

# Supporting resource for front office staff

Key points to remember when responding to parent phone calls or emails:

If someone rings to notify the school of a death or suicide, speak to principal/assistant principal/member of the wellbeing team immediately.

Formal notification of any death, suspected suicide or suicide must come from the principal.

- Do not confirm a death or a suicide or mention the method of suicide to anyone.
- Do not confirm the name of student(s)
- During this time, with any call from a parent/carer to any staff member:
  - The front office must ask about the purpose of the call. Some calls may be irrelevant to the situation and can be put through to the appropriate staff member.
  - For a call about anything to do with the event, including general concerns or questions, please use the notes below and the question prompts.
  - All calls must be logged.
- If the wellbeing team has provided a list of close peers, check the list to determine if the call is a priority and, if necessary, pass on to an IMT member immediately.
- More information and some supporting material will be posted/emailed to parents/carers shortly.
- If you wish your child to leave early, they'll need to be picked up. At this point we'd prefer if students didn't travel home by themselves.
- Put calls through to voicemails but suggest that sending an email would be better at this point. Remind callers to leave their name and to be aware there may be many calls to respond to and the relevant staff member will respond as soon as possible.
- Any queries from the media must be referred to the principal.

Suggested line for office staff to use to respond to queries:

"At this point in time, we are unable to confirm your concern or question. We have received a report and we are treating it seriously. The principal is involved, and the school community will be informed by him/her/them as soon we have all the relevant information."



## Suggested questions

Questions	Response
What's your name?	
Who are you the parent of?	
What are your concerns?	
Where did your concerns come from?	
Do you have specific concerns about your child/ children that need to be passed on the wellbeing team? If they wish for their child to leave early, ask why.	
Best contact number?	

## Please reiterate that:

- not all calls will be responded to immediately at this time
- if a call is to be returned, there may some delay.

### Remember

As an employee of the Department you and your immediate family members (18 years and older) can access professional, counselling and mental wellbeing support through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Confidential counselling is delivered virtually, by phone or face-to-face at a time that is convenient for you. To organise support call **1300 361 008 – 24 hours a day 7 days a week**. This service is fully funded by the Department.

