



St Brendan's N.S. Loughshinny

Critical Incident Policy

Introduction

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, criminal incidents, major accidents, serious injury, suicide, fire, natural and technological disaster, disappearance of student from home or school, unauthorised removal of student from school or home, world events that may affect the student body and/or staff.

Critical Incidents Management Team:

Leadership Role:	Kathy Lundy (Principal)
Media Liaison:	Noeleen Forkan/Kathy Lundy
Staff Liaison:	Kathy Lundy and Deputy Principal (name to be confirmed)
Pastoral Care Coordinator:	Emma Byrne
Family Liaison Role:	Kathy Lundy and Deputy Principal (to be appointed)
Parents Rep: Chairperson of Parents Association:	Melanie Kenny
B.O.M. Rep:	Carole Doyle

Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Role: Kathy Lundy

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Liaise with the Gardaí/Emergency services
- Lead briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- 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)

Follow up

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

Media Liaison: Kathy Lundy & Noeleen Forkan

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
- Designate mobile numbers for contact
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies

Follow up

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

Student Liaison Role: Kathy Lundy

Intervention

- Advise the staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils
- Alert staff to vulnerable pupils
- Outline specific services available in the school
- Put in place clear referral procedures
- Address immediate needs of staff
- Provide materials for staff (from critical incident folder)
- Provide information

Follow up

- Provide pastoral care to vulnerable students
- Monitor class most affected
- Refer as appropriate
- Review and evaluate Plan

Pastoral Care Coordinator: Emma Byrne

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

Follow Up

- Provide follow-up support to families in conjunction
- Work in partnership with Critical Incident team
- Review and Evaluate Plan

Family Liaison Role: Kathy Lundy and Deputy Principal (to be appointed)

Intervention

- Co-ordinate 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

Follow Up

- Provide ongoing support to families affected by the incident
- Involve as appropriate the family in school liturgies/memorial services
- Offer to link family with community support groups
- Review and evaluate plan

Action plans

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 found for students/staff
- Media Briefing (if appropriate)
- Designate a spokesperson (Leader)
- Gather accurate information
- Prepare a brief statement (Team)
- Protect the family's privacy
- 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 people are involved and what are their names?
 - 4. Is there a risk of further injury?
 - 5. What agencies have been contacted?
- Contact appropriate agencies
 - 1. Emergency services
 - 2. Medical services
 - 3. H.S.E. Psychology Departments/Community Care Services
 - 4. NEPS Brendan Lynch
 - 5. Board Of Management
 - 6. DES/Schools Inspector Catherine Treacy
- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team
- Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate
- Ensure any absent staff members are kept informed

- 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. This is to be given to the Student Liaison person
- Arrange supervision of students
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service
- The Pastoral Care Coordinator/Family Liaison Person 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 + Class teacher)
- 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
- Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team
- 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
- Establish contact with absent staff and pupils
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary · Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened
- Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out
- 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
- Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital
- Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided)
- Decide this in accordance with parent's wishes, 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, a student continues to display the following, he/she may need assistance from the Health Board. Constant communication with family is essential.
 - 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
- Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately
 - What went well?
 - Where were the gaps?
 - What was most/least helpful?
 - Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
 - Is there any unfinished business?
- Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future
- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate - Ensure that new staffs are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area. Ensure they are aware of pupils affected in any recent incident and in what way. When individual pupils or a class is 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) Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time Acknowledge the anniversary with the family Need to 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 parent's wishes?
 - Update and amend school records

The Board of Management adopted this policy on _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: _____

(Principal)