

Destinations
Career
Academy of
Georgia
Crisis plan

2022-2023

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GADCA CRISIS PLAN AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A crisis or emergency can be described as a sudden, unexpected event that causes significant emotional and psychological distress to students and/or staff. Crises range in scope and intensity from incidents that directly or indirectly affect a single student to ones that impact the entire community. If this happens, GADCA has appropriate procedures in place and will follow them to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its students and staff.

Crisis Response Team (CRT) – a group of people to include the Head of School, Principal, School Counselor, Community Engagement Specialist, Career Readiness Coordinator, Operations Manager, and Special Programs Academic Administrator as needed that mobilize school and community resources.

The objectives of the CRT:

1. To provide for the safety, welfare, and care of the students and staff
2. To plan and prepare the school community with the skills and organization to respond in a crisis
3. To advocate for the students and staff in healing, rebuilding, and establishing their pre-crisis equilibrium
4. To minimize liability by having a plan and following it

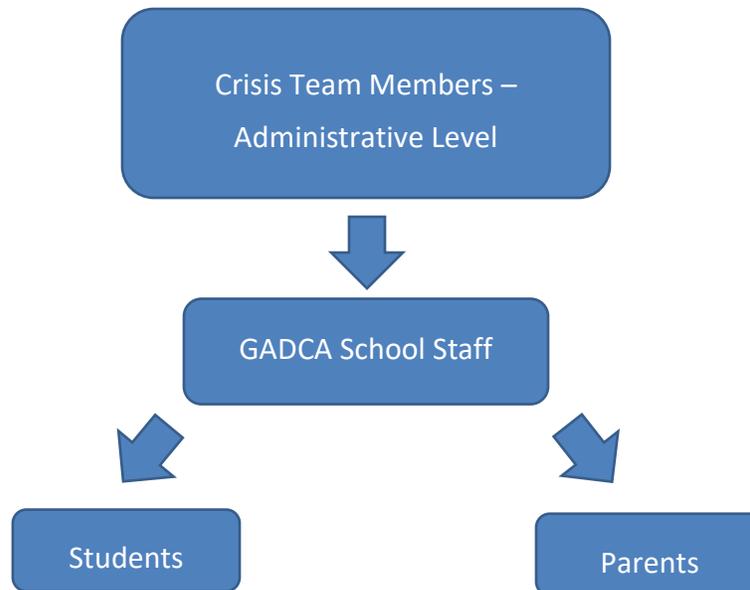
The CRT will convene in the following situations:

1. Medical emergency or natural disaster
2. Acts of violence (from outsiders or students/staff)
3. Death of a student or staff member
4. Suicide of a student or staff member
5. Any situation that causes the emotional or physical safety of the students/staff is threatened

FRAMEWORK FOR TRAINING MODEL

The CRT will be trained in crisis intervention and management, as well as be knowledgeable about GADCA's crisis plan and procedures. The CRT will provide annual trainings to GADCA staff to ensure that they are familiar with the crisis protocol and are able to offer support to families in the event a crisis or emergency arises. The purpose of facilitating an annual staff crisis training is to discuss the following:

1. Identify and interpret school policies or procedures regarding crisis response
2. Identify the CRT members and their roles
3. Train staff to identify at-risk students and refer to a school counselor when appropriate
4. Prepare staff to appropriately handle crisis situations after school hours or on the weekends
5. Teach staff how to lead sensitive and constructive dialogue with students following a crisis



PROCEDURES FOR GENERAL CRISIS INTERVENTION

Unanticipated events can escalate into a school wide catastrophe if not dealt with immediately and effectively (suicides, car crashes, natural disasters, deaths). Teachers or school staff are often the first point of contact for many crisis and counseling issues. As a virtual career academy, the crises and emergencies that we encounter are not normally building-based; but are focused more on each individual child and their environment. As a school, we generally gather our information directly from a student, their family, the community, or from the media. Our students are affected by things happening on a personal level in their own homes and in the community around them. We seek information for stories from the counties we know our students are living in and national stories that could have an impact on their families. We also take everything they write, speak, allude to, and sometimes hearsay as a serious situation to conduct an investigation. Once a crisis is made known, it is important to verify the crisis and follow the proper procedures in place. **Please note if the student is in immediate danger dial 911.** The following is a checklist that GADCA will follow for working with students, families, and staff when notified about a crisis. It should be noted that there are a different set of procedures to follow in the event the crisis is a suspicion of child abuse/neglect or suicide attempt. Please see the sections entitled "Crisis Intervention for Child Abuse and Neglect" and "Procedures for Handling Suicide Attempts" for a step-by-step checklist regarding these procedures.

- Notify the Principal
 - Principal will process crisis with school personnel who is reporting the incident.
 - Principal will tell school personnel who is providing the information to not repeat it elsewhere due to the need to verify the information. An announcement regarding any crisis will come from the Head of School or Principal.

- Principal will follow the Crisis Response Team Support Flowchart (see below) to ensure all crisis team members are aware of the current situation. All Operations and Administration team members will not repeat or give out any information within or outside of GADCA until specifically instructed to do so. Any inquiries about the crisis should be directed to the Head of School.
- Principal will verify the crisis.
 - In cases of reported student death, verify the reported incident by using alternative resources. It is important to not disturb the affected student's family as they cope with a tragedy.
- Convene the Crisis Response Team
 - CRT members all become aware of current crisis or emergency.
 - Team members are given specific duties to help the GADCA student body become aware, adapt, and cope with the presenting crisis.
 - Schedule and provide grief support groups
 - This can be done through Class Connect sessions.
 - Be available to students and families that need additional support by phone and email.
 - Teachers should monitor chat messages during their own Class Connect sessions and refer students to school counselors, as well as notify the family via telephone to provide additional support and express any student concern.
 - Review and distribute "Strategies for Supporting Families in the Time of Crisis" and "Helping Children After a Disaster" to teachers (see Appendix B and Appendix C).
 - If the crisis is a student's death, then review and distribute "Guidelines for Responding to a Student's Death" to teachers (see Appendix A).
 - CRT members will stand in for any staff unable or unwilling to deal with the presenting crisis during the announcement and subsequent discussions
 - Provide a list of counseling resources as requested to all teachers/students that would like to seek out counseling for help.
 - Information pertaining to the Employee Assistance Program can also be distributed to school personnel as requested for additional support.
 - If the crisis surrounds a student(s) death, officially withdraw him/her from GADCA.

- Head of School will prepare a formal statement for an initial announcement to the entire school that includes minimum details and notes that additional information will be forthcoming. Head of School will also prepare a statement for telephone inquiries.
- Call an emergency staff meeting to discuss the crisis or emergency.
- Determine if additional resources are needed to effectively manage the crisis and notify them as appropriate.

A staff meeting will be held following a crisis or emergency to discuss the following components:

1. Review facts of the crisis and dispel rumors.
2. Help teachers and staff process their feelings and responses to the crisis.
3. Describe the feelings that students may experience and suggest how teachers and staff might handle specific situations.
4. Importance of validating student's feelings and emphasizing the normalcy of a range of emotions.
5. Returning to normal routine and schedule as this provides security and comfort to students.
6. Schedule a follow-up meeting.

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM ROLES

Head of School

- Works as the media contact for GADCA
- Briefs the media, if necessary
- Reviews public information releases
- Produce statement for release via social media sites, if appropriate
- Serves as liaison with public safety and response agencies to coordinates responses in a unified command

Principal

- Assesses the situation and engages appropriate crisis response protocol
- Communicates with Head of School
- Monitors implementation of the response plan
- Implements crisis team phone tree to assemble the CRT
- Conducts staff meeting during crisis

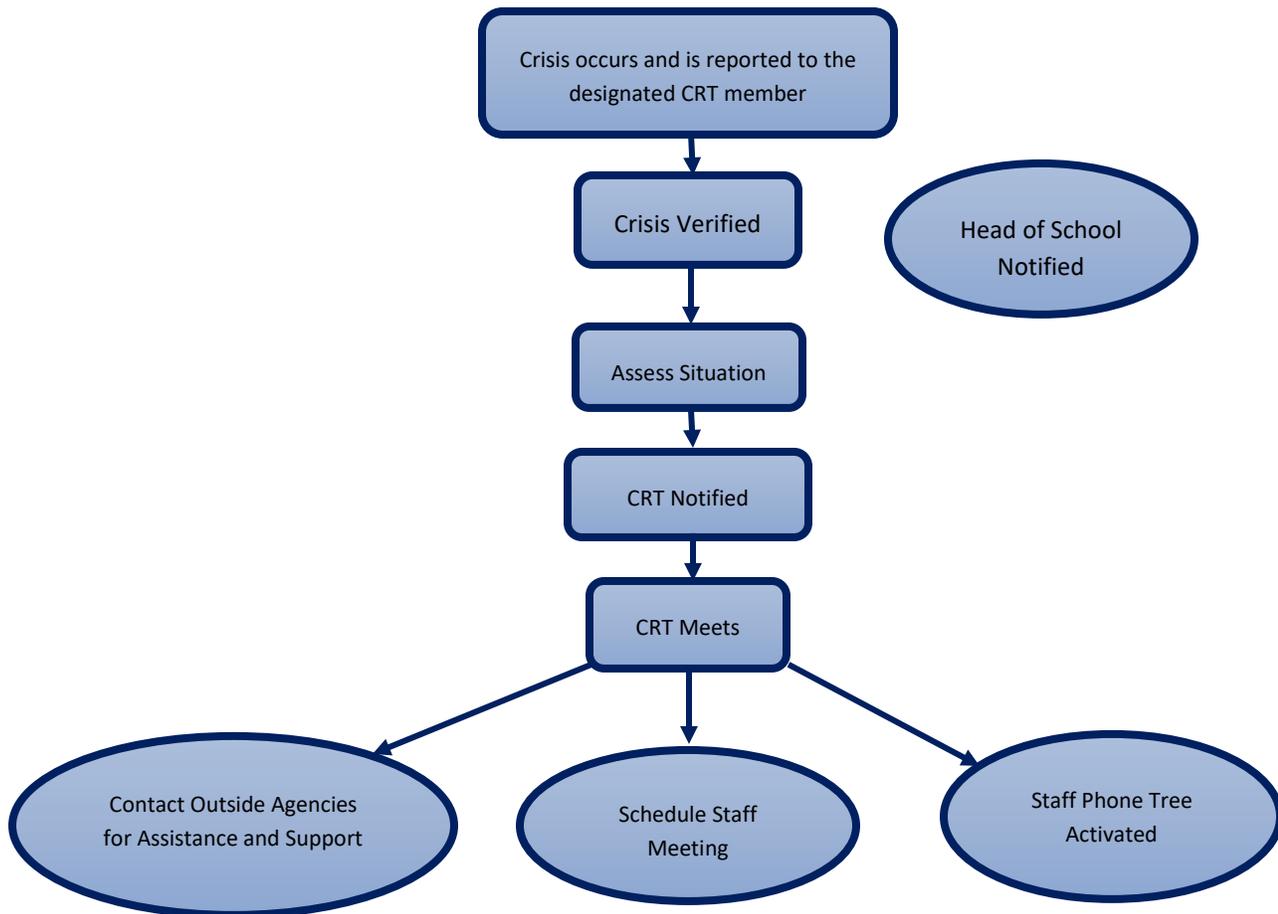
School Counselor & Community Engagement Specialist

- Facilitates discussions and decision making with the CRT
- Provides expertise in linking team to the appropriate crisis response protocols and guidelines
- Leads the development of the response and intervention plan to include physical and psychological interventions
- Reviews effectiveness of response and interventions
- Schedule and provide grief support groups to the GADCA community

Special Programs Academic Administrator, Operations Manager & CRE Coordinator

- Serves as the point of contact regarding the crisis for their designated team
- Ensures referrals to counselors are made, if necessary
- Helps as needed to the CRT in handling crisis situations

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM SUPPORT FLOWCHART



PROCEDURES FOR CRISIS INTERVENTION FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Every professional working with children is an important part of Georgia's plan to eliminate the abuse and neglect of children. ALL GADCA staff members are considered mandated reporters by Georgia law and must report any suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The Crisis Response Team does not need to convene in the event a CPS report needs to be made, but there are procedures in place to ensure the safety of the student(s) and as a liability to GADCA teachers, administrators, and staff. Child Protective Services (CPS) is a division of the Department of Social Services with their main goal being to protect children and handle any calls related to suspicions of child abuse/neglect. When a staff member becomes concerned that a child is being abused or neglected, GADCA will implement the following protocol:

- Call the Principal and School Counselor to process the situation immediately.
- School counselor will provide guidance and support on whether a CPS report is appropriate.
- School counselor and principal will support staff member in calling CPS if needed, as well as provide the appropriate phone number to make a CPS report depending on the locality of the student.
- Principal will report the incident to the Head of School.
- Counselor will provide intervention/additional support as needed to the family.
- Counselor will complete the appropriate documentation in Total View.

Helpful Information Regarding Crisis Intervention for Child Abuse and Neglect:

1. [Division of Family & Children Services](#) -This website provides the contact information of each Department of Social Services across the state of Georgia, which is divided by county/city.
2. Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline - (1-855-422-4453)
 - a. The Georgia Division of Family & Children Services (DFAS) operates a statewide Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline 24/7 by receiving reports of child abuse and neglect and referring them to the appropriate local department of social services. The CPS Hotline is staffed by trained Protective Service Hotline Specialists. Anyone can report suspected child abuse or neglect to a local department of social services or to the CPS Hotline. Callers will be asked to provide as much information as possible about the child, the alleged abuser and the incident. You are not required to give your name when you make the report, but if you do identify yourself, the local department of social services will be able to contact you for further information if needed and will be able to inform you of actions that were taken. Each report is sent to the proper local social service agency to be evaluated to determine whether the report information meets the legal definition of child abuse or neglect and whether CPS has the authority and responsibility to conduct a family assessment or an investigation to determine the child's immediate safety needs and to determine if the family needs services.
3. How to Document in Total View (do not discuss with staff unrelated to the report):

Subject line: Referral to Counselor

Body of note: See note attachment. (Attach a password protected document noting the situation – see Appendix F for template)
4. Any personal information that did not escalate to the CPS level but needs to be documented should be placed in a password protected document in TV.

PREVENTION

Prevention is defined as the action of stopping something from happening or arising. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the goal of mitigation and prevention is *to decrease the need for response as opposed to simply increasing response capability*. While GADCA does not have control over unexpected circumstances such as plane crashes or earthquakes, we can provide resources and psychoeducation to students and families to prevent some crisis situations and minimize the impact of such incidents. Students who understand how to prevent bullying, threats, harassment, suicide, and unpreparedness during natural disasters, etc. have a more positive outlook in life and remain more poised and relaxed when faced with a crisis.

1. Types of Crises to Prepare for:

- a. Bullying
- b. Suicide
- c. Violence
- d. Natural disasters
- e. Loss of parents/death in family

2. Benefits of Prevention:

- a. Promote safety and awareness
- b. Provide education and additional support on preparedness for crises to the GADCA school community and staff
- c. Avoid traumatic events

Staff and Student Roles in Prevention:

1. Counselors

- a. Provide psychoeducation on ways to prevent crisis situations and good practices on how to handle various crises.

2. Teachers

- a. Review prevention procedures periodically with students to prevent any crisis situations.
- b. Be available to students who reach out for additional support for those experiencing crisis (directly and indirectly) and ensure they are aware of available resources and/or refer to the school counselor

3. Students

- a. Help and assist other students who many need guidance in some of the prevention tactics.
- b. Verbalize their needs to teachers and/or staff to avoid a crisis from escalating.

Prevention Resources:

1. Bullying Resources:
 - a. [Middle School Toolkits for Bullying Prevention](#) – Provides a wealth of strategies, educational tools, and activities on bullying prevention, as well as educates students on how they can be proactive against bullying and the importance of kindness.
 - b. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/> - The federal government website that defines bullying, cyberbullying, ways to prevent bullying, and how adults and children can reduce the frequency of bullying and harassment towards others.
2. Suicide Prevention Resources:
 - a. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
 - b. [Georgia Suicide Prevention Program & Resources](#)
 - c. [National Hopeline](#): 1-800-784-2433 or info@imalive.org – Provides crisis intervention through hotlines, but also via instant messaging.
3. Traumatic Events (coping with traumatic events):
 - a. <https://www.ready.gov/kids> - This website is sponsored by FEMA and provides various activities for children to engage in that can help them prepare for natural disasters and feel calmer in the aftermath of a traumatic event.
 - b. See Appendix C "Helping Children Cope Following a Disaster" for helpful strategies on coping effectively.

INTERVENTION

Intervention is when a crisis occurs, and staff intervene using reasonable measures to include support, safety, and education. It is important to be familiar with GADCA's crisis protocol and procedures to ensure the smoothness of the intervention modes.

1. Guidelines for Intervening
 - a. Support
 - i. Communicating the availability of support services
 - ii. Providing support in an organized manner (see Crisis Response Team Flow Chart)
 - b. Safety
 - i. Ensuring the safety of individuals involved in a crisis
 - ii. Reporting (when necessary) to parents/guardians, local police, and/or the Department of Social Services

c. Education

- i. Educating students and staff on warning signs of a crisis
- ii. Educating students and staff on prevention techniques
- iii. Providing the appropriate crisis training and information to staff, as well as connecting students and families to educational and informative resources in their community

POSTVENTION

Postvention refers to the strategies, steps, and best practices taken to support and assist those affected by a crisis to reduce emotional suffering. It is important to examine steps that were taken during a crisis intervention to know how to best handle a future incident. After a crisis has occurred and been handled according to the appropriate crisis protocol, the CRT will convene to discuss the following:

- The implementation of the crisis plans and process any changes that need to be made
- Any vital information pertaining to the crisis that needs to be relayed to GADCA staff
- Best ways to support the GADCA community
- Importance of being available to staff, students, and GADCA families
- The following are questions to assist during the postvention:**
 1. How did the situation play out?
 2. Do GADCA students understand what happened through facts and not rumors?
 3. What went well and what did not go well?
 4. What improvements can be made to the crisis intervention guidelines and protocol?
 5. Were appropriate community resources and support provided to the GADCA community?
 6. Are there any specific issues surrounding the crisis incident that need on-going attention?
 7. Which student/staff member need additional support and has the appropriate documentation occurred? CRT members should keep a log of students and staff members, including such items as if the contact was self-initiated or requested by a staff member, a brief overview of the discussion that took place, parent/guardian contacts made, and which individuals need further contact/follow-up by a CRT member.

Student/Staff Memorial Services:

In the tragic and/or untimely event of the death of a GADCA student, the following procedures will be permissible, and the appropriate memorials will consist of the following:

- Formal letter sent to GADCA staff stating the pertinent information regarding the situation.
- A yearbook dedication to the deceased student, if permissible and applicable.

- GADCA online student assembly, if deemed appropriate.
- Formal letter and/or card sent to the family by administration.
- See Appendix G and H for sample letters/emails that can be sent to GADCA staff for when a student passes away, or in the aftermath of a crisis.

BUILDING CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES:

GADCA will follow various plans of action depending on the crisis to ensure the safety and well-being of its staff, students, and families. The Head of School (HOS) will assist all personnel in remaining calm by initiating the appropriate crisis protocol. Building crisis management procedures should be reviewed and practiced annually to ensure the safety of everyone in the GADCA office. The following is the color code system that indicates the level of crisis, as well as the guidelines that GADCA personnel will follow at the office located at 1700 Water PL SE, Atlanta, GA 30339.

Color Code System:

- Red** – Remain in office doors locked
- Yellow** - Contact made to staff via email- be on alert
- Green**- Evacuate the building immediately

General Evacuation Procedures:

- HOS will initiate evacuation procedures.
- HOS will determine if staff (and students if present) should be evacuated outside of the building.
- HOS will direct students and staff to follow evacuation drill procedures and route or to follow an alternate route if the normal route is too dangerous.
- HOS will direct all staff to close windows
- HOS will direct all staff to turn off lights, electrical equipment, gas, water faucets, air conditioning and heating system.
- HOS will direct staff to lock doors.

***It is important to note that this is a general evacuation checklist and may not apply to all building crisis (i.e. tornado, earthquake).

1. Lockdown

A “lockdown” event occurs when there is an immediate hostile threat to GADCA or school event.

At a GADCA outing, this may be an intruder, firearms situation, or a non-custodial parent trying to take their child.

- An announcement is made, and staff and students seek immediate cover in a locked room.
- All school activities cease and 911 is called.
- All staff, families, and students remain in “lockdown” until released by the police and/or a “return to class” announcement is made by the administrative team.

2. Fire

- Activate the fire alarm system and call 911.
- Follow standard fire evacuation procedure to include evacuating to a safe distance outside of the building.
- Ensure all GADCA personnel are accounted for, as well as any students that were present.
- HOS/designee should have the following information available for the fire department upon their arrival:
 - Location and type of fire, if known
 - Knowledge and location of anyone remaining in the building
 - Floor plan and internal systems information
- HOS will notify the Vice President, School Management, update, and advise if any assistance is needed.
- HOS/designee will notify police if the fire alarm was pulled falsely.
- Complete a detailed incident report at the earliest opportunity.

3. Chemical Spills, Gas Leaks, and other Hazardous Material

- Notify the Head of School (HOS)
- HOS will evacuate the building using standard fire emergency procedures, bypassing the affected area.
- HOS will call 911 and provide adequate information regarding the chemical spill, gas leak, or hazardous material if known.
- HOS/designee should have the following available for the fire department upon their arrival:
 - Person(s) knowing the location/type of gas leak or hazardous material (if known)
 - Knowledge and location of anyone remaining in the building

- Floor plans and internal systems information
- Complete a detailed incident report at the earliest opportunity.

***In the event a person comes in direct contact with suspected hazardous material, follow safety precautions listed on the container and call Poison Control at (1-800-222-1222).

4. Natural Disasters

- Earthquakes
 - If inside the building, stay there.
 - Get as low to the ground as possible and cover your head with a book or your hands.
 - If possible, take shelter under desks/tables.
 - Stay clear of windows, cabinets, and electrical equipment.
- Tornadoes
 - Remain inside the building until the tornado warning has been lifted or until GADCA personnel has confirmed that there is no longer a threat.
 - Go to the areas of greatest safety which are the lowest level of the building, a room without windows (i.e. an interior room), or any area without glass surrounding it.

5. Storm Warning Procedures

- Monitor local news stations or the National Weather Service for alerts regarding the weather.
- Ensure all GADCA personnel are inside the building.
- Close all windows and blinds.
- Review severe weather drill procedures and location of safe areas (i.e. hallways away from windows) at the onset of a severe weather warning.
- Review “drop, cover, and hold” procedures with GADCA staff and any students/families.

6. Hostage Situations

- Call 911 – inform them that this is a hostage situation and request that police arrive to the scene without sirens.
- HOS will send designee to evaluate situation (not to negotiate) until police arrive.
- Follow lockdown procedures
- HOS will have the building floor plans available upon police arrival.

- HOS will designate someone to meet police and medical personnel in order to direct them to the appropriate location.
- If the hostage situation is not quickly resolved, HOS should consult with the RVP to determine if it is appropriate to disseminate information to students and their families about the crisis.
- Complete a detailed incident report at the earliest opportunity.

7. Shooting Inside the Building

- Implement the lockdown procedures.
- Call 911.
- Communicate the level of crisis to staff members in the building if possible, using a code word/phrase (i.e. “Teachers, Dr. Watson is in the building.”).
- Scan the hallways for any students that might be in the building and get them into the closest office room.
- Turn off lights and kneel toward the wall of the office door (this helps the perpetrator not see you).
- Remain in lockdown procedure mode until police arrive and clear the GADCA building for safety – do NOT attempt to go through the building to assess the situation.
- HOS will notify the RVP, discuss the steps taken, and advise if any assistance is needed.
- Complete a detailed incident report at the earliest opportunity.

8. Bomb Threat Procedures

A bomb threat is considered “low level” if the information in the threat is inconsistent or lacks detail, the threat is vague or indirect, the content of the threat suggests the persons is unlikely to carry it out, and there is no indication that he/she has taken any steps to actually carry out the bomb threat (i.e. a threat is written somewhere in the building or on a bathroom wall, or someone said they heard a rumor). If the crisis is a “low level” bomb threat, then GADCA will implement the following procedures:

- Initiate a lockdown at the GADCA office building or ensure all students are safe at a GADCA outing (i.e., the outing would end).
- HOS initiates an investigation into the threat.
- Ask all GADCA staff to look around the building/location for anything out of the ordinary. **If something unusual is found, then the crisis is escalated to a high-level bomb threat in which different procedures are followed (see below).**

- Ensure that hallways and bathrooms are checked
- Advise law enforcement that you have had a “low level bomb threat”.
- Details of a low-level bomb threat should only be given out as needed and NEVER to students or families.

A bomb threat is considered “high level” if the threat appears to pose imminent and serious danger, the threat is direct, specific, and plausible, the threat suggests concrete steps that have been taken toward carrying it out, and there is an indication of a place or time (i.e. a letter which states “at 8:00 tomorrow morning I intend to blow up the building” or a phone call telling you that a bomb is in the building). If the crisis is a “high level” bomb threat, then GADCA will implement the following procedures:

- Notify the HOS immediately if she is not present, as well as call 911.
- Prepare to evacuate the GADCA building or location where a GADCA outing is occurring.
- Follow the necessary steps required by the emergency services that arrive.
- Details should only be given out to teachers as needed and NEVER to students or families.

*****See Appendix I for a Bomb Threat Checklist to complete in the event this crisis occurs**

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING SUICIDE ATTEMPTS:

When a school becomes aware that a student or staff member attempted suicide, the school must protect that person's right to privacy. If a parent or other family member notifies the school of a student's suicide attempt, the family should be referred to appropriate community agencies for support services (see Appendix D). Staff response should be focused on dispelling the spread of rumors and minimizing the fears of fellow students and staff. As opposed to convening a CRT meeting and alerting the student body, any services provided to the person who attempted suicide must be kept confidential and coordinated with outside service providers such as a suicide crisis counselor or hospital emergency team. It is important to be sensitive with the information being provided and ensure that the appropriate confidentiality policies are followed. GADCA will implement the following procedures when a suicide attempt is made known to staff:

1. Tell the person providing the information about the suicide attempt not to repeat it elsewhere in the school.
2. Members of the Crisis Response Team will talk to the most profoundly affected students (i.e. known friends of the student) and determine the type of support needed.
3. Provide appropriate support and counseling (i.e. facilitation of a Class Connect session that focuses on

suicide prevention resources, healthy coping skills, and/or make a referral to a school counselor).

4. Provide excused absence for scheduled Class Connect sessions.

Please note: The above procedure will ONLY be followed when one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. Rumors and myths are widespread and damaging.
2. Students witness police action or emergency response services.
3. A group of the attempt survivor's friends are profoundly affected by the suicide attempt and request support.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY AFTER A SUICIDE ATTEMPT:

After a student attempts suicide, it is important for he/she to take time to recover and receive the appropriate treatment. The following checklist will be followed by the CRT to ensure the safety and well-being of the student:

- Obtain a written release of information form by the parents that allows GADCA staff to share and/or receive any confidential information with the student's treatment providers (see Appendix E).
- Inform the Student Attendance Specialist and students' teachers about possible forthcoming absences.
- Instruct teachers to provide the student with assignments to be completed, if the circumstances are appropriate.
- Maintain contact with the student and family while he/she is receiving crisis/counseling services
- Seek recommendations for appropriate wraparound services from the student's therapist
- Upon the student's return to GADCA, the designated CRT member should maintain regular contact with the student and a referral to a school counselor should be made in order to provide additional support/resources to the family in an effort to prevent any further crisis situations.
- Ongoing communication with the student's treatment providers on at least a biweekly basis should occur to ensure that the student's needs are being met in the best possible environment.

Suicide Risk Assessment Interview

If a student presents with suicidal behavior, it is important to be in contact with the student until the situation is resolved and the student is safe. **IS PATH WARM** being a great acronym to guide suicide risk assessment and provides insight into a student's current thought processing. The main goal is to assess whether the student has a plan and a means to implement that plan (i.e. does he/she mention that they are going to stab themselves and have access to knives?)

I = Ideation

S = Substance Use

P = Purposelessness

A = Anxiety

T = Trapped

H = Hopelessness

W = Withdrawal

A = Anger

R = Recklessness

M = Mood Change

Warning Signs and Risk Factors of Suicide

WARNING SIGNS

- Abrupt changes in personality
- Giving away possessions
- Previous suicide attempt
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Change in eating pattern - SIGNIFICANT WEIGHT CHANGE
- Change in sleeping pattern - INSOMNIA/OVERSLEEPING
- Unwillingness or inability to communicate
- Depression
- Extreme or extended boredom
- Accident prone (carelessness)
- Unusual sadness, discouragement and loneliness.
- Talk of wanting to die
- Neglect of academic work and/or personal appearance
- Family disruptions - divorce, trauma or losing a loved one
- Running away from home or truancy from school.
- Rebelliousness, reckless behavior
- Withdrawal from people/activities they love
- Confusion - Inability to concentrate
- Chronic Pain, Panic or Anxiety
- Perfectionism
- Restlessness

RISK FACTORS

- Problems with school or the law
- Breakup of a romance
- Unexpected pregnancy
- A stressful family life (having parents who are depressed or substance abusers; or a family history of suicide)
- Loss of security... fear of authority, peers, group or gang members
- Stress due to new situations, college, or relocating to a new community
- Failing in school or failing to pass an important test
- Serious illness or injury to oneself
- Seriously injuring another person or causing another person's death (example: automobile accident)
- Major loss - a loved one, a home, divorce in the family, a trauma, a relationship

CRISES REQUIRING LIMITED SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

In certain crisis situations, a schoolwide response would be excessive and unnecessarily impact students. In other instances, police involvement may limit the school's ability to respond to the incident.

When suicide risk is present, or when attempted suicide has occurred, a limited response by trained school staff and/or the CRT should be all that is necessary to contain potential panic and reduce further risks. While these situations do not, by themselves, constitute schoolwide crisis, inappropriate responses to these events can lead to chaos. In the case of a homicide, an immediate school-based response may be limited due to law enforcement intervention. However, a general crisis response should follow due to the emotional trauma and stress such an event would cause.

Crises Occurring During Summer or School Breaks

If a school administrator or other CRT team member is notified of a crisis during the summer (or when affected students are on break), the response usually will be one of limited school involvement. In that case, the following steps should be taken:

- Convene the CRT to discuss the crisis.
- Identify and notify any GADCA staff, students, and/or families that are most likely to be affected by the crisis.
- Ensure all affected parties receive adequate support from the GADCA community and recommend community resources for additional support.
- Notify general faculty/staff by email with appropriate information related to the crisis event.
- Schedule a staff meeting for an update the week before students return to school.
- Be alert for repercussions among students and staff when school reconvenes, recheck the affected parties, and other at-risk students and staff, as well as institute appropriate support mechanisms and referral procedures (i.e. counselor referral, special programs).

Appendix A: Guidelines for Responding to a Student's Death

It is important that GADCA responds appropriately to students and their families when a fellow student passes away. The following are some guidelines to consider when interacting with students, as well as some discussion questions to consider if the student death arises in a Class Connect session. Grief is a normal and natural process, and it is essential that it is addressed with students in an effective and productive way.

- If the answer to children's questions are unknown, tell them so.
- Know the facts about a student's passing and be prepared to stop rumors.
- Share your own feelings of loss and grief.
- Be understanding of students' feelings of anger, fear, and guilt.
- Be flexible with schoolwork and participation – children who are grieving may have difficulty concentrating on tasks.
- Be available when children need to talk – encourage open communication and acceptance.
- Refer to an advisor/school counselor when appropriate.
- Encourage students to attend support groups that are being offered.
- Encourage students to discuss their feelings with their parents and families.
- Discuss ways to cope with traumatic situations. (Refer to Appendix C for guidance on this)
- Be sensitive to cultural differences among students.

Possible Discussion Questions after a Student's Death:

1. *What have you heard and what have people said?*
2. *What was it like for you when you first heard the news?*
3. *How can you as students help each other through this?*
4. *I think talking about this today is more important than our scheduled lesson. Let's just talk and see how everyone is feeling.*
5. *If you were a member of _____ family, what do you think you would want at a time like this?*
6. *_____ had this illness for a long time. What do you know or want to know about it?*
7. *If a suicide occurs, discuss the facts and myths about suicide. What do you know about the facts and myths about suicide?*
8. *You know, whenever I hear about someone dying, I think of my past losses, is anyone experiencing the same thing?*

It is important that GADCA ensures that their students and families feel adequately supported following a crisis. The following are guidelines for families in dealing with their children after a crisis, which may be helpful to distribute or talk about with some families who are significantly struggling following a crisis.

1. Remain Calm

Emotions and responses to crisis vary; however, as parents, it is important to remain calm as children are more likely to remain calm if they see their parents reacting this way. Children are greatly influenced by their family's sense of well-being, and anything that families can do to reassure students will be helpful.

2. Attend to Children's Emotions and Reactions

It is important that families validate their children's emotions in response to a crisis. Listen to what they are saying and reassure them that they will overcome this tragedy. It is important to note that everyone recovers from traumatic events at their own pace.

3. Return Children to Normal Routine as Quickly as Possible

Children thrive off structure and routine; therefore, it is important that children return to their typical day as soon as possible as this provides stability and a sense of familiarity. When children adhere to their typical schedule, it is helping them in the recovery process as they are not dwelling on the aftermath of a crisis.

4. Take Advantage of Available Resources and Attend Support Groups

Use GADCA teachers and counselors to your advantage and communicate any needs for additional support. It is a good idea to attend any support groups or Class Connects offered by GADCA in the event of a crisis. Many children benefit from some type of mental health services (i.e. support group, individual counseling, group counseling) regardless of whether they were directly or indirectly affected by the crisis as this can help them grieve and heal using appropriate coping skills.

It is normal for children to be upset following a disaster (i.e. earthquake, tornado, terrorist attack, explosion, etc.) and it is important that they learn to express and deal with their feelings in a healthy manner. The following is a list of common behaviors that might be seen in students:

- Excessive fear of darkness, separation, or being alone
- Clinging to parents, fear of strangers
- Worry
- Increase in immature behaviors
- Not wanting to complete schoolwork
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Increase in either aggressive behavior or shyness
- Bed-wetting or thumb-sucking
- Persistent nightmares
- Headaches or other physical complaints

The following are some strategies to use when helping your child overcome feelings following a disaster:

- Talk with your child about his/her feelings about the disaster – share your feelings too
- Talk about what happened – give your child information that he/she can understand (use <https://www.ready.gov/kids> to help younger children understand the nature of a disaster)
- Reassure your child that you are safe and together
- Spend extra time with your child at bedtime
- Allow your child to mourn or grieve and validate his/her feelings
- Follow-up with the appropriate school personnel and/or local mental health providers if your child needs additional support in healing

Appendix D: GADCA Release of Information

c/o K12 Inc.

2300 Corporate Park Drive

Herndon, VA 20171

DESTINATIONS
CAREER ACADEMY
of GEORGIA

POWERED BY STRIDE K12

RELEASE OF INFORMATION AUTHORIZATION

I hereby grant permission to: _____ (name of agency/organization/person), to release information and receive information from Virginia Virtual Academy concerning _____ (student) for the purpose of: (check all that apply)

- Treatment
- Medication
- Psychiatric/Psychological Records
- Court Proceedings
- Educational Information
- Medical/Physical Information
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Other (please be specific): _____

The authorization for Release of Information is valid for:

- 30 days
- 60 days
- 90 days
- 180 days
- 365 days

I also understand that this consent may be canceled at any time with the exception of information already released in accordance with this authorization.

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

Signature of Legal Guardian/Primary Caregiver _____ Date _____

GADCA Staff Member _____ Date _____

Appendix E: TV Template for CPS Report

Create a PDF document that includes the following information when a report is made to Child Protective Services (CPS) and attach it to the TV note. **Remember to password protect the document due to the highly confidential information.**

Date and Time of Report:

Employee Name:

Name of Principal who was notified:

Name of Counselor who was notified:

Details of CPS Referral:

- CPS Case #:
- CPS Worker Name:
- Facts of the Case (NO opinions):

*****TV notes can be subpoenaed, so it is very important that you only mention the facts of the case (i.e. “Student’s name reported that his mom hits him”). This is important in case we find that DSS has not recorded our report accurately, which does happen!**

To: All Staff

From: Head of School or Principal

Date:

Re: The Aftermath of a Student Death - Memorials/Counseling

The passing of _____ has profoundly affected many of our students. It is important to offer students as much support as possible during this difficult time. Please use the handout, Guidelines for Responding to a Student’s Death, to help guide your discussion with students.

If you know of any students that would benefit from extra support during this challenging time, please reach out to your designated principal or school counselor. Class Connect sessions will also be established to address the grievances that many of our students are encountering, so please direct them to attend these for additional support.

Funeral services for _____ will be held at _____ (*funeral location*). If you would like to express your sympathy to the family, please send any letters to _____ (*address of the family*).

Also, any staff members who would like counseling in the aftermath of this tragic event, please reach out to the school counselor for your grade level band for additional resources. If needed, class coverage can be provided, so please inform your principal to ensure a fellow staff member can help.

If you have any questions concerning the above information, please consult your supervisor.

To: All Staff

From: Head of School or Principal

Date:

RE: Crisis Event

The recent tragic event of _____ has affected the entire GADCA community. It is important to try and return to your typical routine but be prepared for a variety of emotions/reactions from students given the recent events. Please know that your GADCA family is here to support you in dealing with the recent crisis. If you feel that you need additional support on how to best address your students' needs, then please reach out to your supervisor.

It is imperative that you tell your students that you are available to them and can provide support to them. Use the handout, Strategies to Supporting Families in Times of Crisis, to guide you in your discussion with your families. If you are concerned about any of your students, then please reach out to your supervisor. It is important to be mindful of any students who show guilty feelings or indicate that they feel responsible for the crisis and immediately reach out to a school counselor.

If you have any questions concerning the above information, please consult your supervisor.

Appendix H: Bomb Threat Checklist

1. When is the bomb going to explode?
2. Where is the bomb going to explode?
3. What does the bomb look like?
4. What kind of bomb is it?
5. What will cause the bomb to explode?
6. Did you (the caller) place the bomb?
7. Why did you (the caller) place the bomb?
8. Did you (the caller) make the bomb?
9. What is your name?
10. Where do you live?
11. Caller information: Male / Female Age: _____ Race: _____ Length of call: _____
12. Caller's Voice:
 - Calm Laughing Lisp Angry Crying Rasp Excited
 - Normal Deep Slow Distinct Ragged Rapid Slurred
 - Soft Clearing Throat Nasal Deep Breathing Loud
 - Stutter Cracking Voice Disguised Accent FamiliarIf familiar, who did it sound like?
13. Background Sounds:
 - Street Noise House Noises Factory Machinery Crockery Motor Animal Noises
 - Voices Office Clear PA System Static Local
 - Long Distance Office Machinery Booth Other
14. Threatening Language:
 - Well Spoken Foul Incoherent Irrational Taped
15. Additional Remarks: _____

Appendix I: Staff Phone Tree

