

Critical Incident Policy

Kilbonane National School

Knocknahilan

Aherla

Co. Cork

Roll No: 173381

Tel: 021-7331730

Email: office@kilbonaneschool.com



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 include:

- Death, serious illness or major illness/outbreak of disease affecting the school community
- Accident or serious injury
- Criminal or violent incident
- Suicide or suspected suicide (to be managed in accordance with NEPS guidance and *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools*, including careful attention to safe messaging)
- Civil unrest, war, or a major world event having a significant impact on the school community
- Fire, natural or technological disaster
- Disappearance of a student from home or school
- Unauthorised removal of a student from school or home

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

Role	Name	Contact
Team Leader	Mr. Keith Cotter (Principal)	via school (021) 7331730
Deputy Team Leader	Ms. Eva O'Driscoll	(as above)
Garda Liaison	Mr. Keith Cotter	(as above)
Staff Liaison	Ms. Eva O'Driscoll	(as above)
Student Liaison	Ms. Ciara McCarthy	(as above)
Deputy Student Liaison	Mr. Cathal Brophy	(as above)

Chaplaincy Role	Fr Kieron O'Driscoll (or equivalent, in consultation with the family's faith tradition)	(085) 8356888
Parent Liaison	Ms. Siobhán Slevin	via school (as above)
Community Liaison	Ms. Eva O'Driscoll	(as above)
Media Liaison	Mr. Keith Cotter / Ms. Eva O'Driscoll	(as above)
Administrator	Mr. Denis Healy	via school (as above)
NEPS Psychologist	Ms. Ciaragh O'Brien	ciaragh_obrien@education.gov.ie

Names and contact details to be reviewed at the start of each school year and after any staff change.

Roles and Responsibilities

Team Leader

Intervention

- Confirm the event.
- Activate the Critical Incident Management Team.
- Express sympathy to family.
- Clarify facts surrounding the 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 the plan.

Media Role

Intervention

- With the 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.
- Manage misinformation, including on social media, among pupils and the wider school community.

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response.

Student Liaison

Intervention

- Address immediate needs of staff and students.
- 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 the Parent/Community Liaison.
- Work in partnership with the Religious Education team.
- Review and evaluate the plan.

Parent Liaison Role

Intervention

- Coordinate contact with families (following first contact by the Principal).
- Consult with family around involvement of the school in, e.g., funeral service.
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by the critical incident.

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to families affected by the incident.
- Involve families, as appropriate, in school liturgies/memorial services.

- Offer to link families with community support groups.

Action Plan

Short-Term Actions (Day 1)

1. Immediate contact with family/families.
2. Consult with the family regarding appropriate support from the school, e.g., funeral service.
3. Ensure that a quiet place can be made for students/staff. Rooms available as follows:
 - Prayer room: Aistear Room
 - Individual meetings: Learning Support/Resource Rooms (upstairs)
 - Parents: Hall
4. Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team (8.00 a.m.).
5. Organise a staff meeting, if appropriate (8.30 a.m.).
6. Organise timetable/routine for the day (adhering to the normal school routine is important, if possible).
7. 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.
8. Arrange supervision of students.
9. 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.
10. Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate (Student Liaison person and Class teacher).

Task	Name	Contact Number
Gather accurate information	Relevant staff and witnesses (accidents)	—
Contact appropriate agencies	Mr. Keith Cotter	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. Keith Cotter	(as above)
Inform students	Mr. Keith Cotter	(as above)
Make contact with bereaved family	Mr. Cotter / Chaplaincy Role	(as above) / Fr Kieron O'Driscoll
Dealing with the media	Mr. Cotter / Ms. O'Driscoll	(as above)

Media Briefing (if appropriate)

- Designate a spokesperson (Team 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?
 - Is there a risk of further injury?
- Contact appropriate agencies:
 - Emergency services
 - Medical services
 - HSE Psychology Departments / Community Care Services
 - NEPS
 - Board of Management
 - Department of Education / Schools Inspector

Important Contacts

Contact	Number
Department of Education	(090) 6483600
NEPS	(0761) 108450

Gardaí	999 or 112
Diocesan Office (Regina O'Sullivan)	(021) 4301717
Denis Healy (Chairperson, Board of Management)	(085) 7613726
Doctor (Michael Crotty)	(021) 4871157
Southdoc	(1850) 335999
Children and Family Services (Cork)	(021) 4923001
School Inspector	<i>to be confirmed with current details</i>

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.
- Review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting (2.45 p.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 relatives, 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 in accordance with parents' wishes, school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends).

- School closure (if appropriate — request a decision on this from school management).

Task	Name/Group
Review the events of the first 24 hours	Staff
Arrange support for individual/groups of students/parents	Mr. Keith Cotter / 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	Board of Management

Longer-Term Actions

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress. If, over a prolonged period, a student continues to display any of the following, he/she may need assistance from the HSE, Tusla or NEPS:

- 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

Task	Name/Group
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Staff

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Plan appropriately	Staff
Inform new staff/pupils	Mr. Cotter / Class teacher
Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries	Staff
Plan school memorial service	Staff / TBC by Parish

Data Protection

All records and communications relating to a critical incident will be managed in compliance with GDPR and the school's Data Protection Policy, on a need-to-know basis only.

This policy was reviewed and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 22 September 2026.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)