

St. Michael's National School

Critical Incident Policy



What is a critical Incident?

“A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school”.

Examples:

- Death , major illnesses / outbreak of disease (foot and mouth).
- Criminal incidents.
- Major accidents, serious injury.
- Suicide.
- Civil unrest, war.
- Fire, natural and technological disaster.
- Disappearance of student from home or school.
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.

2. Aim of plan

The aim of the Critical Incidence Plan is that in the event of such an incident as outlined above, the plan will help staff and management to react quickly and effectively and to maintain control of the situation. The plan will also help the school to return to normality as soon as possible and limit the effects of the incident on staff and students.

3. Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school.

We have systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

4. Physical Safety

- Evacuation plan formulated.
- Regular fire drills.
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked.
- Pre - opening supervision in school classrooms (9:00 – 9:20 am.)
- Side gates locked during school hours.
- School doors locked during class times – use of fob required to enter and exit.
- Rules in the playground.

5. Psychological Safety

The management and staff of St. Michael's National School aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of students, to enhance a sense safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for discussion.

- SPHE is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, resilience, bullying, decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions and disclosures.
- Information is provided on mental health in general.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies (HSE., Tusla, Neps., Community Gardaí.)
- The school has a clear policy on anti-bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- There is a care system in place in the school using the “ Continuum of Support” approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published on 2007.

6. Critical Incident Management Team

Leadership role: Ms. Gorry, Ms. Hilliard, Ms. Daly.

Communication role : Ms. O'Driscoll (phone), Ms. Gorry(media).

Student liaison/counselling role: Ms. Daly, Ms. Feeney, Ms. McEntee.

Chaplaincy role: Fr. Warren.

Family liaison role: Fr. Warren, Ms. Gorry.

Parent Liaison: Ms. Daly.

Staff Liaison: Ms. Gorry, Ms. Daly.

Parents' Association rep: Ms. Christina Carberry.

Board of Management rep: Ms. Feeney.

NEPS: Ms. Brigid Rodden.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Leader

- The team leader alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting of the team.
- Coordinates / delegates tasks of the other team members.
- Liaises with BOM and DES.
- In case of bereavement, liaises with bereaved family.

Family Liaison role

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

Garda liaison

- Liaises with gardai.
- Ensures that information about deaths and developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

Chaplaincy role

- Visit home, if appropriate.
- Assist with a prayer service.
- Make contact with local clergy.
- Be a personal and spiritual support of staff.

Staff Liaison

- Leads briefing the meeting for staff on the facts as known.
- Advises staff on procedures for identification of vulnerable students.
- Provides materials for staff.
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses.
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.

Parent Liaison

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.
- Arranges parent meetings.

- May facilitate such meetings and manage questions and answers.
- Manages the consent issues in accordance with agreed school policy.
- Maintains a record of parents seen.
- Provides appropriate materials for parents.

Communication Role

- With team, prepare a public statement.
- Organise designated room to address media promptly.
- Address media.
- Ensure telephone line free for outgoing and important incoming calls.
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies.

8. Record keeping

All team members will keep written records of phone calls, letters, meetings, materials used, interventions etc

9. Confidentiality

The school is conscious of its responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. Members of staff will bear in mind language used e.g. the term suicide will not be used. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead. The term 'violent death' may be used instead of murder.

10. Keyroles assigned by Team Leader

Name of team leader	Task
Principal	Gathers facts, Media liaison, Garda liaison Liaises with BOM. /DES.
Deputy Principal	Family Liaison, Parent liaison, Student liaison Staff liaison.
Secretary	Administrator- prepares, sends out letters, emails and texts
Chaplain	Prayer service, Contact local clergy, Family liaison.

11. Short term actions and roles assigned : Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Ms. Gorry
Contact appropriate agencies	Ms. Gorry
Convene a meeting with key staff	Ms. Gorry
Arrange supervision of students	Ms. Feeney/ Ms. McEntee
Hold staff meeting	Ms. Gorry
Organise timetable for the day	Ms. Daly
Inform parents	Secretary / Ms. Daly
Make contact with bereaved family	Ms. Gorry, Fr. Warren

Dealing with media	Ms. Gorry, Ms. Hilliard
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12. Medium term actions and roles – 24 to 48 hours

Task	Name
Review the events of the first 24 hours	Ms. Gorry Ms. Daly
Arrange support for individual / groups/parents/ students/ teachers	Ms.Feeney Ms. McEntee
Plan the re-integration of staff and students	Ms. Daly Ms. Feeney Ms. McEntee
Plan visits to injured	Ms. Gorry Ms. Daly
Liaise with family regarding funeral arrangements etc..	Ms. Gorry Fr. Warren
Attendance and participation at funeral service	All Critical Incident Management Team
School closure	Ms. Gorry Ms. Hilliard

13. Beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for continuing signs of stress.	Ms. Feeney Ms. McEntee
Evaluate response to incident and amend critical incident plan appropriately	Critical Incident Management Team
Formalise plan for future	Critical Incident Management Team
Inform new staff and pupils	Ms. Gorry
Decide on appropriate way to deal with anniversaries	Ms. Daly Ms. Feeney Ms. McEntee
Care of deceased person's possessions	Ms. Gorry
Plan a school memorial service	Critical Incident Management Team

14. Emergency Contact Numbers

Gardai: 0469481540

Ambulance: 999/112

Hospital: Our Lady's Hospital, Navan - 046 9078500

Fire Brigade: 999/112 - 046 9051068
- 046 9021666

Local GPS: Trim Primary Care – 046 9436257

HSE: 046 9021595

INTO: 01 8047700

Clergy: Parochial House – 046 9431251

D.E.S.: 018896400

NEPS Psychologist: 046 9093310

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13/02/2023

Signed: *Mary Hilliard* Date: 13/02/2023

Chairperson of Board of Management.

Signed: *Brid Gorry* Date: 13/02/2023

Principal.