will be available whenever they need you.

Children and adolescents who have experienced other concerns or losses in their lives may find it harder to cope.

Children and adolescents who have experienced loss (e.g. separation/divorce of parents, death of a relative or pet, moving house/school) may find it harder to cope. They may become upset and need to express their feelings about these other concerns, even though they may have appeared to be coping before the event. If your child is already using the services of a psychologist or psychiatrist for wellbeing concerns, you should ensure they are made aware of this event.

Children and adolescents may have many questions. They may want to know exactly what happened.

The school will have provided your child/children with consistent information about the incident. Details about the way a suicide or attempted suicide occurred is not provided to students as this information is generally considered to be potentially harmful to students' wellbeing. As parents, it is important to steer discussion towards the positive "help seeking" actions young people can take, such as talking to a trusted adult (e.g. parent, counsellor, teacher, relative or friend), or using the agencies or websites listed in another attachment.

"Tell an adult if you are worried about a friend."

This is an important message to share with your child/children in any discussion about suicide. Children and adolescents sometimes share their feelings about death with friends: in conversations, letters, e-mails, text messages, on the internet, etc. If young people are aware of friends who they fear may hurt themselves they should tell an adult immediately. Nothing is more important than protecting a life.

Monitor the Internet and mobile communications tools

Following a suicide, students will be texting news about the death (both accurate and rumored), calling for impromptu gatherings (both safe and unsafe), creating online memorials (both moving and risky), and posting messages (both appropriate and hostile) about the deceased. This happens quickly and often to large numbers of people. You can proactively monitor, moderate and influence what and how information is shared between students.

Be aware that you or your child may be affected by possible media responses to the event.

You may decide to protect against certain coverage or watch television news coverage together so that you can discuss any reactions or concerns and ensure your son/daughter feels supported. Hopefully, media reporting of specific youth suicides will not occur. However, if it does, be aware that it can contribute to young people's vulnerability.

Some adolescents may show reactions weeks/months/a year after an event.

If you are concerned about your child's reactions—for example, if there are changes to their behaviour such as their socialising or school work patterns—it is important to speak to the Principal or the Student Support Services Officer at the school. This may result in a referral to one of the agencies listed in Attachment No.2.

Be aware that school staff will also be affected.

While everyone will be working towards normalising school routines, some staff will be managing difficult emotions. Adult counselling support is provided to all our school staff through a process outside the school.

Respond to community concern with respect.

If speaking with other members in the community, try to reinforce that the approach is to respect the bereaved/affected family, to avoid romanticising or sensationalising suicide and to encourage help seeking actions in young people, for their own wellbeing and when they have concerns about their friends.

Where can parents and young people get more information and help?

- ARAFEMI Carer Helpline** provides free, confidential information, support and referral for family, carers and friends of people with a mental illness. **1300 550 265**, 9am to 5pm Weekdays www.arafemi.org.au/family-support/telephone-helpline.html
- Area Mental Health Services (AMHS)** triage provides mental health information, advice and referral. Each AMHS has a centralised triage number. www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/Services
- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement** provides a range of education, counselling, research and clinical services for those working in and affected by experiences of grief and bereavement. **1800 642 066** www.grief.org.au
- Beyondblue** provides information about the signs and symptoms of depression, available treatments, how to get help and links to other relevant services and support groups. **1300 22 4636**, 24 hours/7 days www.beyondblue.org.au
- Bush crisis line** is a telephone support and debriefing service for multi-disciplinary remote and rural health practitioners and their families. **1800 805 391**, 24 hours/7 day
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)/Child and Youth Mental Health Services (CYMHS)** offer assessment and treatment depending on clinical need (crisis; single session, specific assessments, ongoing case management, targeted intensive outreach case management, community based, sub-acute and acute mental health care). CAMHS are transitioning to CYMHS: 0-25 years. CAMHS/CYMHS are regionalised. www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/index.htm
- The Compassionate Friends Victoria Inc.** offers friendship and understanding to families following the death of a son or daughter, brother or sister. **9888 4944, 1800 641 091**, 24 hours/7 day www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au
- EPPIC State-wide** is part of **Orygen Youth Health**, an early psychosis program operating in the western and north western suburbs of Melbourne. **9342 2800 AH: 1800 888 320**
- Griefline** provides confidential telephone counselling services to anyone in the community who may need support in order to express their feelings and experiences. **9935 7400**, 12noon to 3am/7 days www.griefline.org.au
- Headroom** is a youth website for informing young people, their caregivers and service providers about positive mental health. It includes information about mental health, strategies to help young people and links to other support services. www.headroom.net.au
- eheadspace** offers online and telephone mental health support to young people aged 12 to 25 and their families or friends. Young people can register at www.eheadspace.org.au or call **1800 650 890**. Webchat and telephone support is available from 9am to 1 am and e-mail is available 24 hours a day.
- Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800** is a 24 hour telephone and online counselling service for young people from 5-25 years of age. www.kidshelpline.com.au
- Lifeline** is a 24 hour telephone counselling service providing access to crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health support services. **13 11 14** www.lifeline.org.au
- Mind Health Connect** provides information on mental health care, finding relevant support and resources to meet your needs. www.mindhealthconnect.org.au
- OCD and Anxiety helpline** provides assistance to callers to understand and manage symptoms of anxiety disorders and depression, and referral to community and health services. **1300 269 438** or **9830 0533** 10am to 4pm Weekdays. www.arcvic.org.au/our-services/helpline
- Parentline** is a state-wide telephone counselling, information and referral for parents and carers with children from birth to eighteen years. **13 22 89**, 8am to midnight 7 days www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood/parentline/
- Reach Out!** is a web-based service that encourages young people to help themselves through tough times. The aim of the service is to improve young people's mental health and wellbeing by providing support, information and referrals in a format designed for young people. <http://au.reachout.com>
- SANE Australia** provides information about mental illness treatments, symptoms, medications, where to go for support and help for carers. **1800 18 SANE (7263)** 9am to 5pm Weekdays. www.sane.org/helpline/helpline-online
- Suicide Callback** provides crisis counselling to people at risk of suicide, carers for someone who is suicidal and those bereaved by suicide. **1300 659 467**, 24 hours/7 days www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/
- SuicideLine VIC** provides specialist telephone counselling and information to anyone affected by suicide. **1300 651 25124** hours/7 days. www.suicideline.org.au
- The Black Dog Institute** is a not for profit organisation that offers specialist expertise in mood disorders (depression and bipolar disorder). <http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/>
- Ybblue**, the youth program of **beyondblue**, promotes the message that it's acceptable to talk about depression and encourages young people, their families and friends to look out for each other and to get help when it is needed. A set of youth fact sheets with information on a variety of topics, including how to recognise depression and how to talk about it, what services are available to help young people and how to help friends and family who may be going through a tough time can be downloaded from the site. www.youthbeyondblue.com

APPENDIX F:

DRAFT SCRIPT TO READ TO STUDENTS

Document all information received, and actions undertaken.

ENSURE EXPLICIT CONSENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE BEREIVED AS TO WHAT INFORMATION (IF ANY) THEY ARE COMFORTABLE SHARING AND WHAT LANGUAGE THEY WISH TO BE USED IN COMMUNICATING THEIR LOSS.

Today/yesterday the college was given the very sad news that on {insert day/date} one of our Year {insert level} students died. The school community is thinking of the student, his/her family and his/her friends. Some students in our college, particularly his/her friends will find this news very difficult to understand and accept. Other students – not just close friends – are also likely to be upset perhaps because it reminds you of another sad event in your own life.

DET staff will be available to assist individual students. A notice is going home today to inform your parents/carers about the death.

If you need to leave school early, or you are absent from school, we request that you use existing school procedures to advise of your absence from school (sign out at the office if leaving school early or have home contact the school on the absence line if you are absent for the day or are going to be late attending school).

If you are approached by anyone asking for information about the student's death, please tell them they should speak with our principal.

We request that you be sensitive and respectful of other people's feelings during this difficult period. We also encourage you to look out for each other and report any concerns that you may have about a particular student to a teacher or parent.

If you have any questions about the information contained in this notice, please speak with your Advisor, Community Leader, or other staff member that you feel comfortable in asking.

APPENDIX G:

SCRIPT FOR FRONT OFFICE STAFF

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

ENSURE EXPLICIT CONSENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE BEREIVED AS TO WHAT INFORMATION (IF ANY) THEY ARE COMFORTABLE SHARING AND WHAT LANGUAGE THEY WISH TO BE USED IN COMMUNICATING THEIR LOSS.

Script for Front Office Staff - General enquiries

We have been informed that there has been an incident involving one of our students. The family of that student are aware and they are being supported.

Our principal, **{insert name}**, will be communicating with all of our college families to ensure that you have an awareness of the incident along with suggestions on how to best support your child.

We hope that you understand the need for a consistent response to queries received at this time. It helps us ensure that we are remaining sensitive to the needs of the family.

Please ask your child for the letter that they will have been given during the course of the day to share with you. This has also been emailed to all of those families that we have addresses for.

If you have current serious concerns around the safety and wellbeing of your child, then I am able to direct your call to a suitable support person. They will be able to discuss the concerns around your child with you.

Script for Front Office staff – Media enquiries

Our college principal, **{insert name}**, is currently unavailable. If you would like to leave your name, organisation name and number, then I will ask him to return your call. No other person from within the college will be liaising with the media.

We ask for your understanding that there are many demands on his time and naturally, the top priority is caring for the needs of our students and staff.

APPENDIX H:

DRAFT SCRIPT FOR FOLLOWING UP ON STUDENT ABSENCES

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

Script for Unexplained Absences

Hello, this is **{your name}** from Rushworth P-12 College. I am wishing to speak to **{parent/carers name}** if **{he/she}** is available, please.

We have received the tragic news that one of our students has passed away and wish to check on the wellbeing of all of those students who are away today.

{Name of child} is absent and we just wish to ensure that you are aware of this absence.

If aware of absence.

Are you able to provide us for a reason for this absence so we can ensure that our records are accurate?

If unaware of absence

We require your support in making contact with **{insert name}** and then request that you advise us of your success.

An email will be forwarded to you if we have your current email address which provides details of the support available here at our college along with other relevant information. A letter and information sheets will also be given to your child tomorrow on **{his/her}** return to share with you, or, if you believe that **{child's name}** will be absent for a period longer than this, we will put this in the post for you.

If you become aware that **{child's name}** will be absent tomorrow, it would be appreciated if you would make contact with the college by 9:00 am.

Thank you for your time and please know that we are working together to provide support and ensure the safety of all of our students hence us making this call.

APPENDIX I: INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES INFORMATION POSTER

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

Family liaison person is _____

Emergency Services liaison person is _____

Key Student Wellbeing Contact person is _____

Key Staff Wellbeing Contact person is _____

CAMHS and headspace liaison person is _____

Media liaison person is _____

APPENDIX J:

IMT 48 TO 78 HOURS RESPONSE ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

- Ensure the College returns to its regular routines and timetable.
- Family liaison person (staff) to contact the parents/carers/guardians and determine whether there is anything further that the Department can do to assist.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Plan the College's involvement in the funeral if approval is given by the family.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Ensure that relevant information is communicated with staff and provide opportunities for their feedback and observations to be given.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Monitor and assess students who have been identified as being at risk in collaboration with SSSOs and mental health agency support with a view to preparing an Individual Support Plan for any student who may require one.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Ensure all students who are receiving support are identified to staff. This should also detail who the primary support person is.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Collect all of the student's belongings and store in a safe and secure place for them to be collected by the parents/guardians or the police.

Task completed by: _____ at _____ am/pm

- Continue to meet at least daily at this time to ensure that appropriate actions are being taken and that all members are aware of developments.

APPENDIX K: FIRST MONTH RESPONSE AND CHECKLIST

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

- Monitor staff wellbeing and determine whether any further actions should be taken to support staff to manage their grief and trauma.
- Monitor student wellbeing and determine whether any further actions should be taken to support individual students, including whether any Individual Support Plans need to be reviewed or amended.
- Plan for relevant events to be held by the college (college magazine, award nights, graduation etc).
- Gather information from staff relevant for an operational debrief.
- Conduct an operational debrief.

APPENDIX L:

LONGER TERM RESPONSE AND CHECKLIST

Document all information received and actions undertaken.

- Continue to monitor the wellbeing of staff and students.
- Continue to provide support to individual students and staff as required.
- Keep staff, students and the college community informed of any further developments.
- Plan for anniversaries, birthdays and significant events.
- Implement recommendations from the operational debrief.
- Review curriculum and college-based prevention and intervention programs to ensure that they are providing positive mental health and wellbeing messages.
- Consider convening forums and events for students and the college community that foster optimistic thinking and a sense of connectedness with family, school and the community.
- Consider professional learning opportunities for college staff in understanding the impact of good mental health and wellbeing on student learning and the use of effective coping skills to manage the complexities of life.