

Critical Incident Policy

Kilbonane National School

Knocknahilan

Aherla

Co. Cork

Roll No: 173381

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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
- Suicide.
- Civil unrest, war
- Fire, natural and technological disaster
- Disappearance of student from home or school
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home

Critical Incidents Management Team

Team Leader:	Mr. Cathal Brophy*	contact via school at (021) 7331730
Garda Liaison:	Mr. Cathal Brophy*	(see above)
Staff Liaison:	Ms. Eva O'Driscoll	(see above)
Student Liaison:	Laura MacMahon	(see above)
Chaplaincy Role:	Fr Kieron O'Driscoll	(085) 8356888
Parent Liaison:	Siobhán Slevin	contact via school (see above)
Community Liaison:	Ms. Eva O'Driscoll	(see above)
Media Liaison:	Mr. Cathal Brophy*/Ms. Eva O'Driscoll	(see above)
Administrator:	Mr. Denis Healy	contact via school (see above)
N.E.P.S Psychologist:	Ms. Ciaragh O'Brien	ciaragh_obrien@education.gov.ie

*until 2 November 2025

Roles and Responsibilities

Team Leader:

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)

Postvention

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

Media 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.

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response.

Student Liaison:

Intervention

- Address immediate needs of staff.
- Provide information.
- Refer to relevant agencies, where appropriate.

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable students.
- Monitor class most affected.
- Refer on, as appropriate.

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.

Postvention

- Provide follow-up support to families in conjunction with Home School Community Liaison.
- Work in partnership with Religious Education team.
- Review and Evaluate Plan.

Parent 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.

Postvention

- 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.

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: Aistear Room
 - Individual Meetings: Learning Support/Resource Rooms (upstairs)
 - Parents: Hall

SHORT TERM ACTIONS - DAY 1

Task	Name	Contact Number
Gather Accurate Information	Relevant Staff and Witnesses (Accidents)	
Contact Appropriate Agencies	Mr. Brophy*	021-7331730
Convene a Staff Meeting	Ms. O'Driscoll	021-7331730
Arrange Supervision of Students	Ms. O'Driscoll	(as above)
Hold Staff Meeting	All Staff	
Organise Timetable for the Day	All Staff	
Inform Parents	Mr. Brophy*	(as above)
Inform Students	Mr. Brophy*	(as above)
Make contact with bereaved family	Mr. Brophy*/Chaplaincy Role	(as above)/Fr Kieron O'Driscoll
Dealing with the Media	Mr. Brophy*/Ms. O'Driscoll	(as above)

IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

Department of Education & Skills	(090) 6483600
NEPS	(0761) 108450
Gardaí	999 or 112
Diocesan Office (Regina O'Sullivan)	(021) 4301717
Denis Healy (Chairperson B.O.M.)	(085) 7613726
Doctor (Michael Crotty)	(021) 4871157
Southdoc	(1850) 335999
Children and Family Services (Cork)	(021) 4923001
School Inspector (Michael Ryan)	(087) 6847009

Media Briefing: (if appropriate)

- Designate a spokesperson. (Leader)
- Prepare a brief statement. (Team)
- Protect the family's privacy.
- Gather accurate information.
- What happened, where and when?
- What is the extent of the injuries?
- How many are involved and what are their names?
- Is there a risk of further injury?
- Contact appropriate agencies.
- Emergency services.
- Medical services.
- H.S.E. Psychology Departments/Community Care Services.
- N.E.P.S.
- B.O.M.
- D.E.S./Schools Inspector.
- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team (8.00a.m.)
- Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate. (8.30 a.m.)
- Organise timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible).
- 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.
- Arrange supervision of students.
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service.
- 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.
- Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate. (Student Liaison person and Class teacher.)

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.
- Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team (8.00 a.m.)
- Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff.
- Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students.
- Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting. (2.45p.m.) Decisions to be made include:
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary.

- Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission.
- Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc).
- Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.
- Plan visits to injured.
- Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided).
- 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).

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS - 24 – 72 HRS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
Review the events of the first 24 hours.	Staff
Arrange support for individual/groups of students/parents.	Mr. Cathal Brophy* Ms. Eva O'Driscoll
Plan the re-integration of staff and students.	"
Plan visits to the injured.	"
Liaise with family re funeral. Arrange memorial service.	Fr Kieron O'Driscoll
Attendance/Participation at funeral service etc.	Staff/Fr Kieron O'Driscoll
School Closure.	B.O.M.

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.
 - Uncharacteristic behaviour.
 - Deterioration in academic performance.
 - Physical symptoms - e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness.
 - Inappropriate emotional reactions.
 - Increased absenteeism.

LONG TERM ACTIONS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
Monitor Students for signs of continuing stress.	Staff
Evaluate response to incident and amend C.I. Plan appropriately.	Staff
Inform new staff/pupils.	Mr. Brophy*/Class teacher
Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries.	Staff
Plan school memorial service	Staff/TBC by Parish

This policy was reviewed and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 22 September 2025.