

St. Patrick's S.N.S. 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 illness / outbreak of disease (Foot & Mouth)
- Criminal incidents (e.g. Dunblane shooting, Shooting at first communion in Ballymun.)
- Major accidents, serious injury (e.g. 'Navan bus crash')
- Suicide
- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing in Cork)
- Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g. Midleton incident in Cork)
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.

E.g. 9/11, tsunami, world events that may affect the student body and / or staff. Maybe a need for provision of discussion and involvement in ceremonies.

Critical Incidents Management Team:

Leadership Role: Ms. Mary O'Riordan (School Principal)

Communication Role: Fr. Liam Mc Clarey (Chairperson of BoM)

Student Liaison / Counselling Role: Ms Laura Mulligan (Deputy Principal)

Chaplaincy Role: Fr. Joe Mc Loughlin (Priest)

Family Liaison Role: Ms Suzanne Burns (Home School Community Liaison Co-Ordinator)

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
- 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 / Counseling Role:

Intervention

- Outline specific services available in school
- Put in place clear referral procedures
- Address immediate needs of staff
- Provide information
- Provide counseling

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 the family in 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.
- Rooms will be made available as follows:
 - Prayer room: (Computer Room)
 - Individual Meetings: (Prefab 1)
 - Parents: (Breakfast club/Parents' Room)

Media Briefing (if appropriate)

- 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 (8.30 a.m.)
 1. Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate. (9.00 a.m.)
 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. (8.30 a.m.)
 2. Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff.
 3. Decide on mechanism for feedback on vulnerable students from teachers.
 4. Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting (3.00 p.m.).
 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.
 - School closure (if appropriate)
 - 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 Health Board. 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.
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
 1. Ensure that new staff members are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.
 2. Ensure they are aware of any pupils who were affected in any recent incident and in what way(s).
 3. 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.
- Plan a school memorial service
- Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parents' wishes?
- Update and amend school records

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's S.N.S. at its meeting on _____ . Parents may view this policy on the school website or by appointment with the Principal.

Date: _____

Fr. Liam McClarey

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Critical Incident Team

Leadership/Media & Communication Role: Ms. Mary O’Riordan (Principal) & Fr. Liam Mc Clarey (Chairperson)

Student Liaison/Counselling Role: Ms Laura Mulligan

Chaplaincy Role: Fr. Joe McLoughlin

Family Liaison Role: Ms. Suzanne Burns (Home School Community Liaison Officer)

Clergy

Fr. Liam Mc Clarey P.P.	01 8213596
Fr. Joe McLoughlin	01 8213596

Media/Local Papers

I.N.T.O	01 8047700
The Teaching Council	01 6517900

Secretary

Aideen Donnelly	01 8216563
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Caretaker

Pat Hehir	085 7391415
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Emergency Services

Ambulance/Fire Brigade	999/112
Garda Station Blanchardstown	6667000/8213023
Sinead and Niall (Garda Community Guards)	6667020

Medical Services

Director of Community Care, Dublin 7	8825000
Corduff Health Centre	8211131
Dr. Anne O’ Brien, Brookhaven	8207032
Dr. Lyons, Ashling Heights	8213116
Doctor, Hartstown (Out of Hours)	1850224477
Roselawn Health Centre	6464500

Hospitals

Connolly Hospital	8213844
Crumlin Hospital	4096100
Temple Street	8784200

Dept. of Education

Mary Dunne (Inspector)	0469033920 / 0879447409
Dept. of Education	8734700

Counselling Services

Genesis	8202764
Gemma O' Dwyer	0868235885
N.E.P.S Jacqueline Horan	8892726/8892700
Roselawn Psychology Dept.	6464583/8116052
Child/Family Services, Blanchardstown Road North	8248520
Aisteoir Beo, Family Centre Coolmine	8852680
Children and Family Duty Social Work Team	01 6464518

Other Agencies

Margaret O' Hara School Completion	0876870541
Barnardos	01 8264033