

EASTERN TOWNSHIPS SCHOOL BOARD	<i>Title:</i> SAFE SCHOOL PROCEDURE	
<i>Source:</i> Director of Complementary Educational Services	<i>Adopted:</i>	<i>Reference Number:</i> P035-1

1 – Introduction

These procedures contain recommended practices and processes for the application of the *Safe School Policy* and should not be seen as compulsory (with the exception of section 5).

2 – Ongoing Proactive & Preventative Safe School Education Program

2.1 The following elements should be taken into consideration when designing this education program:

- Establishing a common understanding of what constitutes violence;
- Assuring teacher and student skills in safe school practices are current and based upon empirical research;
- Developing environmental options designed to allow students to re-channel their frustration, and to have access to safe places in the school people will react at all times;
- Creating a school climate that fosters a sense of ownership and belonging.¹

2.2 The following practices should be established to support an effective ongoing proactive education program:

- Establishing an on-going school-wide program of proactive violence prevention education;
- Establishing a Safe School Committee (core team) to monitor safe school practices on an on-going basis, to seek and disseminate the latest research on violence prevention, and to refer to in cases of very serious and/or chronic infractions (see Annex 1);
- Including parents in the ongoing educational process of establishing and maintaining a safe school;
- Consulting Complementary Services professionals is encouraged throughout this process.

¹ DeGosztonyi, Eva, “Blueprint for a Safe School”, Centre of Excellence for Behaviour, 2004

3 - Protocol for Dealing with Person(s) to Person(s) Violations of Physical and/or Psychological Safety

This protocol is usually included in the school's code of conduct. This code of conduct should delineate typical behavioural mistakes from major infractions. This protocol, as indicated in the *Safe School Policy*, deals with person(s) to person(s) violations.

3.1 In the event of an infraction, an immediate assessment of student safety is made by the intervening adult. The intervening adult then:

- re-establishes safety by deciding upon an immediate intervention for student victim and student aggressor;
- refers situation to administrator immediately if it involves staff-to-student violation;
- decides if event constitutes a minor or major infraction. If it involves a major infraction, or if the intervening adult is unsure, the situation must be referred to the administrator.

3.2 The following are examples of major infractions (non limitative and depends on the context):

- assault*
- chronic behavioural mistakes
- illegal substances (usage and/or trafficking)*
- overt physical and/or verbal intimidation, including cyberbullying
- overt social alienation
- racial, or other, prejudice
- sexual assault*
- sexual harassment
- theft*
- threats of violence*
- vandalism*
- weapons (possession and/or usage)*.

* in these situations, a police report should be filed. Please refer also to the ETSB *Substance Abuse Statement and Procedure*.

3.3 The chart on page 4 describes the suggested actions to be taken subsequent to the intervening adult re-establishing safety, and deciding whether the infraction constitutes a minor or major infraction.

4 - Protocols for Responding to School-Wide Emergencies or Threats

4.1 In the event of a school-wide emergency, the administration enacts the established protocol for response. This protocol may be developed in conjunction with the School Board Emergency Response Team (E.R.T., see section 5), and the local police, fire, or other agencies.

4.2 The following are examples of situations that the local school protocol should be designed to respond to:

- Fire;
- Bomb threats;
- Threats of violence from an internal or external source (for example, the use of weapons);
- Natural disasters.

5 – School Board Notification

5.1 In the case of major infractions, the administrator must immediately notify the Director of Complementary Services as well as the Office of the Director General.

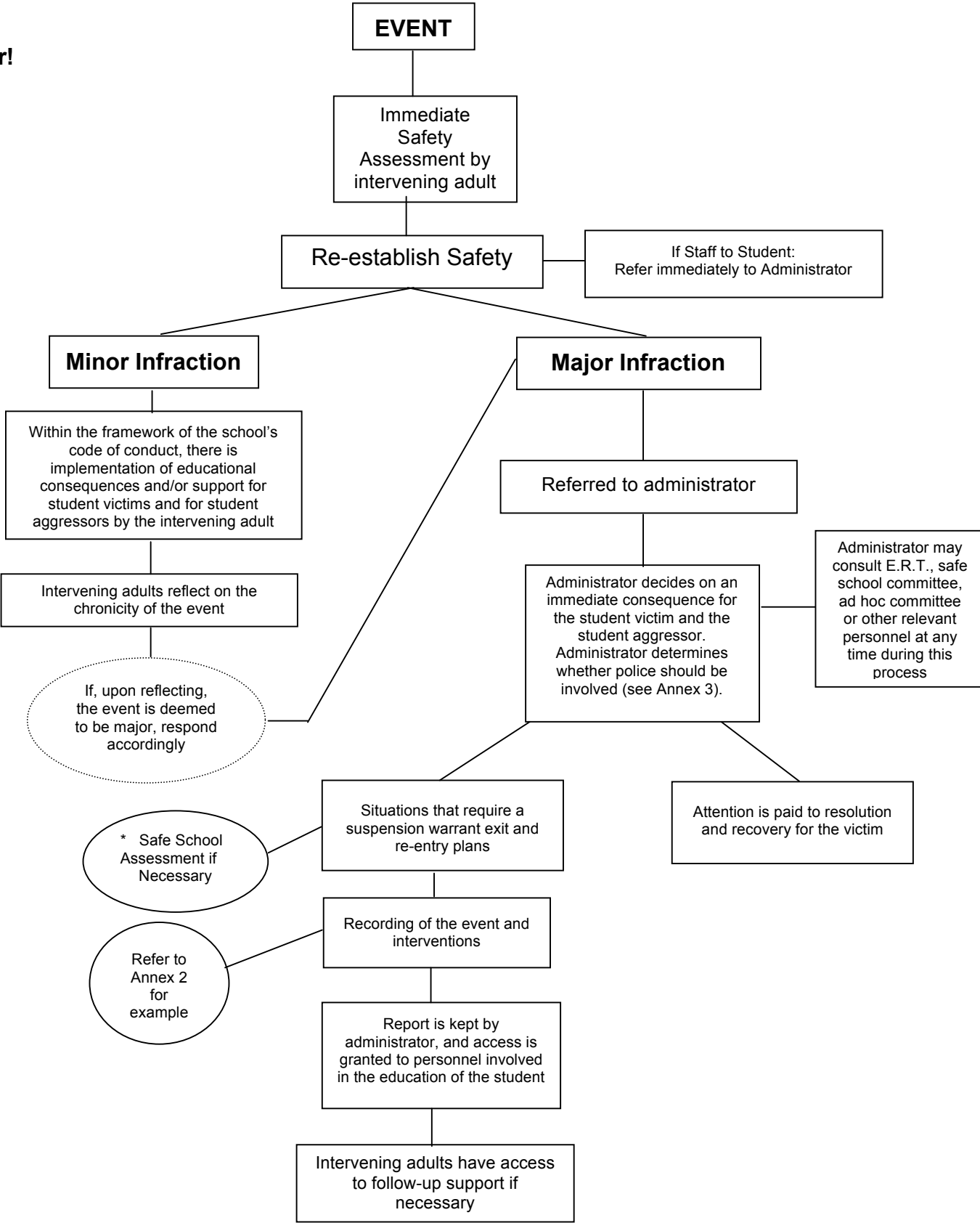
5.2 The ETSB will establish an Emergency Response Team (E.R.T.), which may be called upon for consultation at anytime, but which must be immediately notified in all cases of a school-wide emergency or threat.

The membership of this team will be: Director General, Assistant Director General, Director of Complementary Services, Director of Human Resources, Communications Officer, Coordinator of Buildings and Equipment, and ad hoc members.

* Refer to the ETSB *Substance Abuse Statement and Procedure*

Safe School Procedure Chart

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**Safe School Procedure
Index of Annexes**

- 1) Suggestions for Establishing a School-level Safe School Committee
- 2) Procedure for Requesting a Safe School Assessment (to follow)
- 3) Guidelines for Dealing with the Death of a Student or Staff Member
- 4) Safe School Handbook for Crisis Management & Readiness

Safe School Procedure

Annex 1

Suggestions for the School-level Safe School Committee:

Mandate:

- Seek and disseminate the latest research on violence prevention in schools
- Help design, implement and monitor Safe School proactive educational practices on an ongoing basis in the whole school
- Be available for consultation on major infractions to the school's code of conduct and/or to the ETSB Safe School Policy

Proposed Composition:

- 1 Administrator
- 1 – 3 permanent staff members
- Professionals from Complementary Educational Services (on a consultative basis)
- Students*
- Parent(s)
- Ad Hoc members as the situation warrants

*Student participation pertains only to the first 2 elements of the Committee's mandate.

Safe School Procedure ***Annex 3***

Guidelines for dealing with the death of a student or staff member

ADMINISTRATION:

- Verification of the facts surrounding the incident is crucial. Administrators should contact the family of the deceased and/or the authorities to verify the facts before implementing any intervention plan.
- Give everyone or staff member the facts as quickly as possible to dispel rumours. Please verify that the student is deceased and not being maintained on life support. Verify the condition of any other individuals who were involved in the incident and obtain a current report of their condition.
- Use age-appropriate language when describing the details of the incident and provide only that information which has been verified as factual. Avoid providing unnecessary details or speculations about the cause of the incident.
- Contact key school board administrators for assistance. Assign one key administrator to deal with the media, if needed, and restrict media access to staff and students.
- Convene staff for a meeting to discuss the incident and to allow individuals to deal with their own feelings about the issue before they assist the students. Staff members will need to have accurate facts about the tragedy and instructions to share the information with their students as well as suggestions for providing assistance. Whenever possible, this meeting should occur before the arrival of students.
- Provide staff with information about the Employee Assistance Program and encourage individuals to seek assistance if they are feeling overwhelmed by the incident.
- Use the public announcement system. Administration should carefully plan and rehearse what will be said. Choice of words, voice tone and inflection are very important and set the tone for the management of the tragedy.
- Every effort should be made to contact the teachers who actually taught the deceased student before they arrive at school. If possible, any bus driver who may have had contact with the deceased student should be contacted before they begin their morning run.

Parent Notification:

- It is very important to inform parents of students at the school that a death has occurred. There is a balance between providing enough information to dispel rumours and protecting the privacy of the deceased. It is recommended that a fact sheet be sent home to parents that would contain a brief description of the cause of death but would primarily encourage parents to focus on the needs of their child and clarify what type of services will be available at school to help their child cope with the tragedy.

Administrators should anticipate the degree of trauma that may be experienced by answering the following questions:

Who was the person and were they a long-time, popular member of the school?

What happened and where did the death occur?

Who witnessed the death and what has been done to help them cope with the trauma (i.e. other students, staff members or family)?

What other tragedies have impacted this particular school recently? The latest death will cause other unresolved issues to surface for both staff and students.

Who else was involved in the incident which caused the death? If the person believed to be responsible for the death is also a member of the school community, it will add to the emotionality of the incident and a plan will have to be implemented to re-integrate the individual into the school community with appropriate support and assistance.

ROLE FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL:

There are a number of roles that should be performed by key personnel. It is important to recognize that each person has his or her own unique history with regard to crises and loss. It is not unusual for old issues to resurface. Each student and staff member should be given permission to feel a range of emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Typically, individuals go through a range of emotional reactions following crises: 1) anxiety, 2) denial, 3) anger, 4) remorse, 5) grief and 6) reconciliation.

Principal's Role

- Be visible, available, supportive and empower staff
- Provide direction to teachers about how much to set aside the curriculum (i.e. tests should be postponed temporarily until the degree of trauma has been assessed).
- Stay in contact with the family of the deceased and survivors of the accident
- Provide staff and students with the details of any funeral arrangements
- Ensure that if an in-school memorial service is requested, that it is appropriate and necessary. Respect the family's wishes in this regard.

Student Services:

- Be available
- Cancel all other activities

- Provide individual and group counselling
- Locate community resources for additional assistance.
- Provide support for staff, administrators, parents and students.
- Follow the schedule of the deceased and visit individual classrooms, if needed.
Follow up with close friends of the deceased
- Keep records of affected students and provide follow-up services.

Teacher's Role:

- Provide accurate information to students
- Lead classroom discussions that focus on helping students cope with the loss; just talking about the loss can help students process their feelings and regain a sense of personal security. If you are not comfortable with this, ask a counsellor to step in and assist you. Do not feel bad about this discomfort; you are also entitled to the full range of emotions that accompany this type of event.
- Dispel rumours
- Answer questions without providing unnecessary details
- Model an appropriate response
- Give permission for a range of emotions
- Identify students who need counselling and refer to student services professionals
- Set aside the curriculum as needed.

The majority of students should stay in their classrooms. Only those closest to the victim or those with tragic life situations of their own should be sent to support personnel. However, treat all requests for assistance seriously and seek help from student services and administration throughout the process.