



Critical Incidents Policy

St. Oliver Plunkett's Primary School, Ballyhegan.



NAME:	ROLE:
Mr. Seamus Galvin	Principal
Mr. Micheal Lee	Chair of Board of Governors

Date Ratified:	08/10/2024
Date of Review:	October 2027 (Or in response to CI)

Critical Incidents Policy

The aim of this policy is to lessen the effect of a critical incident on the staff, students and parents at St. Oliver Plunkett's Primary School. It is anticipated that by adopting the procedures outlined in this policy it will be possible to provide a more secure environment for everyone associated with the School.

What is a critical incident?

A critical incident is one which arises suddenly. Critical incidents may occur in school or out of school, but both types will have a major impact on staff and students. An incident might be designated as critical where the result is likely to be serious disruption to the running of the School, or where there is likely to be significant public and/or media attention on the School.

There can, of course, be no rigid formula for responding to incidents, but broadly speaking, it has been assumed that where damage to premises is the focus, The Education Authority (EA) South Eastern Region and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) will take the leading role in managing the crisis in collaboration with the school and other agencies. Where the crisis is related to people, such as in the event of a death or serious injury, the assumption is that the School is likely to take the lead, with the support of the EA, as necessary.

Examples of in-school critical incidents

- A serious accident to a child or adult
- The death of a student or member of staff through natural causes, such as an illness
- A traffic accident involving a student or staff member
- Violence or assault within school
- A school fire or explosion
- Destruction of part of the school building
- Abduction of a student
- A student or students absconding
- An illness such as meningitis within the school or the local community

Examples of out-of-school critical incidents

- An accident to a student or staff while out of school on a visit or swimming etc.
- Death or injuries on a school journey
- Tragedies involving children from many schools
- Civil disturbances

Support Agencies and Personnel

A list of significant contacts and telephone numbers is available from EA.

Practice within school

Individual class teachers have an important role to play in managing critical incidents and may well be the best people to deal with the students in their classes. The main role of specialist agencies is one of support, empowerment and to support students who cannot be helped by the teachers within the School alone. In times of crises, teachers must react as they feel is appropriate and there can be no easy formula for dealing with critical incidents but by ensuring good communication within School a crisis may be managed more effectively.

By outlining the appropriate actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident, the School aims to reduce the effect.

Critical Incidents Team

A central component of this policy is the identification of the composition, roles and responsibilities of the Critical Incidents Team.

The role of the team is to review and direct the handling of the incident and the response and recovery process in order to:

- ensure the safety and security of students, staff, other users of the premises and visitors;
- minimize the loss to the School in physical, human and financial terms;
- manage an incident to minimize disruption to regular operations;
- liaise with appropriate agencies, including the Media.

The Critical Incidents Team will comprise of the following personnel:

- **Principal:** Mr. Seamus Galvin
- **Chair of Governors:** Mr. Michael Lee
- **Vice- Principal:** Mr George Cullen
- **The School's Designated Teacher (DT):** Mrs Siúrdon Fearon

School Secretary: Mrs Kathy McCann

The Critical Incidents Team will, dependent upon the nature of the incident itself, be concerned with any of the following issues:

- adequate assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action;
- analysis of requirements to address these hazards; establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services; development of an effective management plan;

- dissemination of planned procedures;
- organisation of practice drills to test the plan;
- regular review of this plan;
- assisting the Principal with all aspects of the implementation of the plan;
- arranging staff development activities, where necessary.

Procedures during an incident

1. The Principal, Vice-Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection, must be informed of any critical incident as soon as possible.
2. As soon as an incident is confirmed, the Critical Incidents Team will meet to decide strategies.
3. The rest of the staff will be informed as soon as possible, preferably at a specially convened staff meeting.
4. All staff should share the same information.
5. Students will be told information simply and sensitively, without fabrication, preferably in smaller group situations.
6. The School will try, as far as possible, to keep to the normal routine.

Action Plan

Major incidents require the following procedures: -

1. Set up a communication network.
2. Convene the Critical Incidents Team.
3. Inform immediately the appropriate Officers in CCMS and EA.
4. Collect, record and convey as much accurate information as possible.
5. Identify two telephonists to staff:
 - a) school phone for incoming calls
 - b) mobile phone for outgoing information/staff use.
6. Office area to be used for enquiries
7. Use the up-to-date list of students' next of kin (record files) and contact parents of affected children
8. Record all actions
9. **Principal, alone, to act as 'press officer.' This may be deferred to an external CCMS or EA advisor is thought necessary. No other staff members to be interviewed or make statements regarding any ongoing or past incident.**
10. **Refusal of access to press/television on school premises**

Action Plan Timing

Action

Obtain factual information at the start
Senior staff meeting with support personnel
Advise EA and CCMS
Convene the Critical Incidents Team
Contact families
Call a staff meeting to give information
Inform students in small groups
Arrange a debriefing meeting for staff involved
Arrange debriefing for students directly involved
Identify high risk students and staff
Promote discussion in classes
Identify the need for group or individual treatment
Organise counselling
Mark anniversary (discreetly)

Timescale

Within hours
Within hours
Within hours
Within hours
Immediately
Same day if possible
Same day if possible
Same day if possible
Same day if possible
Following day
Following days and weeks
Over days and weeks
As required
Annually

**Critical Incident Management Plan in the event of a crisis in school, during school time
(Main Plan)**

Priority	Task	Responsible
Immediate		
1.	Secure the physical safety of the pupils, staff and other adults involved as far as is possible	Person in charge at scene
2.	Raise the alarm	Person in charge at scene
3.	Call the emergency services as required	Office staff
4.	Obtain factual information about incident	Head teacher
5.	Initiate emergency procedures	Head teacher
6.	Provide first aid if qualified person/s available	
ASAP		
7.	Release management team	I/c staff cover/HT
8.	Notify LEA	Office staff
9.	Notify chairman of governors	Office staff
10.	Commence log of events	HT/Man team
11.	Arrange use of telephones / set-up emergency line	Man team
12.	Inform other staff if possible	Man team
13.	Staff to secure key points / entrances & exits	Man team
14.	Contact families directly involved	Man team/office
15.	Arrange quiet area to receive families	Man team/office should give information and instructions if any
16.	LEA team arrive to support	
17.	Chair / Vice Chair arrive to support	
Same day (if possible)		
18.	Inform other parents using telephone	HT/Man team
19.	Staff meeting if possible to brief staff	HT/Man team
20.	Inform other pupils in classes or groups	Man team/Staff
21.	Inform the media	LEA press officer
22.	Answer enquiries (and in subsequent days)	Man team/Office
23.	Arrange debriefing of staff involved in incident.	LEA press officer
Subsequent days		
24.	Debrief children involved in the incident, with support team if appropriate (as soon as is possible allowing for their health and well being)	Man team
25.	Identify pupils and staff requiring additional support and organise care	Man team with prof advice
26.	Promote discussion in classes	HT/Man team
27.	Consider any long term implications and forward plan if possible (enquiries/funerals/anniversaries etc)	HT/Man team
28.	Produce a written record of events avoiding admissions of liability.	Head teacher

Signed.....Chairperson of Board of Governors

Signed.....Principal

Signed.....Designated Teacher

Date.....