

Kilnamanagh Community National School (KCNS)
Oulart, Co. Wexford. Y25 HT63
087 3861430 / 053 9136555
Email: kilnamanaghcns@wwetb.ie

Draft Critical Incident Policy for Kilnamanagh CNS

Introduction:

In Kilnamanagh CNS 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 School manager, in place of the Board of Management, through the Principal, the Staff and the Parents Association 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)(Covid-19 Virus)
- Criminal incidents (e.g. shooting)
- 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, Covid-19

Critical Incidents Management Team:

Leadership Role: Bróna Kenneally(Principal)

Communication Role: Valerie Boylan (secretary) Jamie Lee Somers (Special Duties Teacher) and Bróna Kenneally (Principal)

Student Liaison/ Counselling Role: Bróna Kenneally and Jamie Lee Somers

Chaplaincy Role: Bróna Kenneally, Jamie Lee Somers, Sharon McManus

Family Liaison Role: Bróna Kenneally

Parent Rep: A parent will be selected from the body of parents in the school

School Manager in place of B.O.M. Rep: Theresa Curtin Byrne

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.

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Roles and Responsibilities

1. Leadership Role:

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Liaise with the Gardaí/Emergency services
- Lead briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- 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)

Postvention

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

2. Communication Role:

Intervention

- Use phones, email, WhatsApp, social media respectively depending on the circumstances
- Ensure all relevant information is related to parents/guardians and the children
- 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
- Designate mobile numbers and email addresses 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
- Address immediate needs of staff
- Provide materials for staff (from critical incident folder)
- Provide information

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- Provide counselling

Postvention

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

4. Counsellor Role: Intervention

- Visit home(s), if appropriate
- Facilitate families to allow their children to attend outside religious or non-religious services
- Make contact with local community where necessary
- Facilitate online services for staff, children and their families as and when needed for communication purposes in a counsellor mode e.g. online meetings
- 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

4. Family Liaison Role: Intervention

- Co-ordinate contact with families (following first contact by Principal)
- Pay a visit to the family home
- 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

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

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Action plan

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)

- Immediate contact with family/families through agreed channels of communication
- Pay a visit to the family home, if appropriate to offer support
- 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
- Arrange school work to be done from home if the school has to close for any reason and communicate this with the parents

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

5. School manager in place of BOM

6. DES/Schools Inspector

- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team
- Organise a staff meeting, if appropriate
- Ensure any absent staff members are kept informed and if for any reason the staff need to leave the building, communication is done online, over the phone etc.
- Organise timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible, allowing for this to be done at home also if the school is closed and this will depend on the situation of every family)
- Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted, list of friends etc, or any other relevant information. This is to be given to the Student Liaison person
- Arrange supervision of students if needed
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service
- The Principal will liaise with the family, to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial service

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- Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate. (Student Liaison person + Class teacher)
- Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS (24-72 HOURS)

- Communicate with families, leaving channels of communications open and families aware of this and supported
- Communicate any updates received from the DES or HSE or other agencies relevant to the incident, to the school community
- Preparation of students/staff if attending a funeral
- Involvement of students/staff in service 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
- Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team
- Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff
- Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students
- Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting
- Establish contact with absent staff and pupils
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary
- Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened
- Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out
- Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission
- Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc)
- Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.
- Plan visits to injured
 - Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital
 - Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided)
 - Decide this in accordance with parent's wishes, school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends
- School closure (if appropriate)
- Request a decision on this from school management

LONGER TERM ACTIONS

If the school is closed for a longer period then it is up to the school leader to

- Put in place online learning software and invite the staff to join to hold meetings online
- Encourage good communication with the staff and parents, leaving channels of communications open and accessible
- Liaise regularly with staff and parents
- Oversee and encourage online education facilitating by the class teachers and SNA's

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- Adopt new online educating measures for the school to continue educating the children from home
- Update school community using accepted mode of communication

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. Constant communication with family is essential.

- Uncharacteristic behaviour
- Deterioration in academic performance
- Physical symptoms — e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness
- Inappropriate emotional reactions
- Increased absenteeism

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately

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

Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future

- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
- Ensure that new staffs are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area
- Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way
- When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, the Principal should brief the Principal of the new school

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

- Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time
- Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
- Need to be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day
 - Plan a school memorial
 - Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
 - Update and amend school records

Drawn up by the School Manager for Kilnamanagh CNS on 23-03-2020

Review Date: September 2020



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