 **Critical Incident Plan**

**Crosserlough National School**

**What is a critical incident?**

A critical incident is ''any incident which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school'' (NEPS).

**What is a critical incident management team?**

''It is a group of individuals from the staff of a school who know the community, the children and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs'' (School Crisis Response Teams: Lessening the Aftermath – Mary Schoenfeldt).

**Role of the Team**

The team is divided into separate roles.

Critical Incidents Management Team:

Leadership Role: Teresa Galligan (Principal)

Communication Role: Siobhan Clarke (Deputy Principal)

Student Liaison/ Counselling \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chaplaincy Role: Rev. Fr Peter Mc Kiernan

Family Liaison Role: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parents Association Rep: Chairperson

B.O.M. Rep: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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.

Overall team leader:  Teresa Galligan

Team Leaders: Siobhan Clarke, Noreen Doherty

Student liaison:

Parent liaison: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ BOM Chairperson & Parent Representative from BOM \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Media liaison: Teresa Galligan & Siobhan Clarke

Social media:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Administrator and Garda Liaison: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Description of the Roles**

**Team Leaders: Teresa Galligan, Siobhan Clarke, Noreen Doherty.**

* Overall decision makers.
* Alerts teams members and staff of a crisis (see contact tree)
* Organises the initial meeting and briefs school community on ten point plan or routine for the day.
* Will have the outline routine for the day and make this available to staff.
* Coordinates the tasks for the team
* Keeps in touch with all team members and staff throughout the reaction period
* Communicates with the Board of Management, the Department of Education and NEPS.
* Liaises with affected families.

**Staff Liaison: Noreen Doherty**

* Coordinates subsequent meetings for staff if necessary.
* Advises staff on procedures for identifying vulnerable children (see page \_\_\_\_\_)
* Provides information and materials for staff (To ensure everyone gets a Ready to Go Pack).
* Keeps staff updated on new information.
* Is alert to vulnerable teachers and makes contact with them individually.

**Student Liaison:**

* Alerts staff of potentially vulnerable children.
* Coordinates information from staff or parents about children that they are concerned about.
* Support and monitor the children throughout the reaction period and beyond.
* Be sensitive of significant days e.g. birthdays, Mother's Day, Christmas, etc and remind the child(ren)'s teachers and/or staff liaison of such.
* Provide materials and see Ready to Go Pack for children.
* Facilitate the withdrawal of affected children to quiet room (Multi-Sensory Room) and ensures that they are supervised appropriately.

**Parent Liaison: Chairperson BOM, BOM Parent Representatives,**

* Liaises with the parents of the affected children along with the team leaders.
* Provides a support for parents by organising a parent's meeting and distributing Ready to Go packs for parents after the staff meeting has been held.
* Sets up a room and meets with individual parents and records who has been seen.
* Manages consent issues e.g. in having a counsellor or psychologist in the school.

**Media Liaison: Principal (Teresa Galligan), Siobhan CLarke**

* Advises parents, children and the staff that only the designated person will communicate with the media.
* Allow limited and controlled access of the media.
* Prepare a press statement which is accurate, brief and carefully considered. Contact can be made with NEPS Psychologists to support the construction of such a statement or to re-draft the statement if necessary. Regard everything as recorded and quotable. Nothing is ''off the record''.
* Protect and respect the privacy of the people most affected.
* In major incidences, seek advice from the Department of Education press office, Teacher Unions and NEPS.

**Administrator and Garda Liaison: Noreen Doherty, Brid Mc Evoy,**

* Maintaining an up to date list of contact telephone numbers.
* Compiling emergency information for school trips.
* Prepare templates, letters and press releases.
* Preparing packs of key documents (Ready to Go Packs for children, parents and staff).
* Administration in the course of an incident e.g. phone line, specific rooms, place and person who will log calls and events, arrangement for dealing with normal school business, ensure that the plan is accessible and available.

**Social media:**

* Monitor social media activity after the incident
* Notify domains if comments and or pictures are to be removed
* Advise on appropriate social media use

**Contact Tree:**

This is the order of school individuals who are to be contacted if a critical incident were to arise. However, if one of the team members is directly involved or affected by the incident, move onto the next team member or the relevant substitutes if necessary.

1. Principal and Chairperson of BOM
2. Team Leaders
3. Team Leaders to contact all staff
4. Staff Liaison
5. Student Liaison
6. Parents (if applicable)

**Colour Code Key of Incidents**

Green: Moderate (does not involve death but could be but not restricted to a school fire, large scale damage to the school building, large scale community alert/ could involved death of a person associated with the school but not directly involved with the school on a daily basis)

Red: Severe (involves death or severe damage to the school building which would enable school not to take place i.e fire)

**Action Plan**

**Short Term Plan Day One Actions Plan Checklist:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Gather accurate information about the incident. |  |
| 1. Decide on what type of response is needed. |
|  Assess whether a NEPS Psychologist should be involved from the beginning. |
|  Decide on what action is required: define the incident as Code Red or Code Green. |
|  Convene a meeting for the Critical Incident Team and key staff- clearly specify time and place. |
| **Critical Incident Team Meeting/Staff** |  |
| 1. *Decide which phone line will be kept open and who will man the phone.* |
|  *Decide the procedures for the day.* |
|  *Agree on the rooms to be used for the different requirements: quiet room, parents room, 4* |
|   *grouping and supervision of children, room for staff to meet, room for the psychologist, location for media liaison.* |
|  *Decide on how to break the news the relatives and close friends and who will do this (team leader, principal and parent representative).* |
|  *Decide how to break the news to children: in class groups as opposed as whole school.* |
|  *Identify potentially vulnerable members of staff.* |
|  *Reiterate our procedure for identifying vulnerable children.* |
|  *Decide which issues may need parental consent.* |
|  *Distribute task checklist for each team member.* |
| 1. Contact external agencies e.g. NEPS |  |
| 1. Arrange supervision for students. |
|  Hold staff meeting. |
|  Compile a list of vulnerable children. |
|  Inform students if appropriate. Vulnerable children to be informed separately. |
|  Contact/visit the affected family. |
|  Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media. |
|  Inform parents. |
|  Hold end of day staff briefing. |
| 1. Decide on possible school closures e.g. for funeral. 2. Update staff on developments or any new information. 3. Decide on a plan going forwards. |

**Medium Term Plan (up to 72 hours after the incident).**

* Critical Incident Team to meet daily until normal routine resumes.
* Meet external agencies and staff again.
* Arrange support for students, staff, parents.
* Visit the affected families.
* Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements if necessary.
* Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service.
* Highlight what needs to be organised or followed up on.
* Schedule for the days following the incident.
* Review vulnerable children and staff and decide on how they will be monitored long term.
* Prepare for the return of the children directly involved.

**Long Term Plan**

* Monitor children
* memorials and returning belongings to family
* uphold anniversaries, significant dates related to the incident
* evaluate the response and amend the plan
* inform new staff members

**Dealing with the media**

**Teresa Galligan & Siobhan Clarke will be responsible for dealing with the media. This could include a written statement, interview or verbal statement. No comments will be made until the school community has been alerted and immediate needs dealt with. This includes comments made through social media, email, text and telephone mediums.**

**#Communication**

*Draft Letter – please refer to the Critical Incident guidelines as per NEPS.*

*Draft Text Message*

A code \_\_\_\_\_ critical incident has occurred. <Some detail of  incident>. All staff to meet in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Please contact Teresa or Siobhan for more information.

**Procedures for identifying Vulnerable Children and Adults**

**Which children could be vulnerable? (student liaison is responsible for gathering this information)**

* Close friends or relatives of those involved.
* Children and adults who have been through this incident or similar before.
* Children and adults who may have experienced a recent traumatic event or significant change in their lives.
* Children and adults experiencing serious difficulties within their homes.
* Children and adults with a history of mental health difficulties.
* Children and adults with a history of substance abuse.
* Non-communicative children and adults who have trouble talking about their feelings e.g. children with ASD, ESL, etc.
* Less able children.

**Team Leaders 10 Point List of what to do**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Complete** |
| 1. Contact Team , staff  and NEPS  (see contact tree page ). |  |  |
| 1. Gather the information and assess the situation based on the information that we have including the people that are directly affected by the incident. |  |  |
| 1. Critical incident team meeting (brief) and review roles and responsibilities for the day. |  |  |
| 1. Meet with all available staff at school, allocate jobs(if applicable) and decide on possible school closures (early closure today and possible future closures). |  |  |
| 1. Decide what information is going to be released to parents and students.(media information may be slightly different as appropriate) |  |  |
| 1. Set up an area for parent/students directly involved |  |  |
| 1. Have a staff member present enforcing the closed door policy (with the exception of the people directly involved). |  |  |
| 1. Classes remain in their classes with their class teacher as appropriate until decided otherwise. Classes may continue as normal or resource packs for each class can be utilised. |  |  |
| 1. Set up an area for children/ adults who may need to leave class |  |  |
| 1. Monitor all individuals within the school, meet every half an hour  – every hour as applicable |  |  |

**General information**

1. **Plan for parents coming into school; closed door policy – how we are going to do this?**

Staff member at the school door reassuring people but not admitting people unless they are directly involved in the incident. If a parent wants to bring a child home then that child is brought to the door by a member of staff.

Parents/relatives who are directly involved/ closely affected will gather in the support/resource room. Parents / relatives who are not considered the above will have to refrain from entering until further notice is given. These parents/ on lookers / media representatives will be briefed by a staff member at the door.

Parents who are collecting children from school throughout the day must bring the children home immediately . These children will be brought to the door to the parents in this eventuality . These parents and children will be asked to leave the school grounds.

1. **Plan for supervision of classes for Critical Incident Team  and staff members affected**

Classes may need to be pooled together. Class directly affected will not be mixed with another class and will be given priority. Classes may also be supervised by additional free staff and BOM members.

1. **Centres:**

CIT team and Staff will meet in staff room.

Centres for Class groups will be decided on day depending on incident.

Parents will meet in School Hall – a representative from Parent Council will be on hand to relay information etc. (Chairperson of Parent’s Association)

**Team Members Duties / Roles Checklist**

**Staff Liaison Siobhan Clarke, Noreen Doherty and Principal(Teresa Galligan)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Coordinates subsequent meetings for staff if necessary. 2. Advises staff on procedures for identifying vulnerable children. 3. Provides information and materials for staff (To ensure everyone gets a Ready    to Go Pack). 4. Keeps staff updated on new information. 5. Is alert to vulnerable teachers and makes contact with them individually | **Complete** |

**Student Liaison Moyra Mc Goohan & Fiona O Reilly**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Alerts staff of potentially vulnerable children. 2. Coordinates information from staff or parents about children that they are concerned about. 3. Support and monitor the children throughout the reaction period and beyond. 4. Be sensitive of significant days e.g. birthdays, Mother's Day, Christmas, etc and remind the child(ren)'s teachers and/or staff liaison of such. 5. Provide materials and see Ready to Go Pack for children. 6. Facilitate the withdrawal of affected children to quiet room (Multi-Sensory Room) and ensures that they are supervised appropriately. | **Complete** |

**Parent Liaison Chairperson BOM & BOM Parent Representatives**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Liaises with the parents of the affected children along with the team leaders. 2. Provides a support for parents by organising a parent's meeting and distributing Ready to Go packs for parents after the staff meeting has been held. 3. Sets up a room and meets with individual parents and records who has been seen. 4. Manages consent issues e.g. in having a counsellor or psychologist in the school. | **Complete** |

**Media Liaison: Teresa Galligan & Siobhan Clarke**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Advises parents, children and the staff that only the designated person will communicate with the media. 2. Allow limited and controlled access of the media. 3. Prepare a press statement which is accurate, brief and carefully considered. Contact can be made with NEPS Psychologists to support the construction of such a statement or to re-draft the statement if necessary. Regard everything as recorded and quotable. Nothing is ''off the record''. 4. Protect and respect the privacy of the people most affected. 5. In major incidences, seek advice from the Department of Education press office, Teacher Unions and NEPS. | **Complete** |

**Administrator / Garda Liaison: Siobhan Clarke & Noreen Doherty**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Maintaining an up to date list of contact telephone numbers. 2. Compiling emergency information for school trips. 3. Prepare templates, letters and press releases. 4. Preparing packs of key documents (Ready to Go Packs for children, parents and staff). 5. Administration in the course of an incident e.g. phone line, specific rooms, place and person who will log calls and events, arrangement for dealing with normal school business, ensure that the plan is accessible and available. | **Complete** |

**Social Media:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Monitor all platforms 2. Advise on any appropriate social media use 3. Notify any inappropriate use | **Complete** |

**Additional Areas to develop in the future:**

Chairperson Role

Emergency folders in office: staff, children and parents

Prototype timetable

Gather information about support and service available to school.

Resources for the packs: classroom resources, phone numbers, back-up plan

Digitalise packs and hard copy to be given to each critical incident team member.

Responding to different critical incidents:

1. Procedures to follow when responding to major road accidents:

* An Interagency response
* Communication
* Managing information
* Paying respects
* Funeral arrangements
* Media and social media

In the event of a major road traffic accidents possible a number of students or members of the staff, its important to consider the following response:

Meetings involving key personnel from schools and other agencies.

Additional communication needs to be put in place in order to coordinate actions

If students or members of the school community are badly injured or on critical lists it can add to a sense of crisis.

Some students may need more support before, during and after viewing the remains, particularly when its their first experience of death.

Decide how the school will be represented at the funeral- does the school remain open, what students attend, what staff attend etc

Hold a parent information meeting involving NEPS and share supports with parents.

2. Procedures to follow when responding to violent deaths.

* A meeting with staff involving NEPS should take place before providing information to the wider community. It is important to reassure students that these events do not happen often. It is important that clear, accurate and age appropriate information about what happened should be provided to the school community.
* Parent information meeting involving NEPS should be arranged so parents are informed about available services, how they work and how to access support for their children.

To do list:

Review Policy with the staff, parents association and BOM

Review how we promote student and staff well-being

Communicate information about critical incident planning to all school staff

Consider staff training and other staff supports

Assign roles and responsibilities

Review contact information and develop critical incidents resource banks

Download the resources at the end of the course and circulate to colleagues (p 57 -94)

Review self care check list for all school staff

Review the additional resources- download the pdf to computer for future reference and forward link to pdf to in-school management team

Get the secretary to print student resource pack, staff resource pack and keep a copy in the staff room with the policy.

This plan was drafted in consultation with staff, Board members and guided by templates provided by NEPS. It is a working document. The plan will be revisited at the beginning of a new school year.

The plan was ratified by the Board of Management on the 28th of February 2023.

Signed: *Rev.Fr Peter McKiernan* Signed : *Teresa Galligan*

Chairperson of the Board of Management Principal

This plan was reviewed on the 6th of December 2023 by the newly formed BOM.

Signed \_Mr Éamon McDonald Signed Teresa Galligan

(Chairperson of the Board of Management ) ( Principal )

Date: 6th December 2023 Date: 6th December 2023