

Scoil Réalta na Maidine

Critical Incident Policy

This policy was devised and formulated by the school community involving Board of Management, parents and staff of Scoil Réalta na Maidine.

Critical Incident Management Team

Principal	Bernadette Sheehy
Deputy Principal:	Margaret Lane
Chairperson Board of Management:	Ann Cotter
Parent's Representative:	Laura Gumbo
Chaplain:	Canon Declan O'Connor
Staff Representative:	Martina Scanlon
Secretary:	Joan Byrne
Psychologist:	Jeanne Fleming (NEPS)

AIM

To outline the steps that should be taken to ensure an effective response to crisis situations.

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 illness/outbreak of disease
- Criminal incidents
- Major accidents/serious injury
- Suicide
- Fire, natural and technological disaster
- Disappearance of student from home or school
- Unauthorised removal of student from home or school

Roles and Responsibilities

Team Leader:	Bernie Sheehy
Communication:	Bernie Sheehy
Student Liaison:	Teachers
Chaplain:	Conon Declan O'Connor
Family Liaison:	Bernie Sheehy, relevant class teacher
Staff Liaison:	Margaret Lane, Brendan Guiney
Parent Liaison:	Anne Marie Tritschler
Administrative Tasks:	Maria Halpin Power
Overall support:	Jeanne Fleming

Leadership Role

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Express sympathy to family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Make contact with other relevant agencies
- Contact and inform family/friends of incident
- Establish lines of communication with agencies dealing with incident with a view to being kept informed of developments as they occur
- Decide whether a site visit is appropriate (site visit by principal or person nominated by principal)
- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)

Postvention

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

Communication Role:

Intervention

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

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

Student Liaison

Intervention

- Outline specific services available in school
- Put in place clear referral procedures
- Refer on, as appropriate
- Review and evaluate plan

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 of staff

Postvention

- Provide follow-up support to family in conjunction with Community Liaison Role
- Work in partnership with religious education team
- Review and evaluate plan

Family Liaison Role

Intervention

- Co-ordinate contact with families (following first contact by Critical Incident Team Leader)
- Keep families of pupils involved informed of current developments in incident
- Consult with family around involvement of school in possible events, e.g. funeral service
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by incident

Postvention

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

Administrative Tasks

Maintenance of up to date lists of contact number of:

- Parents or guardians
- Teachers
- Emergency support services

Telephone calls need to be responded to, letters sent and materials photocopied.

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep detailed records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, materials used, etc. The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials.

Confidentiality

The school is conscious of its responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements.

Action plan

Short-Term Actions (Day 1)

- Immediate contact with families involved in incident
- Consult with the family regarding appropriate support from the school, e.g. funeral service
- Contact with families of the other children affected
- Ensure a quiet place can be made for pupils/staff
- Rooms will be made available as follows
- Individual Meetings – Principal's Office, Library

Media Briefing (0-24 hours)

- Designate a spokesperson (Leader)
 - Prepare a brief statement (Team)
 - Protect the family's privacy
 - Gather accurate information
1. What happened, where and when?
 2. What is the extent of the injuries/fatalities?
 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. HSE psychology Department/Community Care Services
4. NEPS
5. Board of Management
6. DES/School's Inspector

Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team

1. Organise a staff meeting, if appropriate
2. Organise 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's name
4. Arrange supervision of pupils

Liaise with family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service

1. The Chaplin/Principal 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 (Principal and Class Teacher)
3. Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths

Medium- Term Actions (24 – 72 Hours)

- Preparation of pupils/staff attending funeral
- Involvement of pupils/staff in liturgy if agreed by bereaved family
- Facilitation of pupils/staff responses, e.g. sympathy cards, flowers, book of condolences, etc.

Ritual within the school

Review the events of first 24 hours.

1. Reconvene Key staff/ Critical Incident Management Team
2. Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/pupils/staff
3. Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students
4. Have reviews Critical Incident Management Team meeting
5. Establish contact with absent staff and pupils

Arrange support for individual pupils, groups of pupils and parents, if necessary

1. Hold support/information meeting for parents/pupils, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened
2. Teacher for each age group to talk separately
3. Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out
4. Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings (with parental permission slips to be included in enrolment forms)

Plan for the re-integration of pupils, 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 and 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 in consultation with close school friends
6. School closure - request a decision on this from school management

Long Term Actions

- Monitor Pupils for signs of continuing distress
- If, over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he may need assistance from the HSE

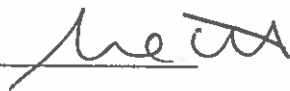
1. Uncharacteristic behaviour
2. Deterioration in academic performance
3. Physical symptoms, e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness
4. Inappropriate emotional reactions
5. Increases absenteeism

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 is 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 what way
 3. When individual pupils or a class or 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 pupils/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.
 - Plan a school memorial service e.g. plant tree (closure)
 - Care of deceased persons possessions. What are the parents wishes?
 - Update and amend school records.

This Policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: _____
Chairperson



January 2018

Chairperson

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parents/Guardians

The school has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our students/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury.

(brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy *(Elaborate)*.

It is possible that your son may have some feelings that he may like to discuss with you. You can help your son by taking time to listen to him and encouraging him to express his feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate for his age.

If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at school *(Details)*.

Signed: _____
Principal

**SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING CONSENT FOR
INVOLVMENT OF OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following the recent (tragedy/death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to boys either in small groups or on a one to one basis, offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your son has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (X). If you would like your son to receive this support, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by _____. If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school.

Signed: _____
Principal

I/We consent to having our son meet with _____

I/We understand that my/our son may meet x in an individual or group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Signed: _____

(Parents/Guardians)

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

BARNARDOS	(01)453 0355
THE SAMARITANS	116 123 (066) 712 2566
CHILDLINE	1800 66 66 66
PARENTLINE	1890 92 72 77 (01) 8733500
AWARE	1800 80 48 48 (01) 661 7211
NATIONAL SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT	1800 20 18 90 (021) 427 4218
RAINBOWS	(01) 473 4175
BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING SERVICE	(01) 676 8882
BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING	(01) 611 1719