

SANBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SRSD File: FFA

MEMORIALIZATION POLICY

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a uniform and consistent set of protocols and practices to be followed after a death in the school community. The Board believes that great care must be taken to ensure that grief support in the school community ~~supports~~ **reflects** the latest research and best practice in the field of mental health.

Statement of Policy:

Sanborn Regional School District's protocol regarding memorialization after a death in the school community is based on the latest research on postvention responses for schools and educators from leading mental health organizations.

~~The guiding principles of this protocol are to provide structured grief support in the school community. The guidelines on memorialization center on four main principles:~~

- To minimize the potential for putting other students at risk (in the case of suicide)
- To respond to deaths in a uniform manner
- To facilitate support for the process of grieving
- To allow for memorials which reflect a desire to commemorate the life, rather than the death of the deceased, in personal and meaningful ways

Dealing with Spontaneous Memorials

Spontaneous memorials often appear after the death of a student or adult. The school staff should respect the need of students to express their feelings but **must** also ~~need to~~ balance these displays by indicating that these remembrances will be temporary. School administrators may remove memorials at the end of the day or after the funeral and give them to the family of the deceased person.

All requests for memorialization activities and/or wearable symbols must be approved by the Building Principal, with consultation from other district or building administrators, school counselor(s), the school psychologist, and other qualified staff members.

Memorial Activities to Consider

- Scrapbooks/cards/posters in one (monitored) location for students to express condolences to family. Memorials will be removed the day after the funeral/memorial ceremony and given to the family.

- One-time activity focused memorial which may include fundraising for prevention groups related to the cause of death (i.e. American Cancer Society), or mental health awareness programs
- Picture in yearbook for the last year that they were in attendance at the school only
- Picture in class video as it would be if student was still alive
- Scholarship in memory of deceased
- Focus any discussion on how do we support one another going forward
- Appropriate, discreet, and small wearable symbols (i.e. ribbon pins, bracelets, etc)

Memorial Activities To Avoid

- Discussion of the specific details of the cause of death, especially in the case of suicide
- Flying the flag at half-mast (this is reserved for the death of a public figure)
- Posting a notice on the outside sign board
- Dismissing school early
- Cancelling school
- Planting gardens
- Erecting plaques
- Public memorial **services/events** on school grounds
- Creating a permanent part of the environment (i.e. planting trees) or adding to an existing memorial site
- Music (or other) performances at funerals by school groups