



TASMANIAN  
CATHOLIC  
education commission

# Suicide Postvention (Cross Sectoral) Guidelines

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## 1. Introduction

These guidelines are designed to assist schools in preparing for and responding to the tragic occurrence of completed, attempted or suspected suicide within their student community, a process known as postvention. It aims to support communities in grief and to guide schools in recognising and responding to the risk of suicide contagion. Important to achieving both these purposes is the requirement for sensitive sharing of information across government and non-government schools, between mental health agencies and schools and between families and schools.

This document should be considered in relation to critical incident management processes appropriate to each sector.

These guidelines have been developed collaboratively between State, Catholic and Independent school sectors who are committed to supporting consistent processes and standards across all Tasmanian schools.

## 2. Purpose

To support all school staff in preparing for and responding to the impact of suicide within their school community through the use of the [Headspace School Support Suicide Postvention Toolkit](#).

A ministerial letter of intent between Ministers, Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the three education sector heads (February 2013) was signed in relation to agreed school use of this resource across all sectors.

## 3. Definition

**Postvention strategy** – a strategy developed before the school is in the aftermath of a suicide or attempted suicide which allows school staff to immediately implement guidelines that promote a healthy and safe environment.

**Postvention response** – a strategy to be developed by the school in response to suicide or attempted suicide which allows school staff to promote a healthy and safe environment.

For other definitions refer to the Toolkit and FAQ sheets available on the [headspace School Support site](#)

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

*Deputy Secretary EYS (DoE)/Director TCEO/Executive Director IST*

Inform schools of their responsibility to implement Suicide Postvention strategies and promote the use of the **headspace** postvention toolkit.

## *Manager School Support (DoE)/ Team Leader SSS (TCEO)/ Manager Education Services (IST)*

- ensure flexible processes are in place for effective postvention responses by support staff in schools.
- ensure support staff are familiar with the **headspace** postvention toolkit
- inform other sectors (Catholic, Independent or DoE Support Managers) of a suicide (attempted or completed)

### *Principals/senior staff*

- use **headspace** Postvention toolkit so this it is meaningful to the specific school context for the preparation of a Suicide Crisis plan; the drafting of which can be assisted by the **headspace** school support team
- identify and train a school-based postvention team
- partner with Headspace for further training
- offer employee assistance services/staff support services to all staff following a suicide (attempted or completed)

### *Teachers*

Undertake professional learning to:

- understand risk factors and warning signs of young people at risk of suicide
- respond and support young people at risk of suicide
- continue to understand suicide as part of the spectrum of mental health

## **5. Related Documents**

The following documents are available

- [Headspace School Support Suicide Postvention Toolkit](#)
- [Headspace Website Support Materials](#)
- Critical Incident and Emergency Plan

Signed by:



(TCEC Chairperson)

Date:

1 April 2014

Authorised by:

Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission

TCEO Contact Officer:

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State, Catholic and Independent School Representatives

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