

## **Critical Incident Management Policy**

For the purpose of this policy a critical incident is defined as any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school. This could include:

- The death of a member of the school community
- A serious accident involving pupils or staff
- A traumatic event involving the school
- A serious accident or tragedy in the wider community

In the event of a critical incident occurring, the Critical Incident Team is convened to plan and implement an appropriate response.

The Critical Incident Team consists of:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Guidance Counsellors
- Chaplain +RE team
- Year Head (relevant)
- Form Teacher (relevant)
- Other volunteer teachers

*(See Appendix 1)*

Depending on the nature of the critical incident, the school may access professional support from agencies such as:

- Department of Education Psychological services
- National Suicide Bereavement Support Network
- Rainbows
- Parish Priest
- Gardai
- Counsellors

**Key administrative tasks in planning for a critical incident:**

- Maintaining an up-to-date list of contact numbers for
  - a) Staff
  - b) Pupils, parents / guardians
  - c) Emergency support services
  
- Compiling emergency information for school tours including:
  - a) list of all pupils and teachers involved and group leader
  - b) copy of itinerary
  - c) list of phone numbers / contact numbers of all involved including school mobile number
  - d) up-to-date medical information on pupils and permission forms from parents in case of a medical emergency
  - e) insurance details

**Procedures to be followed in the event of critical incidents:**

On notification of a critical incident the Principal will convene the Critical Incident Management Team to carry out the following:

- Ascertain the facts.
- Contact appropriate agencies
- Organise for the supervision of pupils
- Inform Staff , BOM and Loreto Office
- Prepare a statement of the facts
- Identify high risk pupils
- Appoint someone to deal with phone calls
- Organise timetable for the day
- Inform parents and guardians
- Inform pupils
- Make contact with the bereaved family
- Organise support

- Respond to the media through a nominated spokesperson decided by the Board
- Contact school solicitors if required

The team should draw up a short written statement of the facts for staff, pupils, parents and the media.

**Media:**

A spokesperson will be designated to brief the media where necessary. All communication with the media should be simple, factual and brief. The school will at all times endeavour to protect the privacy of the family.

The statement should include:

- The facts about the incident
- The school's response
- Support available for the pupils
- Positive information or comment about the deceased person
- Condolences extended to the family

**Administrative requirements:**

- organise supervision or substitution
- make necessary phone calls
- reserve rooms for meetings / counselling
- record events, letters to parents, telephone calls made and received/i-flows sent
- deal with normal school business
- organise practical requirements (snacks/ drinks/ tissues)
- maintain the normal school routine where possible

**Medium Term Tasks:**

- Prepare staff and pupils for attending the funeral
- Involve the bereaved family in the liturgy if they are agreeable
- Facilitate staff and pupils' responses e.g. book of condolence, school council's vote of sympathy, flowers
- Support distressed staff and pupils
- Ensure counselling service is available
- Deal with deceased person's possessions in keeping with parental wishes
- Facilitate the return to school of siblings and close friends
- Monitor siblings and friends of the deceased carefully
- Update and amend school records and inform the DES

**Long Term Tasks:**

- Keep in contact with the parents of the deceased
- Be sensitive to occasions such as anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas etc
- Organise a school service and memorial in the Memorial Garden
- Help staff and pupils to acknowledge bereavement
- Provide appropriate support for the primary carers
- Review overall school response
- Review the support structures available

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Critical Incident Management Team**

Principal: M. O Donoghue  
Deputy Principal: F Carolan  
Guidance Counsellor: M Mc Dowell  
Chaplain: N Donohue  
RE team representatives: S Walsh  
Volunteer Teachers: B O Reilly  
M Cleary  
S Keady  
A Harding  
A Judge  
J Doyle

Board of Management Liaison Person: Aidan Farrell

The Student Council, Parents' Association, Staff and Board of Management were consulted in the formulation of this policy and their recommendations included in this document.

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