

St Columba's NS

Critical Incident Management Plan

Rationale:

The critical incident plan for the school is drawn up to ensure that as far as possible roles, responsibilities and procedures are clear to allow the smooth and caring management of any traumatic incident in the school community. It is impossible to foresee all possible traumatic events so this document deals with worst case scenario in terms of outcome, i.e., the death of a member of our school community. Other critical incidents may involve such events as serious injury to a community member or the witnessing of a serious incident by members of the school community. The document should be read as a "living document" and should be capable of being modified to respond to a variety of situations by members of the critical incident management team.

Critical Incident Management Team:

1. Team Leader/Principal	Bryan Donovan
2. Deputy Team Leader/Deputy Principal	Emma Walkin
3. Administrator	Mary O'Dea
4. Student Liaison	Class teachers
5. Chaplain	Rev'd Garth Bunting
6. Chairperson	Dr Susan Pike

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader shall have the primary role in coordinating the school response to any critical incident. Engagement with the civil authorities such as An Garda Síochána or Emergency Services, Parents or the Media shall be primarily the responsibility of the Team Leader, normally the principal teacher. However, should the Principal be unavailable or dependent upon the circumstances, the Deputy Team Leader may undertake some of these roles, either in place of or at the request of the Principal.
2. The Administrator shall ensure that the usual means of communication used by the school such as Text-a-parent and Email are kept updated and shall issue such communications as requested by the Team leaders or the Chaplain.
3. The Chaplain shall be available to provide support and Spiritual guidance both during the immediate aftermath of a critical incident and in the period after the critical incident as appropriate.
4. Class Teachers shall provide class-specific communication and shall lead class-specific supports/interventions.
5. The Chaplain shall provide appropriate pastoral support in accordance with school ethos.
6. The Chairperson shall liaise with Principal/Deputy Principal and provide support/advice as appropriate.

Short Term Actions Day 1

Task	Designated Person	Further information
Gather accurate Information	1,2 & 3	Teachers should inform the Leader or Deputy Leader of news of a critical incident. Designated persons should seek accurate information as discretely as possible.
Convene Critical Incident Management Team meeting	1,2 & 3	Facts to be shared and appropriate course of action in accordance with policy decided.
Inform staff	2 & 3	School Secretary or Deputy Principal as available should inform staff of the facts as known.
Inform parents	3	The facts and the school plan to be communicated by the most suitable means at the time to parents.
Contact Chaplain	2 or 3 as appropriate	The facts and the school plan to be communicated. Request for assistance as appropriate.
Inform students	4	Timing of communication with students shall depend on the nature of the incident and shall be decided by the CIMT. SNA's shall be in place to provide additional support to more vulnerable students.
Contact the family/ families central to the incident	1, 2 or 5 as appropriate	The approach to this will be dependent on the nature and location of the incident and should be very discrete.
Prepare a brief media statement	1 or 2	Where appropriate address the facts, the person and sympathise with the family. Establish rules of engagement/ means of communication with media outlets.
Convene Whole Staff Meeting	1 & 2	At the end of the day, staff should be gathered and any updates shared. Advice regarding how to deal with media and families as appropriate. Indication of employee welfare supports should be shared as appropriate.

Medium Term Action Day 2 +

Task	Designated Person	Further information
Convene CIMT/ Staff meeting	1 & 2	Before school starts; update facts, ensure that staff are supported. Gather any further information.
Contact External Agencies as appropriate	1 & 2	Civil Authorities & NEPS psychologist.
Create a gathering space for parents	1,2,3 & 5	Where appropriate a space for parents to gather should be available, either the church or the parish room.
Arrange whole school support where appropriate	1 & 2	Contact NEPS for advice. Provide materials such as books or activities for children to explore the situation.
Visit those affected	1, 2,3, 4 & 5	As appropriate visit bereaved or injured parties. Make contact prior to visit to ensure this is acceptable.
Liase with bereaved family	1, 2, 3,4,5	Person with close relationship should establish contact with family to establish their preferred approach.
Agree procedure for attendance at funeral	CMIT	Will vary from members of school management, appropriate staff members, whole class or whole school and based on family wishes.
Decide on school closure	CMIT with advice from NEPS with permission of the Board of Management	This will only occur in the case of an extreme critical incident.

Follow up beyond 72 Hours

Task	Designated Person	Further information
Monitor students and staff for signs of distress	1, 2 & 4 + SET	Ensure that Staff are aware of NEPS supports as appropriate.
Liase with external agencies	1, 2 & SET	Contacts with NEPS and other appropriate agencies for children and Employee assistance for staff.
Plan for return of bereaved	Whole school	Age-appropriate discussion with children.
Plan for return of personal items etc to bereaved family	1 & 2	Contact the person with whom liaison was established on behalf of the family to find out what they would like.
Plan for appropriate ceremonies	Whole school lead by Principal and Chaplain	As a faith school an appropriate event may be held sometime after the critical incident. In this ceremony the whole school community may commemorate the dead as appropriate and celebrate or pray for the recovery of injured persons.
Provide appropriate advice/material to students and parents	1,2 & 4	A list of appropriate materials can be found in Appendix I of this document and should be provided as requested / required.
Review response to incident and amend plan as appropriate	Whole School community, led by 1 & 2	No two incidents are the same, but it will be appropriate to review and discuss what worked and what didn't work.

Appendix I

Waterbugs and Dragonflies, Explaining death to young children (Doris Stickney)