**Scoil Seanáin Naofa**

**Critical Incident Policy**

***Definition of 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’.

**Critical incidents include but are not limited to:**

* 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.
* The disappearance of a member of the school community.
* An accident or tragedy in the wider community.

**Aim of Critical Incident Plan:**

In Scoil Seanáin Naofa,Cloghroe we aim to protect the well-being of our students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times, as outlined in our mission statement.

We recognise that critical incidents can greatly affect people and that co-ordinated and systematic procedures are necessary to facilitate the provision of a rapid and appropriate response at the time of the incident, as well as post-incident support. The aim of this plan is to ensure that management and staff will react effectively and promptly to maintain control of the situation. The plan will also assist the school community to return to normal as quickly as possible and limit the negative effects of the incident on staff and students.

We acknowledge the complex nature of traumatic events which may have far-reaching consequences, and can affect attitude, performance and the ability to cope. It is therefore important for the school to have clear supportive strategies in place for our students and staff.

**Critical Incident Management Team**

The Critical Incident Management Team comprises:

* Principal
* Deputy Principal
* Assistant Principal
* B.O.M. Representative
* Parents Association Representative

**Support Services Team:**

* School Secretary
* Caretaker
* Relevant teachers with expertise e.g. First Aid, Bereavement Support
* Other professionals and support services
* Other staff members concerned.

**Key Administrative Tasks**

* Updated list of student addresses and contact numbers to be maintained by secretary.
* Staff addresses and contact numbers available from Principal, Deputy Principal and Secretary.
* School trips: organising staff are responsible for compiling a list of all students and staff involved in the trip, a list of mobile phone numbers for accompanying teachers and helpers, and any medical information on students involved.
* The Principal will liaise with the media and will also be responsible for a media statement, when appropriate.
* Health & Safety – Safe School Evacuation Procedures as outlined in Health & Safety Statement. Regular fire drills.
* The management will afford staff members with opportunities to attend information / training courses in First Aid, Bereavement, etc.
* Management to ensure that new staff members are made aware of the Critical Incident School Policy.
* Communication between all relevant staff members regarding children in emotional distress / affected by trauma /critical incidents and who are in need of special consideration, with a view to providing relevant supports.

***Roles and Responsibilities***

**Role of Management:**

* To confirm the event and to clarify facts surrounding the event.
* To alert members of the Critical Incident Management Team to the crisis and to convene a meeting of the team.
* To co-ordinate / delegate tasks of Critical Incident Management Team members.
* To make contact with family to express sympathy.
* To visit the home of the bereaved / injured, as appropriate.
* To contact NEPS, Bernardo’s, HSE, Gardaí and / or other relevant bodies.
* To ensure provision of on-going support to staff and students.
* To facilitate any appropriate memorial events.
* To prepare a public / media statement with Critical Incident Management Team, when appropriate.
* To outline specific services available in school.
* To put referral procedures in place.

**Role of Critical Incident Management Team Members:**

* CIMT will establish a chain of communication to disseminate relevant information.
* CIMT will ensure that new staff are made aware of the Critical Incident School Policy.
* In the case of bereavement to clarify funeral arrangements.
* To liaise with other relevant support agencies e.g. NEPS, HSE, etc.
* To brief and advise staff members.
* Visit home, if appropriate.
* Address immediate needs of staff.
* Monitor class / students most affected, and facilitate on-going support to vulnerable students.
* Make contact with local clergy and assist with prayer or memorial services.
* Consult with family around involvement of school in e.g. funeral service.
* Be available as personal and spiritual support to staff.
* Link family with community support groups

**Action Plan**

**SHORT –TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)**

* Immediate contact with family / families. It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident.
* Convene a meeting with CIMT.
* Contact appropriate agencies, e.g emergency services, medical services, HSE, NEPS, BOM, DES (Schools inspectorate).
* The Principal will liaise with the family to extend sympathy and clarify the family’s wishes regarding the school’s involvement.
* Ensure that a quiet place can be made available for students / staff.
* Organise routine for the day. (Adhering to normal routine is preferable, where possible).
* 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 Principal.
* Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives.

**MEDIUM –TERM ACTIONS (24-72 hours)**

* Attendance and participation at funeral to be decided in accordance with family’s wishes and school management decisions.
* Involvement of students / staff in liturgy if agreed by bereaved.
* Preparation of students / staff attending funeral. Facilitation of student / staff responses e.g. sympathy cards, flowers, book of condolences, etc.
* Ritual / service within the school.
* Arrange support for individual or groups of students, and parents, if necessary.
* Plan for the re-integration of students and staff, e.g. siblings, close relatives, etc.

**LONG-TERM ACTIONS**

* Monitor students for signs of continuing distress.
* Inform new staff members of Critical Incident Policy and where appropriate, to ensure they are aware of pupils affected by any recent incident, or any student in distress.
* Update and amend school records.
* Review and evaluate Critical Incident Policy as necessary.

**CONTACTING STAFF IF CRITICAL INCIDENT OCCURS OVER WEEKEND**

* In the event of the death of a colleague the Principal / Deputy Principal will contact staff by phone.
* In the event of the death of a student the CIMT needs to be informed immediately. Other staff will be informed asap.

**EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Ambulance Barnardo’s

Gardai H.S.E.

Priest Social Services

Doctors NEPS

Hospital? Helplines?

**Consultation and Communication regarding the plan**

Staff were consulted and their views taken into account in the preparation of this plan. Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Our school’s final policy and plan, in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to staff.

Each member of critical incident team has a personal copy of the policy/plan.

All new and temporary staff will be directed to the plan by the principal.

The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis.

