



**Mountrath
Community School**
Pobalscoil Mhaighean Rátha

Critical Incident Management Policy

of

Mountrath Community School

Dysartbeigh, Mountrath, Co Laois

Roll number: 91550B

Policy Created By	Mountrath Community School
Date reviewed/Amended by the school	November 2024
Policy review date	January 2026
Date current version – Ratified by BoM	11th November 2024

Contents

Our Mission Statement:	2
Review and Research	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Definition of ‘critical incident’	3
Aim	3
Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school	3
Physical safety	3
Psychological safety	3
Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)	4
Team leader:	4
Garda liaison	4
Staff liaison	4
Community/agency liaison	5
Parent liaison	5
Media liaison	5
Administrator	5
Record keeping	5
Confidentiality and good name considerations	5
Consultation and communication regarding the plan	6
Emergency Contact List	11
Appendix 1: Sample Media Announcement	12
Appendix 2: Sample Letter to Parents Violent Death	13
Appendix 3: Sample Letter to Parents Sudden Death Accident	14
Appendix 4: Steps for Informing the Class	15

Mountrath Community School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

Our Mission Statement:

Mountrath Community School will endeavour to provide an educational setting and experience within which each person is encouraged to grow academically, spiritually, emotionally, socially and culturally.

Mountrath Community School cherishes each member equally recognising their uniqueness, religious affiliation and cultural difference. Each member of the school community is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity. All members of the school community are encouraged to share in the responsibility of running the school.

Education lies at the centre of our purpose. Mountrath Community School will facilitate a positive learning and teaching environment. A learning environment should embrace the academic and cultural, leading to the development of the person as a whole. Students are expected to give due recognition and importance to their studies whilst striving towards educational excellence relative to their ability.

Curricular and extra-curricular activities help form a mature and well-rounded student.

Discipline in one’s life forms an essential part in the pursuit of excellence.

The Board of Management, through the Principal Kathryn O’Brien, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school’s policies and plans.

Definition of 'critical incident'

The staff and management of Mountrath Community School recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school”. Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include:

- *The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death*
- *An intrusion into the school*
- *An accident involving members of the school community*
- *An accident/tragedy in the wider community*
- *Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*

Aim

The aim of the CIM policy is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical safety

Here at Mountrath Community School we endeavor to provide a safe environment for all. Our Health and Safety policy details the following

- Evacuation plan formulated including regular fire drills
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Supervision in the school yard
- Front doors locked during school hours
- School doors locked during class time

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Mountrath Community School aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of students, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management; resilience; conflict management; problem solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the post primary school student are available
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety

- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies –Gardai, Laois Domestic Abuse, Tusla, SCP etc.
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers. See DES Circulars 0023/2010.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system in place in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2025). These documents are available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or support teacher), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Team leader:

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda liaison

- Liaises with the Gardaí
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared

Staff liaison

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and contacts them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison

- At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students
- Maintains student contact records

- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Council
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent liaison

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc.)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the SEC; relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.

The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of Mountrath Community School *have* a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements.

Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, e.g. the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, *and* that the family involved consents to its use.

The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead.

Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

Staff Room	Main room for meeting staff
Canteen	Meetings with students
Parents meeting room	Meetings with parents
Principal's office	Meetings with media
Prayer room/ Chaplain's office	Individual sessions with students
Parent meeting room	Meetings with other visitors
Board room	CMIT meetings

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

Staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff. Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Deputy Principals. The plan will be updated annually

Role	Name
Team leader:	Principal: Kathryn O'Brien
Garda liaison	Principal: Kathryn O'Brien
Staff liaison	Principal: Kathryn O'Brien Deputy Principal's Monica White/ Denis Boland
Student liaison	Deputy Principal's Monica White/ Denis Boland/ Year Heads/ Guidance Counsellors Ronan Walsh and Maria Kelly & Chaplain Dermot Murphy
Community liaison	Year Head/ Chaplain Dermot Murphy
Parent liaison	Year Head/ Chaplain Dermot Murphy
Media liaison	Principal: Kathryn O'Brien
Administrator	School secretary: Violet Callaghan

Short term actions – Day 1

Task
<p>Accurate information: Clarify whether information is accurate</p>
<p>Who, what, when, where?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate the Principal/Deputy Principals informs the Gardaí, the Critical Incident Management Team and NEPS. Class cover to be provided for Team. The Principal/Deputy Principal informs parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student or next of kin of the staff member. In the case of death this should be done in person by the Principal/Deputy Principals accompanied by the Chaplain/ Gardaí. If other students have seen the incident, students will be kept together and asked not to text or call immediately until the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student or family of the staff member concerned has been informed). Principal/Deputy Principal will inform the Chairperson of Board of Management who informs the board members. The Trustee representatives on the Board of Management will inform the Trustees. The Parents' Association, ACCS and NAPD should also be contacted.
Convene Gather a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly
Contact external agencies
<p>Arrange supervision/ care for students & staff Students or staff may need to leave the school or to be sent home. Students will not be let/sent home on their own to an empty household. Staff who will also be affected by the Critical Incident may also be very upset /traumatised by the whole incident and should not drive themselves home unless they are totally comfortable to do so.</p>
<p>Hold staff meeting: A Staff Meeting will be organised where the Principal will inform Staff, giving information as required and set out a plan for the day. (In the case of a suicide the school must respect the wishes of the family regarding the information communicated).</p>
Agree schedule for the day

Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately).

- Year heads/ SPHE/ RE Teachers inform the students giving the accurate information through a prepared statement and allowing them time to ask questions.
- Special consideration should be given to the friends, class, year group and sports team of the student. These may be informed separately.

Compile a list of vulnerable students

- Space (The Chaplains office or the Prayer Room) for students to come and talk if they wish, be made available. The following staff will be available to assist in the management of the Critical Incident: School Management, School Counsellors, Chaplain, and Year Heads.
- NEPS to be available to assist as required.

Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media

- Deputy Principal or designated person deal with telephone inquiries. A pre-prepared statement will be drafted for dealing with enquiries.
- Principal/Deputy Principals or person designated by the Principal/Deputy Principals only to liaise with the media, respecting the wishes of the parent/guardian.
- The Parent/Guardian Body will be informed of the event via email/letter.
- Official school social media will send messages at the appropriate time (under the direction of the Principal)

Critical Incident involving a member of staff:

- The Principal should be informed. In line with overall health, safety and welfare of students and staff, the Gardaí must be informed. In the case of death, the Principal/Deputy Principals calls the emergency services and the Principal/Deputy Principals will visit the next of kin accompanied by the School Chaplain.
- All staff are informed by the Principal/Deputy Principals or person designated by the Principal/Deputy Principals.
- Class cover provided for those most affected by the news.
- Principal informs the rest of the staff as soon as possible.
- Allow staff time to reflect on the sad news and offer appropriate support.
- Year head/Tutors/ CT to tell the students at an agreed time giving appropriate information.
- Year Head/Chaplain to tell the tutor class first if the teacher is a tutor to the class.
- The rest of the Students are informed by their tutors.

Critical Incident Outside School Hours

The following describes the different scenarios and corresponding actions that need to be taken.

If event happens during a school trip:

- The teacher in charge informs the Principal/Deputy Principals or the Year Heads as soon as possible. The Principal/Deputy Principals or the Year Head informs the Gardaí and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student or next of kin of staff and family of the student or staff.
- Principal/Deputy Principals/Year Head inform the families of the other students as soon as possible on the trip and keeps in contact with them. Information will be available on the copies of the Permission Forms left in the school on the groups departure as per the School Tours Policy. List of students and contact numbers should also be circulated to Principal, Deputy Principals and Year Head.
- Principal/Deputy Principals informs the Critical Incident Management Team and NEPS.
- Where necessary and possible, a member of the team may travel to join the group and assist with the ongoing management of the incident.
- Open up the school.

- All necessary support be provided for the staff, including regular contact by telephone/e-mail/text. Staff will be reminded of the services available from EAS.
- In the case of a death, arrangements will be made to enable students and staff to return home.
- The parent(s) /guardian(s) to be informed by a member of the team of the arrival time of the students back to Mountrath and the venue. In order to avoid media attention a venue other than school may be chosen.
- If there is a death or very serious injury, the Principal/Deputy Principals/Year Head and Chaplain will visit the home of the injured or deceased.

If the event happens at the weekend or during holiday time:

- Person who hears the news informs the Principal - if not available a Deputy Principal or the Year Head.
- The Principal/Deputy Principal verifies the news and information as soon as possible.
- Principal/Deputy Principal informs the Critical Incident Management Team and NEPS. Year Head and Tutor to be informed if possible.
- A text will be sent to all staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) of class members if a student has died.
- If appropriate Principal/Deputy Principal, Chaplain to visit the family (clarify the school's involvement in the funeral etc.).
- Principal or designated person to deal with the media and handle the telephone inquiries in the school.
- School to be opened as a gathering point for the students. If possible, the Critical Incident Team to be present.

In both situations outlined above the staff and students will need to be informed as soon as possible on their return to school. Staff will be informed at the beginning of the school day. The Class Teacher (if comfortable to do so) will go to the base classes informing them of the events giving appropriate information.

Steps to be taken if you receive the news outside school time when the Principal/Deputy Principals are not contactable:

- An Assistant Principal or a member of the Care Team will clarify and confirm the news and get as much information as possible.
- Contact the members of the school Critical Incident Management Team.

Agree on the follow actions:

- Who will contact the family of the student/teacher directly involved in the critical incident. In some circumstances it may be necessary to visit the family.
- In the case of an incident involving students on a school trip a person needs to collect the contact information from the school and contact the rest of the families.
- If necessary, the Critical Incident team and Assistant Principal if available may open the school.
- In the case of a tragic accident/death a designated member of the team will deal with telephone/email inquiries.
- A designated person who will deal with the media.
- In the case of a death, the Chaplain will check with the family regarding the school's involvement in the funeral.
- A designated person to inform all staff.
- The Principal/Deputy Principals take over management of the incident on their return.
- The Principal/Deputy Principals will inform the Board of Management and convene an emergency board meeting as soon as possible.
- The Principal/Deputy Principals will ensure the appropriate reports and school records are written by those involved in the critical incident. If the incident happened in school or on a school activity the member of staff with responsibility for the trip and those both staff and students who witness or were

involved in the event write up a detailed report as soon as possible.

Procedures for the end of the school day:

- The Critical Incident Team gather to review the day and plan for the next day.
- Identify those in the school who will need extra support in the coming days.
- In the case of death by suicide, where there is concern for the welfare of a student, an agreed member of the Critical Incident Management Team will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Hold end of day staff briefing

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies if necessary	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	
Visit the injured	
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Chaplain & Principal
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service Procedures in the event of a Funeral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chaplain will liaise with the family regarding the funeral arrangements and the school's involvement. The wishes of the family will be respected at all times. • Floral tributes should be sent from the school, unless there are family wishes to the contrary. • At the time of the funeral those members of the student's class and year group, accompanied by parent(s)/guardian(s), who wish to attend, should be allowed to attend. • In the case of a funeral of a member of staff the school will close. 	
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the following days after the event, the Critical Incident Management Team will meet as required to identify high risk students and if there are any students who will need ongoing counselling. The Guidance Counsellors (in consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Head and Chaplain) will arrange this. 	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Principal/ CIMT
Plan for return of bereaved student(s) belongings: In the event of a death, it is important all belongings are returned to the family. This must be done in a timely and sensitive manner. A "Memory Box" may be used for this purpose.	Year Head/ Chaplain
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	

<p>Decide on memorials and anniversaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be no permanent monuments erected. If the students have set up a tribute area (e.g., at the locker), this should be removed with the students in a timely, sensitive manner also. 	BOM/Staff, parents and students
<p>Review response to incident and amend plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may also be necessary to amend and update school records and liaise with the DES/SEC. The anniversary date will be noted to ensure it is remembered each year. 	Staff/BOM

Emergency Contact List

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	Portlaoise Garda Station: Portlaoise. Call: (057) 8674100
Hospital	Portlaoise Hospital: (057) 862 1364
Tusla: Child and Family Centre	Annette Maguire Child and Family Agency, Midlands, Primary Care Centre, Harbour Road, Mullingar Westmeath. Tel 044-9353999 childfamily.midlands@tusla.ie
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Laois CAMHS, St Fintan's Campus, Dublin Rd, Beladd, Portlaoise, Co. Laois, R32 YFW6 Phone: (057) 869 6152
School Inspector	
NEPS Psychologist	NEPS Region 1- Offaly/Laois NEPS, Grattan House, Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois, R32 RY6V Tel: (01) 8650887
Employee Assistance Service (EAS): Free & Confidential: Available 24/7 for teachers and immediate family (partner, cohabiting adult children). Services: Short-term counseling (health, stress, relationships, trauma, bereavement, addiction), online CBT, wellbeing portal/app (podcasts, blogs), webinars/seminars.	Contact: Freephone 1800 411 057 SMS "Hi" to 087 145 2056 WhatsApp 087 369 0010.

Appendix 1: Sample Media Announcement

This can be used as a template by schools to be emailed, posted on the school social media site or given to the media.

It may help to decrease the number of media calls and callers to the school.

In some instances, it is not appropriate to provide names or information that might identify individuals.

This announcement will need to be changed based upon confidentiality issues, the wishes of the victim's family and the nature of the incident.

My name is (*EDIT*Name) and I am the Principal of (*EDIT*Name) School. We learned this morning of the death of (*EDIT*one of our students or Name of student). This is a terrible tragedy for the (*EDIT* Family Name) family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with the (*EDIT* Family Name) family and friends.

(*EDIT*Name) was a (*EDIT* e.g. 5th year boy) and will be greatly missed by all who knew him/her.

We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school have implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and (*EDIT*insert other information if relevant) have been with us all day supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time.

The teachers have been helping students to deal with the tragic event.

The school has been open to parents, to support them and to offer them advice and guidance.

We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.

Appendix 2: Sample Letter to Parents Violent Death

Dear Parents

I need to inform you about a very sad event that has happened.

(*EDIT*Give accurate information about the incident, but avoid using the word murder as this will not be established until the court case is completed).

We have shared this information and had discussions with all of our students so that they know what has happened. School staff members have been available for students on an on-going basis today. Other support personnel (*EDIT*including psychologists etc., according to actual arrangements) are available to advise staff. This support will continue to be available to advise staff in their support of students (*EDIT*if appropriate insert how long).

The death of any young person is tragic, but a violent death is even more difficult. It is hard to have to teach our children about the violence in our world and to accept that sometimes we do not have the power to prevent it.

This death may cause a variety of reactions in your child. Some children/young people may be afraid for their own life and for the lives of those they love. Take time to listen to their fears and reassure them that what has happened is rare.

We have enclosed some additional information that may be useful during this time.

The media are in the vicinity of the school and may approach you or your children. You need not respond to their questions if you are approached. We will not allow the media to interview your child at school and our general advice is that you should not let your children be interviewed. They are not mature enough to judge what to say and may say something they will regret later.

Young people frequently turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. At these times it is important that you monitor their use and engage with them about what they read.

We urge you to emphasise and reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive and careful about what they post.

(If planned) A support meeting for parents is planned for (date, time and place). At that time, we can talk further about how to help ourselves and our children.

Our thoughts are with (*EDIT* family name) and with each of you.

Sincerely

Kathryn O'Brien

Principal

Appendix 3: Sample Letter to Parents Sudden Death Accident

Dear Parents

The school has experienced (*EDIT* the sudden death, accidental injury, etc.) of Name of student(s). We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events.

(*EDIT* Brief details of the incident, and in the event of a death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost).

Our thoughts are with (*EDIT* family name).

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

It is possible that your child may have some feelings and questions that he/she may like to discuss with you. It is important to give factual information that is appropriate to their age.

You can help your child by taking time to listen and by encouraging them to express their feelings.

All children are different and will express their feelings in different ways. It is not uncommon for children to have difficulty concentrating or to be fearful, anxious, or irritable. They may become withdrawn, cry, complain of physical aches and pains, have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares.

Some may not want to eat. These are generally short-term reactions. Over the course of the days to come, please keep an eye on your child and allow him/her to express their feelings without criticism.

Although classes will continue as usual, I anticipate that the next few days will be difficult for everyone.

(*EDIT* Optional) An information night for parents is planned for (*EDIT* date, time and place). At that time, further information about how to help children in grief will be given.

We have enclosed some information which you may find useful in helping your child through this difficult time.

Young people frequently turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. At these times it is important that you monitor their use and engage with them about what they read.

We urge you to emphasise and reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive and careful about what they post.

If you would like advice you may contact the following people at the school. (*EDIT* Details).

Principal's signature

Sincerely

Principals Signature

Appendix 4: Steps for Informing the Class

A) Informing a Class:

It is important to check to see if staff feel they can do this task. If staff have experienced a traumatic incident or bereavement recently, they may not be able to do this. Another member of staff should be delegated the responsibility for informing the class group

Procedures for teacher of Class directly affected by the tragedy:

- The teacher may be accompanied by the Counsellor, Senior Management, Chaplain or Year Head.
- Be sensitive in preparing the students to receive the news.
- Make sure everyone is listening.
- Use words like "I am afraid I have some bad/sad news to tell you". Allow a few seconds for this to sink in.
- Tell the news as best and accurately as you can
- Allow a few minutes and then if okay to continue giving a little more information.
- Allow time for members of the class to cry, chat, ask questions etc.
- Explain how such bad news can affect people differently, perhaps reminding them of someone they know who is very sick or has died, or they may be very upset for the student involved or her friends etc.
- Tell the students there are people available Counsellors/Chaplain, NEPS etc., if they need to chat and tell them they can go to the Prayer Room (Tell students they can phone home if they need to - keep records and advise parent(s)/guardian(s) of student release.)
- Lead a prayer for the person.
- Tell the class funeral arrangements if known.
- Students will be directed to co-operate with school policy and not to talk to the media or post comments on any social network sites.

Telling other class groups:

- Follow the above guidelines but give information about the student involved, e.g., year/class group.
- Remember that a student's friend may not always be in the base class and thus be prepared for students' reaction in other classes.
- If possible, continue the class as normal.

Informing the students if a member of staff is involved in the critical incident:

Follow the guidelines above.

- The students will not be as affected in the same way as if it were one of their peers.
- Remind students to be considerate of the staff at this time as they are concerned or have lost a colleague.
- If possible, continue the class.

It is important for Teachers, when informing students, to stick to the facts, give simple precise answers and allow collective discussions on emotions and grief if necessary.