



Traumatic Incident Policy and Procedures

Purpose:

To provide a framework for delivering a timely, compassionate and coordinated response to traumatic incidents that relate to members of the Te Puna Wai o Waipapa - Hagley College community. To ensure an appropriate response to a traumatic incident, a team of experienced staff will oversee all incidents. This is led by the College Principal with the support of the Senior Leadership Team and key well-being staff.

General Principles and Responsibilities:

A traumatic incident is an event which causes serious distress or harm to a staff member, a student or a group of students at the College, whether:

- Directly, through a student or students being the immediate victim (s) of a traumatic event (e.g. student death or serious injury), or
- Indirectly, through students being affected by, but not directly involved in, a traumatic event (e.g. threat to staff or students, local school student's sudden death)

When a traumatic incident occurs which has impacted upon, or has the potential to impact upon the College Community, a determination shall be made as to whether it will be classified as a traumatic incident. The following may assist with classification:

- Whether any students are directly involved and to what degree
- Whether the event has occurred in the context of the College
- The number of students affected by the event
- The extent of potential distress indirectly affected by the event

The death or serious injury of a current student of the College shall be considered a traumatic event.

The College responses to a traumatic incident will take into account the nature of the incident and the needs of the students, their families, staff and the College. It is acknowledged that the level of College involvement may vary depending on the circumstances of the incident in question.

Student traumatic incidents will be managed by the Principal in consultation with the Ministry of Education Trauma Team. The Guidance Counsellors will take a key role in supporting students and their families and staff. A member of the guidance team may be the appropriate person to be the family liaison person.

When an incident has been characterised as a traumatic incident, the traumatic incident procedures [follows] will be implemented, or the College's Crisis Management Plan.

Related policies:

- Traumatic Incident Procedures [follows]
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Ministry of Education – Preventing and Responding to Suicide
- Crisis Management Plan

Approved (Name): Melanie Morris

Signature: 

Designation: Presiding Member

Date Approved: 29/8/23

Review date: Aug 2025

Hagley College Traumatic Incident Procedures

The following procedures are to be implemented if a traumatic incident occurs at Hagley College or a school event. Every traumatic incident is unique, and those designated with responsibility for managing the incident will be aware of the differences various scenarios present.

If a traumatic event occurs:

1. Ensure the Principal receives information about the traumatic incident. The Principal will set up a traumatic incident response team. The response team will check and confirm that the information received is accurate. The team would typically comprise of the senior leadership team, appropriate year level advisors, appropriate cultural advisors and counselling staff.

Sometimes this information might appear to be obvious, such as during the March 15th attacks. On other occasions, such as death by suspected suicide, the information might be influenced by rumour, false social media postings, or genuine uncertainty. It is, therefore, important to ascertain the truth as a starting point. It is important from this time onwards that all communication about the traumatic incident is led by the school response team

2. Notify members of the Board of Trustees about the incident and keep them regularly updated.
3. Contact the Ministry of Education Traumatic Incidents team, meet and share key information. Expect this team to offer assistance, check process and progress. Phone 0800 TI Team (0800 84 8326)
4. Contact any other schools or institutions which might have a link to the traumatic incident. Often Hagley students have siblings and close friends at other Christchurch schools or institutions.
5. Appoint a liaison person/s to communicate, on behalf of the school response team, with family, families, whānau affected by the traumatic incident. The person appointed must have the capacity to perform the role and not be affected by their emotional involvement with the traumatic incident. There might be more than one liaison person, depending on the scale of the traumatic incident. The liaison person must be actively supported in their role by the response team.
6. Notify outside agencies which might provide assistance. This might be, for example, police, mental health agencies, the hospital, cultural or religious advisors or other schools.
7. Contact individuals or groups (stakeholders) most affected by the traumatic event and agree what information can be released to and discussed with staff, students and the school community.
8. Email all staff in the Hagley College community to advise them about the traumatic incident. The email will contain appropriate details about the traumatic incident and what time the

staff will be meeting as a group. The communication needs to use language carefully and accurately. For example, do not use the word 'suicide' when a person has died suddenly.

9. Meet as a staff to inform and respond to concerns and questions. At this meeting, provide the staff with a series of statements, strategies they might like to use when in class, which relate to the traumatic incident. Many staff members may not feel equipped to deal with the aftermath of the traumatic incident by knowing what to say, answering any questions from students, or dealing with upset students.
10. Advise the student body, families, caregivers and school community about the traumatic incident via a range of means, including email, website, school apps or other media.
11. All media inquiries are to be directed to the Principal who will prepare a media release, if it is deemed appropriate.
12. Establish a care register. Allocate senior leadership, counsellors and any other appropriate staff, to students or staff on the register. Maintain contact and check in regularly on their wellbeing. The care register team will meet daily until not required. As the number on the care register decreases, so will the frequency of the care register meetings.
13. The school receptionist will cover any incoming calls relating to the traumatic incident and refer all phone calls to the senior team administrator.
14. Counselling services will be set up and be ongoing at Simpson House, ranging from informal gatherings of students to one-on-one counselling sessions. These services will remain in place as required. They will be accessible to all members of the Te Puna Wai o Waipapa - Hagley College community, including all staff.
15. If it is deemed appropriate that students affected by the traumatic incident be allowed to leave the school grounds, or stay away from school, a plan will be put in place. The plan will involve a system to monitor students leaving the school grounds and will ensure that an adult is present if students go to someone's house. The signing out process occurs via a manual signout at reception.
16. Staff will be informed by email and fliers in their pigeon-holes of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) services available for support.
17. Information is to be sent to the parents and caregivers to help them provide direction and to support their children coping with traumatic incident related responses and grief. An evening for parents around grief may be useful in the event of a traumatic incident.
18. Check on the wellbeing of staff over the days and weeks following the traumatic incident. There is a chance that a traumatic incident might occur at a pressure point in the teaching timetable. While staff might not be directly affected, they might have students in their classes who are. The staff's ability to support others can be compromised by pressure points in their workload. It might be useful to consider staff wellbeing initiatives during this time and reduce workload, if possible.
19. Keep a written record of the process and use the checklist as a working document.

Hagley College Traumatic Incident Checklist

Action	Done	In Progress	Not Required
Principal notified, response team assembled, information verified			
MOE contacted			
BOT notified			
Other schools/institutions contacted			
Liaison person/s appointed			
Agencies notified			
Stakeholders consulted			
Staff email – details of incident and staff meeting			
Students/Families/ Caregivers email of details			
Media release			
Care register compiled			
School Receptionist briefed to field calls			
Counselling services, O Block set up.			
Plan for students leaving grounds/ adult at home.			
EAP notification			
Parent support/strategies emailed			
Staff wellbeing monitored closely. Appropriate strategies implemented.			
Written record of process and checklist.			

