



St. Mary's Road
Buncrana,
Co. Donegal

St. Mura's National School

Tel. No. 074 9362309

Roll No.16854V

e-mail stmurasbuncrana@gmail.com

Critical Incident Policy

Introduction:

This policy was formulated by the staff of St. Mura's N.S. in conjunction with best practice as outlined in *Responding to Critical Incidents-Guidelines for Schools* and *Responding to Critical Incidents-Resource materials for schools*. (NEPS 2008)

Rationale:

We at St. Mura's N.S. decided to formulate this policy to help us to respond to a critical incident.

Vision Statement:

Every effort will be made by all members of staff to ensure an effective response to all crisis situations. We will have effective emergency plans in place before a critical incident occurs.

Aim:

The aim of this Critical Incidents Policy is to ensure that the school and staff react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident and enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to pupils and staff. Having a good plan should also ensure that the effects on the pupils and staff will be limited. It should enable us to return to normality as soon as possible.

Definition & examples of Critical Incidents are:

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school.

Types of incidents might include the following:

- The 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 pupil(s) or intrusion into the school.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community.
- Parental separation.

Critical Incident Management Team:

- Board of Management Chairperson
Canon Judi McGaffin
- Principal David Barnes



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- -
 -
- Post Holder Kelly Gallagher
Secretary Monica McEleney
The Board of Management as a whole

Procedures to be followed in the event of critical incidents:

Short term actions:

1. The Principal should be contacted first.(If not available, the post holder)
 2. The Principal (Team Leader – See Appendix 1) will gather accurate information about the incident
 3. Contact appropriate agencies:
 - Emergency services
 - Medical services
 - Health Board Psychology
 - Departments/Community Care Services
 - NEPS
 - BOM
 - DES/School Inspector
 4. The Principal will convene a meeting with Critical Incident Management Team(CIMT) to discuss possible topics to be covered.
 - Agreeing a statement of the facts for staff, pupils, parents and the media. If possible there should be a written version of this.
 - Delegating responsibilities to the Critical Incident Management Team ie. the post holder is responsible for liaising with staff (Staff liaison)
 - The learning support teacher is responsible for supervision of pupils (Pupil liaison)
 - The principal is responsible for contacting & liaising with external agencies (Community/ Agency liaison)
 - The post holder is responsible for liaising & setting up meetings with parents (Parent liaison)
- The secretary is responsible for up to-date telephone numbers, taking phone calls, sending letters & maintaining records (Administrator)
- Appointing Principal to handle phone enquiries and to deal with the media.



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- Ensuring that a phone line remains open and available for enquiries.
 - Organising the timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important if this is possible).
 - Organising a staff meeting, if appropriate.
 - Organising the supervision of pupils during any staff meetings.
 - Deciding whether an outside professional be invited to the staff meeting.
5. Secretarial staff taking incoming calls will use a statement agreed by the CIMT
6. The Central Information point is the office.
7. Hold Staff Meeting. – All staff should be asked to attend. The areas which should be covered are:
- An account of facts as known.
 - Opportunity for staff members to express their views and feelings.
 - Discussion with the staff about how the facts will be shared with the pupils.
 - Outline of the routine for the day.
 - Information for staff about which outside agencies have been contacted, or are involved, and the supports that will be put in place for both pupils and staff.
 - A procedure for identifying vulnerable pupils.
 - Distribution of relevant handout materials.
8. Organise timetable for the day. **N.B.** As far as possible maintain normal routines.
9. Inform Parents/Guardians of: *Children Directly Involved.*
Parents/guardians should be contacted as soon as possible, and this first contact will need to be handled with great sensitivity.
Agree who should share information with parents and how this should be done.
Make a list of parents/guardians who have been contacted and those who still need to be told to avoid duplication of messages.
Give parents/guardians relevant and factual information.
The staff room will be set aside for distressed pupils to meet their parents/guardians.
Provide support to parents who are on their own when they arrive at the school and these will be accommodated in the office.



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Give telephone numbers for enquiries.

Children Not Directly Involved: The parents of other children will be contacted and will be informed of the incident and of the fact that their child may be upset.

10. Inform the Pupils.
 - Before meeting with pupils to inform them of a critical incident, careful preparation will be undertaken.
 - Consideration will be given to the age of the pupils and the group size.
 - The information will be given to the pupils by a person i.e. teacher, who is known to them and who they can trust.
 - Any outside "expert" may help the "messenger" by providing them with ongoing advice and support as they manage it
 - The nature of the event will clearly have influence on how pupils are informed.

11. Make contact with the bereaved family.

10. Dealing with the media.
Prepare a written statement to include:

- The facts about the incident
- What has been done already
- What is going to be done
- Positive information or comments about the deceased person

11. Organise the reunion of pupils with parents if necessary.

Medium Term Actions: (24-72 hours)

1. Review the events of the first 24 hours.
 - Reconvene key staff/Critical Incident Management Team
 - Briefly check out how each person on this team is coping
 - Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/pupils/ staff.
 - Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers re vulnerable pupils
 - Have review staff meeting with all staff if necessary. Ensure all staff are kept up to date on any developments.



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- on a personal and professional level.
- pupils.
-
- 2. groups of pupils and parents, if necessary.
 - staffroom
 - Hold support/information meeting for parents/pupils in order to clarify what has happened.
 - Offer advice and reassurance. Inform them about support services and provide relevant handouts.
 - Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out.
 - Arrange, in consultation with the outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings **with** parental permission.
- 3. Plan for the reintegration of pupils and staff. (e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relatives etc.)
- 4. Plan visits to injured.
- 5. Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service.
- 6. Organise attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service.
- 7. Make decisions with regard to school closure.

Longer Term Action:

- 1. Monitor pupils for signs of continuing distress. (Class teachers)

If, over a prolonged period of time, a pupil continues to display the following, he/she may need assistance from the HSE:

- Uncharacteristic behaviour
- Deterioration in academic performance
- Physical symptoms – e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of concentration, tiredness, restlessness



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- Inappropriate emotional reactions
 - Increased absenteeism
- (Liaise with agencies regarding referrals)
2. Plan for return of bereaved pupil/s
 3. Evaluate response to incident and amend the Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately.
 4. Anticipate events/ anniversaries/reminders that may be difficult or upsetting in the future and plan to support staff and pupils.

Parental contact numbers and staff contact numbers are made out as a database.

This Policy will be reviewed regularly.

Ratification

The Policy was adopted by the BOM on _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson

(a)

Review

Reviewed: _____

Reviewed: _____

Reviewed: _____

Reviewed: _____

Reviewed: _____

Reviewed _____

Reviewed: _____



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Reviewed: _____

Reviewed: _____

Reviewed: _____

Reviewed: _____

Summary Checklist for Principals

1. Gather the facts – Who? What? When? And Where?
2. Contact appropriate agencies
3. Convene the Critical Incident Management Team
4. Organise for the supervision of pupils
5. Inform staff
6. Agree on a statement of the facts



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7. Identify high risk pupils
8. Appoint someone to deal with phone enquiries
9. Organise timetable for the day

MAINTAIN THE NORMAL SCHOOL ROUTINE WHEN AT ALL POSSIBLE

10. Inform parents/guardians
11. Inform pupils
12. Make contact with the bereaved family
13. Organise support
14. Respond to the media

Emergency Contact List

Inform key people and seek support as appropriate:

Key Contacts	Contact Details	Done
Chairperson (BOM) Canon Judi McGaffin	00447834561433	



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Emergency Services	999 112	
Garda Station	Buncrana 074 9320540 Letterkenny 0749167100 Burnfoot 074 9368194	
Health/Centre Doctor Doctor Now Doc	074 9361044 074 9363611 1850 400911	
Letterkenny General Hospital	0749125888	
Clergy Canon Judi McGaffin Parish Office	00447834561433 074 9361253	
NEPS Administration (Rose O'Brien) NEPS Psychologists	01 8892790 0749121421 (Deirdre Mc Hugh) 071 9141322 (Neps Sligo) 01 8892700 (Neps Dublin)	
Ambulance	999	
Fire Service / Brigade	999	
IPPN	0214524925 1890212223	
INTO Dublin	01-8047700	
INTO Donegal Gerry McGeehan	086 8512716	
Highland Radio Radio na Gaeltachta	0749125000	
National Educational Welfare Board	01 8738700	
HSE Offices	Buncrana 074 9320420 Donegal town 074 9723540 Letterkenny 074 9123672 074 9123770	



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HELPLINES:

Barnardos	01-4530355
Samaritans	1850-609090
Irish Society for the prevention of cruelty to children	01-6767960/01-6794944
Rainbow Counselling Ireland	01-4734175
Childline	1800-666666
Parentline	1890-927277
Aware	01-6766166 1890 303302
National Suicide Bereavement Support Network	024-95561
The Bereavement Counselling Service – Dublin	01-8391766
Bereavement Counselling Service	01-6767727

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~nsbsn>

Irish website for people bereaved by suicide, lists support groups.



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Staff members on Critical Incident Management Team:

Name	Mobile
Canon Judi McGaffin	00447834561433
David Barnes	083 0987165
Kelly Gallagher	087 6224261
Louise McGlynn	086 3489331
Monica McEleney	086 2686609

REFLECTION

(To be completed 6 weeks after the event)

Details of key lessons learned through management of this event.