



Caherline National School
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Caherline National School

Critical Incident Policy

Revision	Date	Description	Approved

"Judge each day not by the harvest, but by the seeds you sow."

Introduction:

In Caherline National School we aim to protect the well-being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and inclusive for environment. The Board of Management (BOM) through the staff representative, The BOM, the Staff and the Parents Association has drawn up a critical incident management plan.

They have established a Critical Incidents Management team to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

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
- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster. Disappearance of student from home or school
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.

Critical Incidents Management Team:

<i>Leadership Role:</i>	Gearóid Power (Principal)
<i>Communication Role:</i>	Mrs Lisa Riordan / Ms Eichholz
<i>Student Liaison/ Counselling Role:</i>	Mrs Lisa Riordan / Ms Eichholz
<i>Chaplaincy Role:</i>	Fr. P. Currivan/ Fr Roy
<i>Family Liaison Role:</i>	Gearóid Power/ Ms Eichholz
<i>Parents Association Rep:</i>	Suzie O' Kelly
<i>B.O.M. Rep:</i>	Christine Madden

The first-named person has the responsibility as defined.

The second-named person assists and only assumes responsibility on the absence of the first-named.

Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Role:

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Liaise with the Gardaí
- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Express sympathy to family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Make contact with other relevant agencies
- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)

Post-Intervention

- 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 a designated room to address media promptly
- Ensure telephone lines are free for outgoing and important incoming calls
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies

Post-Intervention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

Student Liaison/ Counselling Role:

Intervention

Advises the staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils

- Outline specific services available in school
- Alerts staff to vulnerable pupils
- Put in place clear referral procedures

- Address immediate needs of staff
- Provide materials for staff (from critical incident folder)
- Provide information
- Provide counselling

Post-Intervention

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

Chaplaincy Role:

Intervention

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

Post-Intervention

- Provide follow-up support to families in conjunction with Home School Community Liaison
- Work in partnership with Critical Incident 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

Post-Intervention

- Provide ongoing support to families affected by the incident
- 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 made for students/staff.

Media Briefing (if appropriate)

- Designate a spokesperson. (Leader)
- Gather accurate information
- Prepare a brief statement. (Team)
- Protect the family's privacy.
- 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: | Telephone 999 |
| 2. Medical services | GP Caherconlish Clinic Margaret Sheahan
061 351 899 |
| 3. H.S.E. | Psychology Departments/Community Care
Services
(Marguerite O'Neill Senior psychologist 061-
483692) |
| 4. NEPS | Limerick Office, Punches Cross, Diarmuid
O'Rourke
Psychologist: Tel 061-430019 |
| 5. BOM | |
| • Fr. Patrick Currivan | 061 351 248 (Mobile 087 652 6527) |
| • Christine Madden | 087 745 5092 |
| • Gearóid Power | 087 975 8854 |
| • Lisa Riordan | 087 674 9188 |
| • Gemma Murnane | 086 815 5631 |
| • Peter Tiernan | 087 272 0083 |
| • David Balfry | 087 782 7079 |
| • Ronan O'Connor | 086 259 2452 |

Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team

1. Organise a staff meeting, if appropriate.
2. Ensure any absent staff members are kept informed.
3. Organise timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible).
4. 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.
5. Arrange supervision of students

Liaise 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. (Student 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 of students/staff in liturgy if agreed by bereaved family.
 - Facilitation of students'/staffs' responses, e.g. Sympathy cards, flowers, book of condolences, etc.
 - Ritual within the school.
 - Review the events of the first 24 hours
1. Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team.
 2. Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff.
 3. Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students.
 4. Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting.
 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.
4. Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc.)
5. Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.

Plan visits to injured

1. Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital.
2. Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided)
3. Decide this in accordance with parents' wishes and school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends.
4. School closure (if appropriate)
5. Request a decision on this from school management.

LONGER TERM ACTIONS

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress.

If, over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he/she may need assistance from the HSE Psychology or mental Health Service. Constant communication with family is essential.

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

1. Consult with NEPS Psychologist – Diarmuid O'Rourke, Tel: (061) 430019/087-9199151
2. Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
3. Ensure that new staff are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.
4. Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way.
5. When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, the Principal should 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 deceased person's possessions. What are the parent/guardian's wishes?
6. Update and amend school records.