

New Quay National School

Critical Incident Policy

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This policy supersedes policy (10/17)

New Quay National School aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) is to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

The staff and management of New Quay N.S. 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. Critical incidences 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 or vandalism*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Policy is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an accident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to endure 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 effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Physical Safety

In the interest of physical safety the following are in place:

- Fire drills occur
- Fire extinguishers are regularly checked
- Playground rules are regularly discussed
- A Health and Safety policy is in place
- Respect for school property and members of the school community is instilled regularly

Psychological safety

The Board of Management and staff of New Quay N.S. 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 are familiar with the Child Protection Safeguarding statement and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in light of criteria about pupil safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers. (See Section 7 of Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools)
- The school has an Anti-Bullying policy and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a caring environment in the school

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. Each member of the team has a role.

Roles

The key roles are as follows:

- Team leader
- Garda liaison
- Staff liaison
- Student liaison
- Parent liaison
- Community liaison
- Media liaison
- Administrator

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 or the Department of Education
- 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

Community/agency liaison

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of:
 - i. parents or guardians
 - ii. 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 of 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”

Media liaison

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by the school Board of Management)

Administrator

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of:
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the school system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and send out emails
- Photocopies material needed
- Maintain records

Record keeping

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

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The Board of Management of New Quay N.S. have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, 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 phrase ‘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.

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All 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 critical incidents has been presented to each member of staff.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE FOR SCHOOL PLAN

Critical Incident Management Team

ROLE	NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Team Leader	Mary Reidy	
Garda Liaison	Mary Reidy	
Parent Liaison	Mary Reidy	
Community Liaison	Eilish Finnerty	
Media Liaison	Eilish Finnerty	
Administrator	Eilish Finnerty	

Short term actions – Day 1

TASK	NAME
Gather accurate information	All staff
Who, what, when, where?	All staff
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	All staff
Contact external agencies	All staff
Arrange supervision for students	All staff
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	All staff
Inform students – close friends and students with learning disabilities may need to be told separately	All staff
Compile a list of vulnerable students	All staff
Contact/visit the bereaved family	All staff
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	All staff
Inform parents	All staff
Hold end of day staff meeting	All staff

Medium term actions – (Day 2 and following days)

TASK	NAME
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events	Team Leader
Meet external agencies	Team Leader
Meet whole staff	Team Leader
Arrange support for students, staff parents	Team Leader
Visit the injured	Team Leader
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Administrator
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Administrator
Make decisions about school closure	Board of Management

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

TASK	NAME
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teacher
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Class teacher
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Class teacher
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Class teacher
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/staff and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
GARDA	065 7072180 Ennistymon
HOSPITAL	091 524222 Galway University Hospital
FIRE BRIGADE	999 or 112 (Emergency)
LOCAL GP'S	065 7077035 Ballyvaughan Medical Centre
HSE/Community Care Team/ Child And Family Centre/CAMHS	065 6863935 Kilrush Rd. Ennis
SCHOOL INSPECTOR	Christina Casserly
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	065 6840130 Catherine Kelly
DES	0906 487863
INTO Union	01 8047700
PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY	065 7078026 Fr. Colm Clinton, Parish Priest
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057

Ratification and Communication

The school policy on the **Critical Incident** has been amended and ratified by The Board of Management of New Quay N.S.

Gerry Naughton Chairperson

Mary Reidy Principal

This policy will be communicated to all relevant parties.

This policy will be reviewed when deemed necessary.