



Roll No.	19266T
Principal Teacher	Glenda McKeown
Policy	Critical Incident Policy
Date created	9 th December 2014
Date reviewed	September 2016, November 2017, November 2018, September 2019, October 2020, September 2021, September 2022, 17 th April 2024
Date reviewed	17 th September 2025
Approved by	
	Chairperson, Board of Management
Date for review	Annually

Critical Incident Policy.

Introduction

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff, parents, Board of Management and in response to a course run by NEPS to fill a need for a simple clear, general plan of action.

It was reviewed following its use in November 2013, and annually from that date, due to change of staff and health and safety issues.

A Critical Incident can be defined as: “any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school.”

Rationale & School Ethos

The school wishes to maintain a safe, caring, and responsible environment. To this end we wish to plan and implement a comprehensive, coping strategy which will address the different scenarios which may at some time affect our school community.

Aim

- The main aim of the policy is to plan for as many eventualities as is possible, so that, should given situations arise, we have a plan to put into action.

Policy Content

Critical Incident Management Team:

Leadership Role:	Glenda McKeown
Communication Role:	Fr. William Swan/Glenda McKeown
Student Liaison/Counselling Role:	Gayle Weld
Chaplaincy Role	Fr. William Swan
Media Liaison Role	
Family Liaison Role	Bridget Leacy / Sadhbh Maloney
Parents Association Representative	Daryl Cogley
BOM Representative	Emer Kehoe
NEPS	Deirdre Starr

Leadership Role

Intervention

- Confirm the event.
- Activate the Critical Incident response team.
- 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).

Post intervention

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

Communication Role

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.
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies.

Post intervention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response.

Student Liaison/Counselling Role

Intervention

- Outside specific services available in school.
- Put in place clear referral procedures.
- Address immediate needs of staff.
- Contact other school associated staff (see list)
- Provide information on counselling.

Post intervention

- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable students.
- Monitor class most affected.
- Refer on, as appropriate.
- Review and evaluate plan.

Chaplaincy Role

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.

Post intervention

- Provide follow-up support to families in conjunction with Home School Community Liaison.
- Work in partnership with Critical Incident team.
- Review and Evaluate Plan.

Media Liaison Role

- Pro active approach.
- No student interviews.
- No photos of deceased.
- No comment on any social media.
- Media statement – if appropriate.
- Responsibility for interviews.

Family Liaison Role

Intervention

- Coordinate contact with families (following first contact by principal).
- Consult with family around involvement of school in e.g., funeral services.
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident.

Post intervention

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

General Plan

- Whoever finds out contacts Leader with facts if possible.
- Leader: contacts staff via MT/school business WhatsApp
- Parents may be texted where it is felt necessary.
- Critical Incident Team meet in school (8am)
 - Agenda: Share details
 - Agree facts
 - Critical Incident Roles put into action where appropriate.
 - Outside Agencies contacted where appropriate.
 - Arrange timetable for day – normal routine.
 - Arrange staff meeting – supervision.
- Staff Meeting (8.30 a.m.)
 - Agenda: Share details.
 - Schedule/Routine for day.
 - How to share facts with students.

Provide literature.

- NEPS in place – rooms made available.
- Students informed.
- School Assembly and Prayer Service.... where appropriate.
- Meeting with staff at end of day for review.
- Meeting of Critical Incident team for review.
- Follow up – review of affected students.
 - Referral procedures
 - Review Critical Incident plan.

Individual Scenarios.... following general plan with these differences.

Staff Member passes away

- In the case of this happening during school hours.
 1. Before noon: School will close. Counsellors on site from early next day. Buses to be contacted by school secretary using Text-a-parent/Aladdin
 2. After 1 noon: School will remain open... counsellors made available ASAP.
- Staff on courses will be notified and kept informed of plans/arrangements. If requested some staff will remain after school to meet with them when they return.
- All parents will be notified via Texta parent/Aladdin
- In the case of this happening out of school hours: school shall open as normal on next school day.
- School shall remain closed for funeral.
- No students in guard of honour.
- School shall have Special Months Mind Mass for whole school community.

Student passes away

- In the case of this happening during school hours school shall remain open. Counsellors made available as soon as possible.
- All parents will be notified via Texta parent/Aladdin.
- In the case of this happening out of school hours - school shall open as normal on next school day.
- Parents of classmates phoned.
- School shall remain open on day of funeral - student's classmates will be free to attend but only with own parents.
- No students in guard of honour.
- School shall have Special Months Mind Mass or Memorial Service at later date for whole school community

Bus Accident

- Parents of students involved phoned.
- Counselling set up if needed.

Accident while away at fixture/event

- Go to local hospital
- Two adults stay with student
- Contact parents and remain with student until they arrive.

- Counselling set up if needed.

Out of School Event

- Students return home / evacuated to a safe place with staff, while one staff member remains where necessary.
- One staff member travels to meet those remaining.
- Parents of all students contacted.
- Counselling set up.

Updated & ratified on 9th December 2014

27th September 2016

21st November 2017

20th November 2018

17th September 2019

This version ratified by the Board of Management on 5th October 2020

Reviewed on 15th September 2021

Reviewed on 26th October 2022

Reviewed on 17th April 2024

Reviewed on 17th September 2025



Signed:

Chairperson B.O.M.

Resources

Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools (NEPS).

Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools (NEPS).

When Tragedy Strikes – Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in schools (INTO, UTU).

INTO counselling service.