

St. Declan's National School

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School Policy

Critical Incident Policy 2021

This policy has been formulated by St. Declan's National School and is guided by
* Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools*
(NEPS 2016) to inform Teachers, S.N.A.s and parents of our Critical Incident Policy.

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1. What is a Critical Incident?

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school.

It is important for our school to identify potential critical incidents and which procedures to follow in each instance. Some crises affecting school are listed below.

The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.

An accident involving pupils or staff 'on or off' the school premises.

A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school.

Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.

The disappearance of a member of the school community.

Unauthorized removal of student from school or home

An accident/tragedy in the wider community.

2. Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name
Leadership Role	Cian Kearins (Principal)
Communication/Liaison Role	Cathy Collier (Deputy Principal)
Chaplaincy Role	Father Ciaran Clarke
Counseling Role	Máire Lydon (Assistant Principal)
NEPS Role	TBC
Garda Siochana Role	Barbara Kelly
Administration Role	Karen McCaul, Joanne Tuite
Caretaker Role	Tommy O'Neill

The first named person has the responsibility as defined.

The second named person assists and only assumes responsibility on the absence of the first named person.

3. Why the school has an important role?

1. St. Declan's is a significant part of a child's life and support system. It offers security to the child at a time of insecurity.
2. Teachers are important role models for parents and children. They can model healthy ways of coping and leadership.
3. Teachers are in a position to observe behaviour changes. They can monitor long term progress.
4. Teachers have skills which promote coping e.g. building self-esteem, providing opportunities for creative expression.
5. Curriculum provides for teaching of personal and physical safety, life skills and expression of feelings.
6. School is an important part of our community. Schools also have existing systems which can be adapted to support and inform people, e.g. newsletters.
7. At the beginning of each school year the staff will be reminded of the critical incident management team and their roles.
8. The team will meet up once a year to look through the policy and make any necessary updates.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

(i) Leadership Role (Principal)

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Express sympathy to family
- Identify a school contact person for family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Activate the C.1. response team
- Make contact with other relevant agencies

Postvention

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

(ii) Communication Role (Deputy Principal)

Intervention

- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups
- With Team, prepare a public statement
- Organize designated room to address media promptly
- Ensure telephone line free for outgoing and important incoming calls
- Liaison with relevant outside support agencies
- 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

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response
- Provide ongoing support to bereaved family
- Involve, as appropriate, family in school liturgies/memorial services
- Offer to link family with community support groups
- Review and Evaluate Plan

(iii) Counselling Role (Ms Lydon)

Intervention

- Outline specific services available in school
- Put in place clear referral procedures
- Address immediate needs of any child affected by the incident in question.

Postvention

- Ongoing support to vulnerable students
- Monitor class most affected
- Refer on, as appropriate
- Review and Evaluate Plan

(iv) Chaplaincy Role

Intervention

Visit home, if appropriate
Assist with prayer services
Make contact with local clergy
Be available as personal and spiritual support to staff

Postvention

Provide follow-up support to family in conjunction with Home-school liaison
Work in partnership with religious education team
Review and Evaluate Plan

5.Action Plan

(i) 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: Room
Individual Meetings:
Parents: Room

(ii) Media Briefing

Designate a spokesperson. (Leader)
Prepare a brief statement (Team)
Protect the family's privacy
Gather accurate information
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 are involved and what are their names?
4. Is there a risk of further injury?
5. What agencies have been contacted already?

Contact appropriate agencies

1. Emergency services
2. Medical services
3. H.S.E. Psychology Department/Community Care Services
4. NEPS
5. BOM
6. DES/Schools Inspector

Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team (8.30 a.m.)

1. Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate (9.00 a.m.)
2. Organize timetable/routine for the day (adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible)
3. 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 administration person.
4. Arrange supervision of students

Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service.

1. 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.
3. Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives with 24 hours, if appropriate
4. (Liaison and Class teacher).
5. Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths.

(iii) 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

1. Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team (8.30 a.m.)
2. Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff
3. Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students
4. Have review Critical Incident Management Team meeting (3.00 p.m.)
5. Establish contact with absent staff and pupils

Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary.

1. Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to
2. Clarify what has happened
3. Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out.

4. Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefing or support meetings with parental permission. Permission slips to be included in enrolment forms.

Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc.)

1. Student liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school
2. Plan visits to injured
3. Family Liaison person , Class Teacher and Principal to visit home/hospital
4. Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (to be decided in accordance with parents' wishes.

(iv) 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.

1. Uncharacteristic behaviour
2. Deterioration in academic performance
3. Physical symptoms – e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance,
4. Tiredness, restlessness
5. Inappropriate emotional reactions
6. Increased absenteeism

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately

1. What went well?
2. Where were the gaps?
3. What was most/least helpful?
4. Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
5. Is there any unfinished business?

Formalize the Critical Incident Plan for the future

1. Consult with NEPS psychologist

Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate

2. Ensure that new staff is aware of the school policy and procedures in this area
3. Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way.
4. When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, it would be useful to brief the Principal of the new school.

Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (be sensitive to special days and events)

1. Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they
2. may need additional support at this time
3. Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
4. Be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day,
5. 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 record

6. Success Criteria

- Staff members are familiar with what a critical incident is.
- Staff members are aware of the roles of other staff members on the critical incident team.
- Staff members are aware of the short, medium and long term action plan.

7. Ratification and Review

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 27th May 2021. It will be appropriately communicated to members of the school community and made available on our school's website.

Chairperson of BOM	 Mr. Noel Curtin
Date	27-05-2021
Principal	 Mr. Cian Kearins
Date	27-05-2021

Important Contacts

Garda Siochana (Barbara Kelly)	01 8010600
Fire Brigade Dunshaughlin	01 8259555
Fr Ciaran Clarke	01 8350406
Fr Derek Darby	01 8350547
Doctor Watson	01 8351355
Doctor Murphy	01 8352244
Health Centre Ashbourne	01 8351469
Health Centre Navan	046 9020595
Meath County Council	046 9021881
Blancharstown Hospital	01 8213844
Temple Street Hospital	01 8748763
N.E.P.S	041 9876940
Dept of Education	01 8734700
ESB	1850 372999
Barnardos	01 450355
Samaritians	18500609090
Childline	1800666666
National Suicide Bereavement Support	01 2495561
Aware	01 6766166
Bereavement Counselling Service	01 8391766
Bethany Group Ashbourne	087 2715222, 126 Deerpark.