



Critical Incident Policy

Introduction

St. Kilian's Junior School aims to protect the wellbeing of its pupils and staff by attempting to provide a safe and nurturing environment at all times. We have taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and pupils, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident.

Aim of this Policy

We hope that this policy will help staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of a critical incident. It also aspires to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effects on pupils and staff are kept to a minimum. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school policies section of the Plean Scoile.

Definition of a Critical Incident

We recognise a critical incident to be an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school.

It may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Examples of incidents would include

Death, suicide, major illness, serious injury, outbreak of disease of member/s of school community

Criminal incidents, intrusion into the school, serious damage to the school building

An accident involving member/s of the school community

An accident/ tragedy in the wider community

Fire and natural disaster

Civil war/ unrest

Measures currently taken to address physical and psychological safety of pupils and staff

Physical Safety (please refer also to the Health & Safety Statement)

- ✓ Evacuation Plan and termly fire drills
- ✓ Exits and fire extinguishers are checked regularly
- ✓ Front door security system and camera recording device in 6 locations

The following policies also assist with physical safety

- ✓ Code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy
- ✓ Safety of school employees policy
- ✓ Adult bullying/sexual harassment policy
- ✓ Child protection policy
- ✓ Administration of medicines policy
- ✓ Yard supervision and injury policy
- ✓ School tours policy
- ✓ Complaints policy and grievance procedure

Psychological Safety

- ✓ Anti-bullying policy
- ✓ Adult bullying policy
- ✓ SPHE programme taught at all levels
- ✓ Circle time taught at all levels
- ✓ Relevant staff informed of difficulties affecting individual children and are vigilant to their needs
- ✓ Provision of resources/ books to address various areas of need
- ✓ Links with outside agencies; NEPS, Duty Social Service, Lucena Clinic, Mary Mercer Centre, Family Resource Centre, Tallaght
- ✓ Employee Assistance Service

Critical Incident Management Team

St. Kilian's Junior School has set up a critical incident management team. Each member has an assigned role which s/he will retain for at least one school year. Each member of the team has a pack with relevant materials to be used in the event of a critical incident.

Team Members and Key Responsibilities

Team Leader/s	Chairperson, Board of Management and School Principal Elaine Lowry	Kate Sweeney
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- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management and Department of Education & Science
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Staff Liaison Deputy Principal, Noreen Coll

- Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and outlines the routines for the day
- Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable pupils
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Provides materials to staff from the Ready to Go pack

Pupil Liaison Maria Mc Carthy

- Liaises with other team members to keep them updated with information and progress
- Alerts staff to vulnerable pupils
- Provides materials from Ready to Go pack for pupils if appropriate
- Organises supervision of pupils as appropriate

Parent Liaison Catherine Hickey & Miriam Fitzpatrick

- Facilitates “ questions and answers” meetings with parents
- Meets with individual parents if necessary
- Provides materials from the Ready to Go pack
- Visits the bereaved family with the Team Leader

Community Liaison Kim Costello, St. Kilian’s Parents’ Association

- Liaises with the agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Updates team members of the involvement of external agencies
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of -Parents’ Association
 - Emergency Support Services
 - External Contacts
 - Resources

Media Liaison Chairperson, Board of Management, Elaine Lowry

- Consider issues that may arise because of the incident and how they might be responded to (e.g. pupils being interviewed/ photographers etc.)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise with the Communications section of the Department of Education & Science

Administrative Tasks School Secretary

- Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Parents/ Guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency Support Services
- Telephone calls that need to be responded to, letters to be sent , materials to be photocopied

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep detailed records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

Letter to Parents/ Guardians

The Chairperson/ Principal will prepare a brief, written statement to include:

- the sympathy of the school community for the affected/ bereaved family
- positive information or comments about the deceased/ injured person/s
- the facts of the incident
- what has been done
- what is going to be done

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The school has a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will strive to be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. Our staff members will bear this in mind, and will endeavour to ensure that pupils do so also. For example, the term “suicide” will not be used without the consent of the family or until it has been established categorically that the person’s death was a result of suicide. The phrases “tragic death” or “sudden death” may be used instead.

Critical Incident Room

In the event of a critical incident, Room 3 or Room 14 will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors.

Development and communication of this policy and plan

All staff were consulted and their views sought in the drafting of this policy. Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments. Our school’s final policy and procedures have been presented to all staff.

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

All new staff members will have access to the policy through the School Plan.

This policy was revised by the Board of Management during June - November 2015.

Signed by

Chairperson

