

# Sligo Grammar School

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## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Following the NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

### 1. Why have a Plan?

Having a plan empowers staff and makes them more independent and self-reliant. It enables staff 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 students and staff are limited. Sligo Grammar School is committed to creating a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the School.

### 2. What is a Critical Incident?

It is an incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school. The range of critical incidents includes:

- 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
- Health issues – e.g. meningitis, Bird / Swine Flu

### THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Michael Hall - Headmaster/Team Leader  
Jimmy Staunton - Deputy Team Leader / Staff Liaison Representative  
Other Team Members: Junior School Coordinator, Senior School Coordinator, Transition Year Coordinator, Matron, Guidance Counsellor, Boarding Housemasters, School Secretary, Front Office Staff.

**The Team Leader may co-opt other staff members depending on the nature of the incident. These may include members of the Guidance Department, the relevant Form Teacher, Office Staff, Bursar, etc.**

### Procedures

#### 1. Gather accurate information:

Who? What? When? and Where? Is there a risk of further injury?

#### 2. Contact appropriate agencies (see attached emergency contact list):

- In case of a death, establish contact with the family
- Emergency Services
- Medical Services
- NEPS
- Health Board
- Board of Management
- PTA
- DES
- Examination and Assessment Manager, State Examinations Commission Branch - if State Examinations are in progress during a critical incident, the SEC must be contacted as soon as possible, preferably before Examinations are interrupted.

### **3. Convene a meeting with the Critical Incident Management Team and/or key staff.**

This initial meeting is to agree short term actions – i.e. Day One and follow-on procedures if time allows.

- In the case of a death organise a home visit by two staff members.
- Produce an agreed statement of the facts for staff, students, parents and the media.
- Delegate responsibilities to the Critical Incident Management Team.
- Keep phone line open and manned if appropriate. The agreed factual statement should be available to the telephonists. Staff appointed to take calls should be given clear guidance on what is appropriate to say.
- Organise the timetable for the day. As far as possible maintain normal routines.
- Arrange staff meeting if appropriate.
- Organise student supervision during any staff meetings.
- Decide if an outside professional is required for staff meeting – e.g. NEPS.
- Identify high-risk students.
- Identify staff who may be vulnerable.
- Arrange when and how students will be informed.
  - (a) students directly involved.
  - (b) students not directly involved.
- If appropriate, provide (a) a suitable area for students to congregate (b) a suitable room for students and parents to meet

#### **Staff Liaison**

***Inform staff as soon as possible to prevent them hearing from other, sometimes inappropriate, sources.***

- (a) Staff Meeting – All staff to attend, including ancillary staff. It may be necessary to do this in two shifts thereby ensuring that staff are available to support students and for cover at all times.
  - Give an account of the facts as known.
  - State what has been done already.
  - Hold discussion with staff and make decision on agreed approach to sharing information with students.
  - Decide what is going to be done.
  - Specify support services which will be provided for students and staff.
  - Devise procedure for identifying vulnerable students
  - Publicise timetable for the day and beyond if possible or necessary.
  - Distribute relevant handouts.
  - Advise staff on dealing with parents and the media.
- (b) Information will be continually updated and displayed in the staffroom.
- (c) Informal briefings will be given during morning break and lunchtime.

## **Student Liaison**

### ***Inform students as soon as possible to prevent their hearing from other, sometimes inappropriate, sources.***

Students will generally be informed in form groups by one or two team members – i.e. Form Teacher, Coordinators, Deputy Principal or Headmaster. It is generally thought that support is best given by adults known to the children.

- Give the facts as known to avoid speculation.
- Say what has been done already.
- Say what is going to be done.
- Identify support services which will be provided for students.
- Specify who to talk to and where to go when they need support.
- Timetable for the day and beyond if available.
- Allow students to ask questions, tell their story and express feelings.
- Distribute relevant handouts (may happen at later meetings).
- Advise students on dealing with the media and one another.

### **Organise the reunion of students with their parents, if necessary.**

- Inform students that their parents/guardians will be collecting them as soon as possible.
- Facilitate distressed students and their parents by providing a private room where they can meet following an incident. This could be a very emotional time.
- Where appropriate, offer help with transport, especially for younger children.

## **Parent Liaison**

### ***Children directly involved***

Parents/guardians should be contacted as soon as possible, and this first contact will need to be handled with great sensitivity. The steps involved are set out below:

- 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 factually accurate information.
- Set a room aside for distressed students to meet their parents/guardians.
- Provide support to parents who are on their own when they arrive at the school.
- Give out telephone numbers for enquiries.

### ***Children not directly involved***

The parents of other children in the school should be informed of the incident and warned that their child may be upset.

Send a letter to parents stating the facts about the incident. It may not be appropriate at this point to disclose the names of those involved.

Give details of the support structures in place to help the children cope with the tragedy. Advise parents on who they may contact at the school if they would like advice or assistance.

### **Organise the reunion of students with their parents, if necessary.**

- Inform students that their parents/guardians will be collecting them as soon as possible.
- Facilitate distressed students and their parents by providing a private room where they can meet following an incident. This could be a very emotional time.
- Where appropriate, offer help with transport, especially for younger children.

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***School Assemblies***

Special School Assemblies will be held in the event of the death of a student or a member of staff.

### ***School Closure in the event of the death of a student or staff member.***

In consultation with the Board of Directors / Management and the Department of Education, the School may be closed as a mark of respect and to facilitate attendance at the funeral service.

### ***Special School Opening***

It may be considered necessary to open the school to allow students, staff members and parents to meet and provide support for one another.

### ***Debriefing***

A debriefing session will take place after any serious incident.

Completed 2009

Policy Reviewed and updated by Board of Management: 21/Jan/2019

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Due for next review: Jan 2021

### Review History

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updated 9/11/2015

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