

Moveen National School



Critical Incident Policy

Introduction:

In Moveen National School we aim to protect the well-being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and well-catered for environment.

The Board of Management 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
- Criminal incidents
- Major accidents, serious injury (e.g. car crash)
- Suicide
- Fire, natural and technological disaster
- Disappearance of student from home or school
- 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

Critical incident Management Team:

Leadership Role:	Maria Carroll
Communication Role:	Maria Carroll
Student Liaison / Counselling Role:	Ailish Conlon
Chaplaincy Role:	Ruth Carmody
Family Liaison Role:	Maria Carroll
B.O.M. Rep:	Cian Clohessy

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Leadership Role:

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Liaise with the Gardai /Emergency services
- Lead briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outline 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) There may need to be a differentiation of responses, making sure that children are informed in an age-appropriate manner.

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 location to meet appropriate agencies
- Designate mobile numbers for contact
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

3. Student Liaison I 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) which is kept in the office
- Provide information
- Provide counselling (if necessary) as required

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable students
- Monitor class most affected
- Maintain contact with family of child/ children
- Review and evaluate Plan

4. Chaplaincy Role

Intervention

- Assist with prayer services
- Make contact with local clergy

Postvention

- Work in partnership with Critical Incident team
- Review and Evaluate Plan

5. Family Liaison Role:

Intervention:

- Co-ordinate contact with families (following first contact by Principal)
- 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
- Involve as appropriate the family in school liturgies/memorial services
- Offer to link family with relevant support groups
- Review and evaluate plan

Action plan**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 student/staff.

Media Briefing (if appropriate)

- Designate a spokesperson (Leader)
 - Gather accurate information
 - Prepare a brief statement (Team)
 - Protect the family's privacy
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- It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident e.g.
 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. N.E.P.S.
5. Board of Management
6. DES/Schools Inspector

- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team
- Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate
- Ensure any absent staff members are kept informed
- Organise timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible)
- 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
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service
- The Chaplain/Principal will liaise with the family, to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial service.
- Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate. (Student Liaison person plus class teacher)
- Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths.

Medium-Term Actions (24-72 Hours)

- Preparation of students/staff attending funeral
 - Involvement of students/staff in liturgy 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
 - 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.
 - Arrange, in consultation with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission
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- Plan for the re-integration of students and staff (e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc)

- Plan visits to injured
- Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (to be decided)
Family Liaison person plus class teacher, plus 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:

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 outside agencies. 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 to 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

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- 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 day's 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 service, if deemed appropriate
- Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
- Update and amend school records

Ratification & Communication

Board of Management officially ratified the policy on June 21st 2022

Signed:  *Cian Clohessy*
Chairman of Board of Management

Signed:  *Maria Carroll*
Principal

Date: 21/6/22