

**St. Ailbe's School Policy**

**On**

**Responding to Critical Incidents**

## **Introduction**

Hopefully we here in St. Ailbe's School will never experience a major crisis. However, we must be realistic and accept that at some time or other we, like most schools will have experience of traumatic situations such as the sudden death of a student or teacher due to an accident or illness. The key to managing a critical incident is planning. Research indicates that schools that have developed a Critical Incident Management Plan report being able to cope more effectively in the aftermath of an incident. Having a plan will enable us to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. It may also ensure that normality returns as soon as possible and that the effects on the school community are limited.

## **School Ethos**

Through our mission statement we endeavour to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in our school. This is currently addressed via a number of different avenues:

- Inclusion of SPHE programme in the curriculum
- A physically safe school – Health and Safety Policy
- A psychologically safe school – Anti-Bullying Policy
- Pastoral Care Structures
- Established links with external agencies and referral procedures.

## **Defining a Critical Incident**

In general 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. Examples of critical incidents could include:

- 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 student(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.

## **Creation of a Critical Incident Management Team**

Central to a successful school policy on the management of critical incidents is the creation of a *Critical Incident Management Team* (CIMT). The personnel will be drawn from the school staff. The team will identify the key tasks that may arise in the aftermath of a critical incident and who will be responsible for the different tasks. This team will meet annually to update and review the plan. Should the school experience a critical incident the CIMT will meet in its aftermath to evaluate and revise the plan as necessary.

The following members of staff are presently (2007) on this CIMT.

Mr.P. O'Callaghan, Mr. J. Blackburn, Mr. J Kelly, Mr M Quirke, Mr D. Cullen, Mr N Clancy, Mrs M. Ryan, Mrs B. Collins, Ms A Hayes, Mrs B. Ryan, Mrs M. Quinlan and Mrs V. Hogan.

## **Critical Incident Management Plan**

The Critical Incident Management Team will be responsible for devising the Critical Incident Management Plan. It will also take primary responsibility for its implementation in the event of a critical incident.

Key administrative tasks could include:

1. Maintaining an up-to-date list of contact numbers
2. Compiling emergency information for school trips
3. Identification of roles to be fulfilled at the time of a critical incident
4. External liaison with outside support agencies, parents, distressed visitors and the media.
5. Internal care and communication with staff, students in general and students more immediately involved or affected.
6. Maintaining administration and services.

(Best practice indicates that it is advisable to maintain the normal routine as far as possible for classes not immediately affected by the incident.)

The Critical Incident Management Team will devise procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident. These will cover short term (first day), medium term (24 to 72 hours) and longer term actions.

## **Development and Communication of St. Ailbe's Critical Incident Management Plan.**

- Submissions and suggestions in regard to the Critical Incident Management Plan are invited from all members of staff.
- On completion of the Critical Incident Management Plan it will be instantly accessible to the personnel who will have the key roles in its implementation.
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of and made familiar with its content.
- A list of the members of the CIMT will displayed in the office and Staff Room and updated as necessary.

*Point of information: The term 'suicide' should not be used until it has been established categorically that the death in question was as a result of suicide. The terms 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead.*

## Contact List

Contact	Name	Phone No.
<b>Local Gardaí</b>		<b>062 - 51212</b>
<b>Local Hospital</b>	<b>St. Joseph's Clonmel</b>	<b>052 - 77000</b>
<b>G.P.'s</b>	<b>Dr. Browne Dr. Knightly</b>	<b>062 - 51567 062 - 51687</b>
<b>Health Board Services</b>		
<b>Manager of Community Care</b>	<b>Alan Price</b>	<b>052 - 77000</b>
<b>Psychological Services</b>	<b>Maeve Martin</b>	<b>052 - 77911</b>
<b>Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services</b>	<b>Anne-Marie Naughton</b>	<b>052 - 29774</b>
<b>Adult Psychiatric Services</b>	<b>Dr. Crowe, St. Michaels</b>	<b>052 - 77000</b>
<b>Addiction Services</b>	<b>John Casey</b>	<b>052 - 77900</b>
<b>Regional Suicide Resource Officer</b>	<b>Sean McCarthy</b>	<b>051 - 874013</b>
<b>Education Services and School Contacts</b>		
<b>Principal</b>	<b>Mr. Paul O'Callaghan</b>	<b>062 - 51905</b>
<b>National Educational Psychological Services</b>	<b>Evelyn Buckley</b>	<b>052 - 25833</b>
<b>SPHE Support Services</b>	<b>Beatrice Barry- Murphy Ollie Grace</b>	<b>056 - 7761400 054 - 39111</b>
<b>Home School Liaison Officer</b>	<b>Ms. Noreen Ryan</b>	<b>062 - 51905</b>
<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>	<b>Mr. Liam Carroll</b>	<b>062 - 51905</b>
<b>Other Useful Numbers</b>		
<b>Clergy</b>	<b>Fr. Coffey</b>	<b>086 - 2427728</b>
<b>Local Suicide Bereavement Support Group</b>	<b>Ms. Ailish Hayes</b>	<b>062 - 51905</b>
<b>Media Representation</b>	<b>Mr. Paul O'Callaghan</b>	<b>062 - 51905</b>