

Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan

Critical Incident Policy

Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The school has 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 both staff and students during the normal course of the school day and in the event of a critical incident.

Such policies and procedures will include

- Health and Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Guidance Plan
- SPHE / RSE Policy
- School Outings Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace
- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Pastoral Care Structure
- Transition from Primary School procedures
- New Teacher Induction.

All staff are made aware of the school's Health and Safety Policy, Fire Evacuation Procedures and the location of the defibrillator/medications/etc.. Staff will be reminded of these procedures at the initial staff meeting annually and this information provided to new and substitute teachers.

Definition of Critical Incident:

Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan recognises a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school, and disrupts the normal running of the school”.

Critical incidents may involve students, staff, the school or the local community. Examples of a critical incident might be;

- The death of a member of the school community, through sudden death, accident, suicide or terminal illness
- A serious accident or tragedy in the school community
- Serious damage to the school through fire, flooding vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- A physical attack on a staff member or student
- Intrusion into the school.

Aim of Policy:

The aim of the Critical Incident Policy is that in the event of such an incident as outlined above, the policy will help staff and management to react quickly and effectively and to maintain control of the situation.

The plan will also help the school to return to normality as soon as possible and limit the affects of the incident on staff and students

Critical Incident Management Team:

The School has set up a Critical Incident Management Team consisting of the following personnel.

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principals
- The School Secretary
- The School Guidance Counsellor
- Caretaker

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary. The team will meet annually.

The Principal will act as Team Leader or in his absence, a Deputy Principal.

Role of Team Leader:

- The team leader alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting of the team.
- Co-ordinates/delegates tasks to the other team members.
- Liaises with the Board of Management and the Department of Education.
- In case of bereavement, liaises with the bereaved family.

Other areas of responsibilities, which may be delegated by the team Leader to other members of the team would include:

- Contacting Emergency support services.
- Briefing and advising the staff and noting their feelings and concerns.
- Organising the supervision of students in the school – teachers ‘On Call’ at the time of the incident will automatically gather at the Office.
- Keeping staff updated on information/developments /progress.
- Meeting students to brief them on the situation.
- Taking care of “Vulnerable students/vulnerable teachers”.
- Liaising with external agencies for support or referrals.
- Liaising with school organisations such as Parents’ Council and the Students Council.
- Meeting with individual parents or groups of parents.
- Visiting bereaved families or families closely associated with the incident.
- Preparing a Press release and liaising with the media.
- Preparation of Care Room/Quiet Room in the school.

Roles:

The Team Leader will assign the following roles to CIMT to implement the Critical Incident Management Plan:

- Garda Contact
- Staff Contact
- Student Contact
- Parent Contact
- Community/Agency Contact

- Media Contact
- Administrator

Record Keeping:

Written records will be maintained as appropriate for each Critical Incident.

Confidentiality:

The school is conscious of its responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements, in line with standard GDPR procedures.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN
Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan

KEY ROLES ASSIGNED BY TEAM LEADER

NAME OF TEAM MEMBER	TASK
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	
DEPUTY PRINCIPALS	
SECRETARY	
CARETAKER	
GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR	

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

GARDAI KILBEGGAN (057) 9332102

GARDAI ATHLONE (09064) 92609

AMBULANCE 999 / 221

HOSPITAL Tullamore (057) 9321501

HOSPITAL Mullingar (044) 9340221

Fr Corrigan (087) 2618353

FIRE BRIGADE 999

D.E.S. (09064) 42700

N.E.P.S PSYCHOLOGIST 0761 108 587

SUPPORT/ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

SHORT TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED FIRST DAY

TASK NAME	Name
GATHER ACCURATE INFORMATION	
CONTACT APPROPRIATE AGENCIES	
CONVENE A MEETING WITH KEY STAFF	
ARRANGE SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS	
HOLD STAFF MEETING	
ORGANISE TIME TABLE FOR THE DAY	
INFORM PARENTS	
INFORM STUDENTS	
MAKE CONTACT WITH THE BEREAVED FAMILY	
DEALING WITH THE MEDIA	

**MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED.
24 – 72 HOURS**

TASK NAME	
REVIEW THE EVENTS OF THE FIRST 24 HOURS	
PLAN THE RE-INTEGRATION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS	
PLAN VISITS TO INJURED	
LIAISE WITH FAMILY REGARDING FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS ETC.	
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION AT FUNERAL	
SCHOOL CLOSURE	

BEYOND 72 HOURS.

TASK NAME	NAME
MONITOR STUDENTS FOR CONTINUING SIGNS OF STRESS	
EVALUATE RESPONSE TO INCIDENT AND AMEND CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN APPROPRIATELY	
FORMALISE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE	
INFORM NEW STAFF AND STUDENTS	
DECIDE ON APPROPRIATE WAY TO DEAL WITH ANNIVERSARIES	

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parents/Guardians

The school has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our Students/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury

(Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive Remembrances of persons lost)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy.
(Elaborate)

It is possible that your child may have some feelings that he may like to discuss with you. You can help your child by taking time to listen to him and encouraging him/her to express his/her feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to his/her age.

If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at school
(Details)

Principal.

**Sample letter requesting consent for
Involvement of Outside Professionals**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following the recent (tragedy/ death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help.

(X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to the students either in small groups or on a one to one basis, and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate

Your son/ daughter have been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (X). If you would like your son/ daughter to receive this support, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by

If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school.

Principal.

I/We consent to having our son/ daughter meet with

I understand that my son/ daughter may meet x in an individual or group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____.

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____.

Signed: _____

(Parents /Guardians)

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS.

BARNARDOS 01450355

THE SAMARITANS 1850609090

CHILDLINE 1800666666

PARENTLINE 1890927277

AWARE 016766166

1890303302

NATIONAL SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT 02495561

RAINBOWS 014734175

BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING SERVICE 018391766

BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING 016767727

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE 1800 411057

Development and Communication of this Critical Incident Management Policy

This Critical Incident Management Policy was ratified by the Board of Management

Signed: ***Paul Daly***

Signed: ***Garrett Farrell***

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: **12th September 2024**

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