

Critical Incident Policy

Introduction:

In Carron NS we aim to protect the well being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and well catered for environment as outlined in our school philosophy statement.

The BoM through the Principal and staff has drawn up a critical incident management plan. They have established a Critical Incidents Management Team to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

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:

- Death, major illness/outbreak of disease (Foot & Mouth)
- Accidents in school (serious injury/fatality)
- Criminal incidents (e.g. Dunblane shooting, Shooting at first communion in Ballymun.)
- Major accidents, serious injury (e.g. 'Navan bus crash')
- Suicide
- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing in Cork)
- Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g. Midleton incident in Cork)
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.
- World events that may affect the student body and/or staff. May be a need for provision of discussion and involvement in ceremonies e.g. 9/11, tsunami

Prevention

In Carron NS, we aim, insofar as is possible, to prevent any incidents that may overwhelm the normal coping mechanism of this school. Therefore the staff and BoM have the following practices in place

- Integration of SPHE programmes
- Identification of vulnerable students by teaching staff
- Physically safe school
- Staff training and resources
- Development of links with external agencies
- Child Protection guidelines
- Provision of support for staff

However, we recognise that critical incidents are beyond our control. The purpose of this document, therefore, is to plan for the management of a critical incident should it occur. Preparation will help to ensure that there is a quick and effective reaction, that normality returns as soon as possible and that effects of the incident on students and staff are limited.

NEPs recommends setting up a Critical Incident Management Team. It defines this as " a group of individuals from the staff of a school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs."

Critical Incidents Management Team:

Leadership Role: _Mary Quealy

Communication Role – Mary Quealy & Sinéad Arkins

Counselling Role: NEPs psychologist

Aine Freeley Ennis office 0656865904

Chaplaincy Role: Fr. Colm Clinton

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Leadership Role:

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Liaise with the Gardaí/Emergency services
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Make contact with other relevant agencies e.g. NEPs
- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (ancilliary staff, pupils, outside school)

Postvention

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

2. Communication Role:

Intervention

- With Team, prepare a public statement
- Organise a designated room to address media promptly
- Designate mobile numbers for contact
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

3. Student Liaison/ Counselling Role:

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 (see appendix 1)
- Address immediate needs of staff
- Provide materials for staff (from critical incident folder)
- Provide information

- Provide counselling

Postvention

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

**4. Chaplaincy Role:
Intervention**

- Visit home(s), if appropriate
- Assist with prayer where appropriate
- 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 Home School Community Liaison
- Work in partnership with Critical Incident team
- Review and Evaluate Plan

Action plan : How to respond to a critical incident.

Level 1 – serious accident in school/ car accident involving staff / bus accident involving school children.

Procedures

Contact support personnel for teacher/ children on premises

Contact Parents

Contact Medical support

Contact Gardai if necessary

Contact lists to hand

Support team of parents /neighbours for teachers in the event that one teacher is indisposed

Local contacts with medical experience/first aiders

Local doctor/medical centre

Parent contacts

Garda Contacts

Level 2 A fire in school not resulting in serious injury: serious damage to school property, – the death of a student or parent/sibling who was terminally ill.

In the case of examples one and two, contact the relevant emergency services – gardaí, fire services

If necessary, prepare an information sheet, text message to parents

Make provisions for alternative temporary accommodation

It may be necessary to talk to the NEPs psychologist for advice on how to help children who may be feeling traumatised.

In the case of expected death of a student, parent or sibling staff will ensure that school routines are adhered to, that children are given opportunities to talk and reflect on the death, that in-school rituals./ceremonies can be conducted as appropriate.

The NEPs Psychologist maybe contacted by phone for support at this time.

Decisions should be made about attendance and participation at funeral or memorial services in accordance with family wishers.

School closure for funeral attendance if appropriate.

Medium to long term support

Monitor students for ongoing signs of distress

If a child displays ongoing distress, the school may need to contact NEPs or the Health Board for assistance in helping the child.

The school should ensure that new staff, substitute and visiting staff are informed of pupils that have been affected by a recent incident and in what way.

When individual pupils or a class of pupils are transferring to a new school, the Principal should brief the Principal of the New School.

Anniversaries may trigger emotional response in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time. Teachers may need to be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day

Plan a school memorial service

Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parents' wishes?

Update and amend school records.

Level 3 – The Sudden Death of a student or staff member

Response is similar to level 2 events.

However, a NEPs psychologist can also be made available to visit the school for counselling.

Level 4

An accident/event involving a number of students: a murder: an incident with a high media profile or involving a number of schools

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

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 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 Departments/Community Care Services
 4. NEPS

Drawn up by the Board of Management of [Insert School Name] on _____

Review Date: _____