



Scoil Mhuire Strokestown

Critical Incident Management Policy

In the event of a critical incident such as:

- Death of a pupil or staff member
- An accident which includes pupils or staff on or off the school premises.
- A physical attack on a staff member or student 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.
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community.

Any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the normal running of the school.

1. The following will take place:

The Principal or Deputy Principal will gather accurate information.

The appropriate agencies will be contacted:

Emergency services

Medical services

Health Board Psychological Department/ Community Care Services

NEPS

Board of Management

Department of Education Skills/School Inspector

2. Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management team:

(Principal, Deputy Principal, Class Tutor of the group affected, other members of staff as appropriate throughout the duration of the school day.)

Appoint Deputy Principal to handle 'phone enquiries' on main telephone line. Other telephone lines to remain open.

Organise the supervision roster for the day.

Organise a staff meeting if appropriate (if appropriate break into small groups in order of seniority to reduce disruption).

Engage professional help as required i.e. NEPS.

3. Dealing with the children directly affected:
 - Class Tutor of the group affected.
 - Set aside a quiet place.
 - NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools.
 - It is very important to maintain the normal school routine when possible.

4. Inform Parents/Guardians:
 - The Principal and Deputy Principal should share information with parents.
 - Make a list of parents to be contacted and those who have been contacted.
 - Give parents factual and relevant information.
 - Set a room aside for distressed students to meet parents/guardians.
 - Provide support to parents who arrive on their own.
 - Give telephone numbers for enquiries.

5. Inform students:
 - The Principal/ Deputy Principal will take students in class groupings/ subgroups.
 - Where available they will be advised by professional outside people.
 - Give the facts, avoid speculation, and advise students to refrain from discussing on social media given the sensitivity of the issue.
 - Allow pupils to ask questions, tell their story and express feelings.
 - Help students to realise that overwhelming emotions are natural and normal following a critical incident.
 - See NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools.
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6. Make contact with the bereaved family.

7. Dealing with the media. Prepare statement to include:
 - Sympathise with the family.
 - Set out what has to be done.
 - Set out what is going to be done.
 - Positive information or comment about the deceased person.
 - Brief both staff and students and advise them on dealing with the media.
 - Due to health and safety no media are allowed on the grounds of the school.

8. Organise support:

Inform students that parents will be collecting them as soon as possible if required.

Offer a private room (Oratory) for distressed students and their families to meet following the incident.

If appropriate, offer transport.

Medium term:

- Review the events of the 1st 24 hours.
- Reconvene key staff/critical incident management team.
- Check on how each member of the team is coping.
- Make arrangements for support meeting parents/ students/staff.
- Gather feedback from teachers on vulnerable students.
- Ensure all staff are kept up to date on any developments.
- Be sensitive as to how staff were coping on a personal and professional level.
- Make contact with absent staff and pupils.
- Update media if necessary.
- Arrange support for individual students, students groups of students, if necessary.
- Plan for the reintegration of students and staff.
- Visits to injured people.
- Liaise with family regarding funeral arrangements.
- Designated staff members visit family within 24 hours.
- If school closure is considered- consult board of management for direction.

Follow up actions:

- Monitor students for signs of continued distress
- Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Policy.
- Formalise plan.
- Inform new staff of policy and of students who have been affected.
- Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries.

Liam Martin
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Chairperson Liam Martin

Date: *25/10/23*
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Date for Review: *25/10/26*
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