



PAPAKAIO SCHOOL



606 Crisis Communication Plan

Purpose

To ensure that communication in the event of a crisis is appropriate, clear and proceeds through the appropriate channels in a timely fashion.

The event or crisis itself will to a larger degree dictate how the event is managed. Types of crisis situations can include and are not limited to: fire, vandalism, earthquake, flooding, storm damage, conflict between persons within the school or between school and whanau/family/pupil, death of a pupil or an emergency situation on a school camp or trip.

Communication is likely to be to the school community and/or media and may take the form of usual school communications (such as Facebook, newsletter, Skool loop app, text message or email), media release or verbal statement given to the media. Up to date contact groups must be available 24/7. There is a Crisis Response Ministry of Education team that is available 24/7. Traumatic incident coordinators can be contacted on 0800 TI TEAM (0800 848 326).

It is important that communication is managed well and through a central point. The official spokesperson for the school will be the Principal and/or Chair of the Board. Each will act as a back up to the other.

It is quite possible that the other Board members may be approached by members of the media or school community for a comment. It is essential for efficient management of the crisis that Board members refer questions and approaches back to the spokesperson. Assistance with communications by providing administrative assistance will be covered by school staff.

Useful guidelines from NZPF for handling media can be found at http://www.nzpf.ac.nz/sites/default/files/Media_Guidelines.pdf

The STA Helpline can be contacted through 0800 STAHELP (0800 782 435)
Email: Helpdesk@nzsta.org.nz

Every situation will require and dictate a different set of requirements.

Aspects **to consider** include:

- How much information is given out? In the event of a pupil death it is essential to talk with the family and gain their permission first.
- Media Access - will we allow them on school grounds to film or take pictures? If they are - how will they be escorted? Consider a non-public gathering area with privacy for families.
- Legal issues - ensure wording is neutral and un-emotive
- Consider issuing a written statement and/or fact sheet so to minimise any reporting errors. Consider asking for notes to read back.
- It is good practice to defer the media and plan the response but this must be done in a timely fashion.
- In sharing information be aware of; privacy issues, ensuring there is agreement from the BoT on the course of action, the dangers of Social Media, selecting channels of communication that are most appropriate, protecting people's dignity.

Reviewed September 2020