



Golden National School

Golden, Cashel, Co. Tipperary.

Tel. 062 72164 Email goldenns@yahoo.ie Web www.goldenns.ie Roll No. 17114J

Critical Incident Policy

Introduction:

- In Golden National School we aim to protect the well-being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and well catered for environment as outlined in our school philosophy statement.
- The Board of Management, through the Principal, the Staff and the Parents Association has drawn up a critical incident management plan. They have established a Critical Incident Management Team to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

What is a Critical Incident?

'A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school'

Examples:

- Death, major illness/outbreak of disease (Foot & Mouth)
- Criminal incidents (e.g. Dunblane shooting, Shooting at first communion in Ballymun.)
- Major accidents, serious injury (e.g. 'Navan bus crash')
- Suicide
- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing in Cork)
- Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g. Midleton incident in Cork)
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.
- World events that may affect the student body and/or staff. May be a need for provision of discussion and involvement in ceremonies e.g. 9/11, tsunami

Critical Incidents Management Team:

Leadership Role:	James McCarthy (Principal)
Communication Role:	Karen Corbett (Deputy Principal)
Student Liaison/ Counselling Role:	James McCarthy
Chaplaincy Role:	Rev Fr. Pat Coffey P.P.
Family Liaison Role:	Karen Corbett
Parents Association Rep:	James McCarthy
B.O.M. Rep:	Karen Corbett

- Copies of this policy will be available in the School Plan Folder in the office, in the filing cabinet in the learning support room with a soft copy available in the 'Shared' folder on each of the desktops in the school.
- All members of staff have been involved in the drafting of this policy. Upon ratification, the policy will be discussed further at a staff meeting. All parents within the school will, by appointment, be given the opportunity to view it. A copy will also be furnished to the Parents' Association.
- A note of explanation regarding this policy has been included in the information pack given to all substitute and temporary teachers employed at the school.

Immediate Tasks

- Gather accurate information
- Contact appropriate agencies (GARDA, HSE, NEPS, etc.)
- Convene a meeting with key staff/Critical Incident Management Team
- Arrange supervision of pupils, organise timetable for the day
- Hold a staff meeting
- Ensure appropriate staff have access to Contact Lists
- Apply First Aid, and/or evacuate the building, as appropriate
- Inform staff, pupils and management in appropriate ways

Short Term action

- Management decide whether school will remain open or closed
- Contact National Educational Psychological Service, where appropriate
- Contact relevant external agencies
- Maintain normal routines, as far as possible
- Deal with the media; prepare a written statement
- Set up strategies for dealing with enquiries & the media (Objective/factual statement)
- Arrange transport, if necessary

Medium Term action

- Arrange support for affected pupils/parents (Parental Consent) and staff
- Liaise with students at home or in hospital, as required
- Arrange consultations so staff can better support students
- Plan special assembly/memorial service, where appropriate

- Arrange for student & staff participation in outside school events, e.g., Church services
- Record all activities related to the Critical Incident

Long Term action

- Be aware of multi-cultural and multi-faith issues
- Evaluate school's response to the Critical Incident, amend plan as appropriate
- Explore extra-curricular activities and student mentoring systems
- Ensure follow-up support (e.g., anniversaries)
- Referral to counselling as appropriate (Parental consent)
- Monitor vulnerable students and staff regarding Critical Incident:
- inform new staff and students

The BoM will continually audit the existing arrangements set out in this policy and adapt them as necessary e.g.

- ◆ Existing emergency procedures
- ◆ Administrative systems (Who is in charge?)
- ◆ curriculum strategies (Coping strategies)
- ◆ experience of past critical incidents (What worked?)
- ◆ potential risks e.g., emergency information for school trips (List of potential situations)
- ◆ existing material resources (e.g., Leaflets)
- ◆ existing staff resources (First aid)
- ◆ links with support services and other external agencies
- ◆ personal skills and capabilities (Key staff)

Implementation date

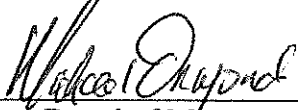
This policy was implemented on 10th June, 2011.

Timetable for review

The policy will be reviewed every three years or, if necessary, amended in line with changes in policies or guidelines from the relevant authorities.

Ratification and Communication

The BoM officially reviewed and ratified this policy on 14th October 2021.

Signed  Date 14/10/21
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed  Date 14/10/21
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Appendix 1

Contact List

All Emergency Services: 999

Gardaí-

Golden : 062 72100

Tipp Town: 062 51212

Cashel: 062 75840

Hospitals:

Cashel : 062 61022

Clonmel: 052 6121900

Doctors

Drs Brown + OConnor + Wallace	Tipp Town	062 51657
Dr. Carroll, Hanrahan, Davern & Lonergan	Kylecourt Clinic. Tipp Town	062 51687
Dr. Barrett		062 62132
Dr. Keenan		062 61715
Dr. Morrissey	Clonmel	052 6125312
Dr. Lynch		052 6124756
Dr. Barrett		062 62132
Dr. Ryan		062 61266

School Support

INTO	Head Office	01 8047700
IPPN	Head Office	1890212223
NEWB	Damien White	050458700
NEPS	Evelyn Buckley	052 6125833 0876502074
Chaplaincy	Rev. Fr Coffey	0862427728
Counselling	CPSMA	
Seno	Belinda Fitzgerald	052 6184764
Electrician	Tom Coughlan	0878112997
Plumber	Willie O Halloran	0862585193
Caretaker	Billy O'Connor	0871725416
School Cleaner	Mags Gubbins	0872505083

Media and Local Papers:

The Nationalist 052 6122211

Tipperary Star 050421122

Tipp FM 052 6125299

Board of Management and staff

Michael Ormond 0862590851

Shane Stapleton 0879983301

Joanne Donnelly 0879717756

Fr Pat Coffey 0862427728

John Landers 0872233481

Karen Corbett 087 6623515

Fiona Kelly 0876530030

Sinead Ryan 0861565356

Margaret O'Brien 0851267641

Lorla Collins 0876842315

Appendix 2

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Leadership Role:

Intervention

- Confirm the event and gather accurate information
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Liaise with the Gardaí/Emergency services
- Lead briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Express sympathy to family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Make contact with other relevant agencies
- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)

Postvention

- Ensure provision of ongoing support to staff and students
- Facilitate any appropriate memorial events
- Review Plan

2. Communication Role:

Intervention

- With Team, prepare a public statement
- Organise a designated room to address media promptly
- Ensure telephone lines are free for outgoing and important incoming calls
- Designate mobile numbers for contact
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

3. Student Liaison/ Counselling Role:

Intervention

- Advise the staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils
- Alert staff to vulnerable pupils
- Outline specific services available in the school
- Put in place clear referral procedures
- Address immediate needs of staff
- Provide materials for staff (from critical incident folder)
- Provide information
- Provide counselling

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable students
- Monitor class most affected
- Refer as appropriate

- Review and evaluate Plan

4. Chaplaincy Role:

Intervention

- Visit home(s), if appropriate
- Assist with prayer services
- Make contact with other local clergy
- Be available as personal and spiritual support to staff

Postvention

- Provide follow-up support to families in conjunction with Home School Community Liaison
- Work in partnership with Critical Incident team
- Review and Evaluate Plan

4. Family Liaison Role:

Intervention

- Co-ordinate contact with families (following first contact by Principal)
- Consult with family around involvement of school in e.g. funeral service
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to families affected by the incident
- Involve as appropriate the family in school liturgies/memorial services
- Offer to link family with community support groups
- Review and evaluate

Appendix 3

DETAILED ACTION PLAN

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)

- Immediate contact with family/families
- Consult with the family regarding appropriate support from the school, e.g. funeral service
- Ensure that a quiet place can be made for students/staff

Media Briefing (if appropriate)

- Designate a spokesperson (Leader)
- Gather accurate information
- Prepare a brief statement (Team)
- Protect the family's privacy
- It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident
 1. What happened, where and when?
 2. What is the extent of the injuries?
 3. How many are involved and what are their names?
 4. Is there a risk of further injury?
 5. What agencies have been contacted already?
- Contact appropriate agencies
 1. Emergency services
 2. Medical services
 3. H.S.E. Psychology Departments/Community Care Services
 4. NEPS

5. BOM

6. DES/Schools Inspector

- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team
- Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate
- Ensure any absent staff members are kept informed
- Organise timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible)
- Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted, list of friends etc, or any other relevant information. This is to be given to the Student Liaison person
- Arrange supervision of students
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service
- The Chaplain/Principal will liaise with the family, to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial service
- Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate. (Student Liaison person + Class teacher)
- Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS (24-72 HOURS)

- Preparation of students/staff attending funeral

- Involvement of students/staff in liturgy if agreed by bereaved family
- Facilitation of students/staffs responses, e.g. Sympathy cards, flowers, Book of Condolences, etc.
- Ritual within the school
- Review the events of the first 24 hours
- Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team
- Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff
- Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students
- Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting
- Establish contact with absent staff and pupils
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary
- Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened
- Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out
- Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission
- Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc)
- Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.
- Plan visits to injured
 - Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital
 - Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided)
 - Decide this in accordance with parent's wishes, school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends
- School closure (if appropriate)
- Request a decision on this from school management

LONGER TERM ACTIONS

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress

If over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he/she may need assistance from the Health Board. Constant communication with family is essential.

- Uncharacteristic behaviour
- Deterioration in academic performance
- Physical symptoms — e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness
- Inappropriate emotional reactions
- Increased absenteeism

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately

- What went well?
- Where were the gaps?
- What was most/least helpful?
- Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any unfinished business?

Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future

- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
- Ensure that new staffs are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area
- Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way
- When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, the Principal should brief the Principal of the new school

Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (Be sensitive to special days and events)

- Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time
- Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
- Need to be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day
 - Plan a school memorial service
 - Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
 - Update and amend school records

