



Newport College, Newport, Co. Tipperary

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

January 2021



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Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Thiobraid Árann
*Tipperary Education and
Training Board*

Policy Area	Schools
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CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Newport College aims to protect the well-being of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

As stated in the Mission Statement

“We strive to provide a holistic education in order to maximise the potential of each student academically, emotionally and socially with respect for self, others and the environment as core values, embracing individuality and honesty, to enable a productive learning and teaching environment”.

The Management/Staff has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The Management/Staff has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both students and staff during the normal course of the school day and in the event of a critical incident.

Such policies and procedures include:

- Safety Statement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour 2020
- Whole School Guidance Plan
- S.P.H.E Policy & RSE Policy
- Class Tutor System
- Student Support Team

CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS POLICY AND PLAN:

In drawing up this policy and plan the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) consulted the following resource documents available to the school:

- Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools (NEPS 2016)
- HSE Training documents

DEFINITION OF CRITICAL INCIDENT:

Newport College recognises a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the normal running of the school”.

Critical incidents may involve students, staff, the school or the local community.

Examples of a critical incident might be;

- The death of a member of the school community, through sudden death, accident, suicide or terminal illness
- A serious accident or tragedy in the school community
- Serious damage to the school through fire, flooding vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- A physical attack on a staff member or student
- Intrusion into the school.

WHAT TYPE OF RESPONSE IS NEEDED?

Response Level 1

The death of a student or staff member who was terminally ill, the death of a parent/sibling, a fire in the school not resulting in serious injury, serious damage to school property.

Response Level 2

Sudden death of a student or staff member (NEPS).

Response Level 3

An accident/event involving a number of students; a violent death; and incident with high media profile or involving a number of schools. (NEPS)

AIM OF PLAN:

The aim of the Critical Incident Plan is that in the event of such an incident as outlined above, the plan will help staff and management to react quickly and effectively and to maintain control of the situation. The plan will also help the school to return to normality as soon as possible and limit the effects of the incident on staff and students.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM:

Newport College has set up a Critical Incident Management Team consisting of the following personnel:

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principal
- The HSCL Coordinator
- The School Guidance Counsellor

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.

The Principal will act as Team Leader or in his/her absence the Deputy Principal.

ROLE OF TEAM LEADER:

- The team leader alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting of the team
- Co-ordinates/delegates tasks of the other team members.
- Liaises with the Board of Management and the Department of Education
- In case of bereavement, liaises with the bereaved family

OTHER AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITIES, WHICH MAY BE DELEGATED BY THE TEAM LEADER TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM WOULD INCLUDE:

- Contacting Emergency support services
- Briefing and advising the staff and noting their feelings and concerns.
- Organising the supervision of students in the school
- Keeping staff updated on information/developments /progress
- Meeting students to brief them on the situation
- Taking care of “Vulnerable students/vulnerable teachers”
- Liaising with external agencies for support or referrals
- Liaising with school organisations such as Parents’ Council & Students’ Council.
- Meeting with individual parents or groups of parents.
- Visiting bereaved families or families closely associated with the incident
- Preparing a press release and liaising with the media.
- Preparation of an “Incident Room”

RECORD KEEPING:

All team members will keep written records of phone calls, letters, meetings interventions etc.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The school is conscious of its responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Management Team

School Principal
School Deputy Principal
HSCCL Coordinator
School Guidance Counsellor

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.

KEYROLES ASSIGNED BY TEAM LEADER

Name of Team Member	Role
Principal	Team Leader; Media Leader
Deputy Principal	Staff Liaison
Guidance Counsellor	Student Liaison
HSCCL Coordinator	Parent Liaison

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Principal	Donal Madden	(085) 872 2461
Deputy Principal	Claire Sullivan	(085) 879 6196
Home School Liaison Coordinator	Sinead McNamara	(087) 263 3101
Caretaker	Seamus Coffey	(087) 127 1532
Hospital	Nenagh General	(067) 34901
	Limerick Regional	(061) 301111
	St. John's	(061) 462222
Doctor	Dr Pat Moroney	(061) 378241
Fire Brigade/Ambulance		999 / 112
Garda Station	Newport	(061) 378102
	Nenagh	(067) 31333
	Castleconnell	(061) 377105
	Murroe	(061) 386102
ESB	Supply Failure/Emergencies	1850 372999
Priest	Fr. Delaney/Fr John O'Keeffe	(061) 378126 (061) 378761 – church
Bord Gáis	Emergency Number	1850 205050
Health & Safety Authority	Contact Number	1890 289 389
NEPS Psychologist	Irene Timmons	(061) 430021
State Examinations Commission		(090) 6442793
DES Communications Unit		(01) 889 6400
TETB Offices	Nenagh Clonmel	(067) 31250 (052) 6121067

SHORT TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

DAY 1

Task	Name
GATHER ACCURATE INFORMATION	Principal and CIMT
CONTACT APPROPRIATE AGENCIES	Principal and CIMT
CONVENE A MEETING WITH KEY STAFF	Principal
ARRANGE SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS	Deputy Principal
HOLD STAFF MEETING	Principal and CIMT
ORGANISE TIMETABLE FOR THE DAY	Principal and CIMT
INFORM PARENTS	HSCCL coordinator
INFORM STUDENTS	Guidance Counsellor
MAKE CONTACT WITH THE BEREAVED FAMILY	Principal and staff member deemed most suitable
DEALING WITH THE MEDIA	Principal

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

24 – 72 HOURS

Task	Name
REVIEW THE EVENTS OF THE FIRST 24 HOURS	CIMT
ARRANGE SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS	Deputy Principal and Guidance Counsellor
ARRANGE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS	Guidance Counsellor and Class Tutors
ARRANGE SUPPORT FOR PARENTS	Principal and HSCL Coordinator
PLAN THE RE-INTEGRATION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS	CIMT and all staff
PLAN VISITS TO INJURED/FAMILY OF BEREAVED	Coordinated through CIMT
LIAISE WITH FAMILY REGARDING FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS	Principal
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION AT FUNERAL SERVICE	CIMT to decide

BEYOND 72 HOURS

Task	Name
MONITOR STUDENTS FOR CONTINUING SIGNS OF STRESS	All staff
EVALUATE RESPONSE TO INCIDENT AND AMEND CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN APPROPRIATELY.	CIMT
FORMALISE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE	CIMT
INFORM NEW STAFF AND PUPILS	Senior Management
DECIDE ON APPROPRIATE WAY TO DEAL WITH ANNIVERSARIES	CIMT

RESOURCES

Box file containing following documents available in Principal's office:

- Responding to Critical Incidents (NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools)
- Copy of Critical Incident Policy and Plan
- Relevant resource materials:
 - Check List for Principals Day 1
 - FAQ Dealing with the Media
 - FAQ Critical incidents during exams
 - Sample Agenda for CIMT meeting - pg. 22/23
 - Script for Principals pg. 24
 - Identifying vulnerable students - pg. 26
 - List of Incident Rooms
 - Staff contact numbers
 - List of Year heads and class tutors
 - Sample Text for Parents and Guardians

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parents/Guardians

The school has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our students/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury, *(Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost)*

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. *(Elaborate)*

It is possible that your child may have some feelings that s/he may like to discuss with you. You can help your child by taking time to listen to him and encouraging him/her to express his/her feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to his/her age.

If you would like any advice or support, you may contact the following people at school *(Details)*

Yours sincerely

Principal.

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING CONSENT FOR INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following the recent (tragedy/ death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to students either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis, and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your child has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (X). If you would like your child to receive this support, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by

If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Principal.

I/We consent to having our child meet with ...

I /We understand that my/our child may meet x in an individual or group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Student:

Class:

Date of Birth:

Signed:

(Parents /Guardians)