



St Patrick's Boys' National School

Roll No 18605K

Critical Incident Policy

What is a critical incident?

A critical incident is any incident which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school.

Examples:

- Death, major illness/outbreak of disease.
- Criminal incidents
- Major accidents, serious injury
- Suicide
- Civil unrest/war (Pupils and non-national pupils may be traumatised by events happening elsewhere)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster
- Disappearance of student from home or school.
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.

Critical Incidents Management Team:

- Anne McLaughlin
- Noel Doherty
- John McFeely
- Geraldine McIntyre
- Brid Doherty
- Kathleen Farren (BOM)
- Teresa McLaughlin (NEPS)
- Claire McElhinney

Roles:

Leadership Role:	Anne McLaughlin
Communication Role:	Anne McLaughlin
Student Liaison:	John McFeely & Geraldine McIntyre
Chaplaincy Role:	Noel Doherty
Family Liaison Role:	Brid Doherty H.S.C.L.
Parent's Association Rep:	Claire McElhinney
B.O.M. Rep:	Kathleen Farren
N.E.P.S.	Teresa McLaughlin

Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Role:

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the C.I. response team
- Express sympathy to family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Make contact with other relevant agencies

Postvention

- Ensure provision of ongoing support to staff and students
- Facilitate any appropriate memorial events
- Review Plan

Communication Role:

Intervention

- Decide with team how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)
- With team prepare a public statement
- Organise designated room to address media promptly if necessary
- Ensure telephone line free for outgoing and important incoming calls
- Liaison with relevant support agencies

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

Student Liaison:

Intervention

- Liaise with Neps Psychologist
- Listen/Support/Advise students
- Outline specific services available in school
- Put in place clear referral procedures
- Address immediate needs of staff
- Information
- Counselling

Postvention

- Ongoing support to vulnerable students
- Monitor class most affected
- Refer on, as appropriate
- Review and evaluate Plan

Chaplaincy Role:

Intervention

- Visit home, if appropriate
- Assist with prayer services
- Make contact with local clergy
- Be available as personal and spiritual support to staff

Postvention

- Provide follow-up support to family in conjunction with Home School Community Liaison
- Work in partnership with religious team
- Review and Evaluate Plan

Family Liaison Role:

Intervention

- Coordinate contact with families (following first contact by principal)
- Consult with family around involvement of school in e.g. funeral service
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to bereaved family
- Involve as appropriate family in school liturgies/memorial services
- Offer to link family with community support groups
- Review and evaluate plan.

Action plan

SHORT- TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)

Immediate contact with family/families

- Consult with the family regarding appropriate support from the school, e.g. funeral service
- Ensure that a quiet place can be had for students/staff.
- Rooms will be made available as follows:
 - G.P. Room
 - Individual Meetings: HSCL Room
 - Parents: Classroom No 1 (Senior Infants classroom)

Media Briefing

- Designate a spokesperson. (Leader)
- Prepare a brief statement. (Team)
- Protect the family's privacy.
- Gather accurate information
- It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident.
 1. What happened, where and when?
 2. What is the extent of the injuries?
 3. How many are involved and what are their names?
 4. Is there a risk of further injury?
 5. What agencies have been contacted already?

Contact appropriate agencies

1. Emergency services
2. Medical services
3. H.S.E. Psychology Departments/Community Care Services
4. NEPS
5. BOM
6. DES/Schools Inspector

Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team 11.00am

1. Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate 12.30 or 3.00pm
2. Organize timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible).
3. Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted, list of friends etc, or any other relevant information and give to the Student Liaison person.
4. Arrange supervision of students.

Liase with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service.

1. The Chaplain/Principal will liaise with the family, to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial service.
2. Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate. (School Liaison person + Class teacher)
3. Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths.

MEDIUM – TERM ACTIONS (24-72 HOURS)

- Preparation of students/staff attending funeral
- Involvement students/staffing liturgy if agreed by bereaved family.
- Facilitation of students'/staffs' responses, eg. Sympathy cards, flowers, books of condolences, etc.
- Ritual within the school.
- Review the events of the first 24hours
 1. Reconvene Key Staff /Critical Incident Management Team. 9.00am
 2. Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff.
 3. Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students.
 4. Have review Critical Incident Management Team meeting. (3.00pm)
 5. Establish contact with absent staff and pupils.
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary.
 1. Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened
 2. Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out.
 3. Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission. Permission slips to be included in enrolment forms.
- Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. (absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc)
 1. Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.
 2. Plan visits to injured
 3. Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital.
 4. Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided)
 5. Decide this in accordance with parents' wishes and school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends.
 6. School closure
 7. Request a decision on this from school management

LONG TERM ACTIONS

- Monitor students signs of continuing distress.
- If, over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he may need assistance from the Health Board.
 1. Uncharacteristic behaviour
 2. Deterioration in academic performance
 3. Physical symptoms – e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness.
 4. Inappropriate emotional reactions
 5. Increased absenteeism
- Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately.
 1. What went well?
 2. Where were the gaps?
 3. What was most/least helpful?
 4. Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
 5. Is there any unfinished business?
- Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future
Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical incidents where appropriate
 1. Ensure that new staff are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.
 2. Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in any way.
 3. When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, it would be useful to brief the Principal of the new school.
- Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (Be sensitive to special days and events)
 1. Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time.
 2. Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
 3. Be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day and Father's Day.
 4. Plan a school memorial service.
 5. Care of the deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
 6. Update and amend school records.