

ATTACHMENT 4.17

GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA INTERACTIONS | NON-SUICIDE / NOT PERMITTED TO DISCLOSE

The following guidelines should be used when interacting with media about a death. In this case, “death” refers to a staff or student death that is **not** a suicide, or a staff or student suicide-death when the family has **not** given the school permission to disclose cause of death.

The staff person responsible for working with the media should prepare a written statement for release to those media representatives who request it. The statement should include:

- A very brief statement acknowledging the death that does **not** include details about the death.
- An expression of the school’s sympathy to the survivors of the deceased.
- Information about the school’s postvention response plan.

SAMPLE STATEMENT

I am very sad to report that [insert school] is grieving the death of a student/staff. On behalf of the entire school district, I want to express our heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the student’s family and friends for this painful loss. Our school is working with mental health professionals to provide postvention services and support to students, staff, and families this week and in the weeks to come.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

All other staff, including school board members, should:

- Refrain from making any comments to or responding to requests from the media.
- Refer all requests from the media to the designated person responsible for working with the media.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD:

- Not be permitted to conduct interviews on school grounds.
- Not be allowed to attend parents or student group meetings to protect information shared in those meetings.