



Critical Incident Policy

Reviewed 13/10/2023

Introduction:

The staff and management of The Intermediate School Killorglin recognise a critical incident to be:

'Any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school.'

Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community.

Types of incidents may include:

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, violence, terminal illness, suicide, suspected suicide or other unexpected death
- Any accident or incident involving pupils, staff or members of the school community on or off the school premises
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An accident or tragedy in the wider 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 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 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.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update this policy and plan. Each member of the team has a critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of a critical incident.

The following are the members of the Critical Incident Management Team:

- Principal - Mr. J. O'Dwyer
- Acting Deputy Principal - Mr. J. O'Mahony
- Counsellor - Ms. H. Pierce
- Religion Co-ordinator - Ms. M. Blennerhassett
- Learning Support Co-ordinator - Mr. O. Moynihan
- S.D.P. Co-ordinator - Ms. S. Leonard

In the event that one of the members is unavailable, or opts out of the team, another staff member may be appointed in lieu.

The following roles are assigned to the Critical Incident Management Team:

Role	Person
Team Leader	Principal / Deputy Principal
Garda Liaison	Principal / Deputy Principal
Staff Liaison	Principal / Deputy Principal
Student Liaison	Guidance Counsellor
Monitor Social Media	Guidance Counsellor
Parent Liaison	Guidance Counsellor / Office Staff
Community Liaison / Agency Liaison	Principal / Deputy Principal
Media Liaison	Principal / Deputy Principal
Administrator	Office Staff
Liaison for Students with specific needs	Learning Support Co-ordinator / SNA

Preventing a Critical Incident

The first priority of the Intermediate School is to try to prevent Critical Incidents from occurring. The school has put systems in place to help 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.

1. Physical Safety

- Regular fire drills
- Evacuation plan formulated and communicated with students and staff
- Fire exits, smoke detectors and extinguishers are regularly checked
- First Aid kits are regularly checked and re-stocked
- Adequate supervision before school, during break time and during lunch time

- Locking doors of specialist rooms when not in use
- Clear rules in specialist rooms which are clearly communicated with students
- Regular first-aid training for staff
- Defibrillator on school grounds

2. Psychological safety

The management and staff of the Intermediate 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 positive mental health is an integral part of this provision.
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Children First document and Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures. All staff have undertaken TUSLA training in how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures.
- School policies promote positive health of students and staff, most notably the following policies: Anti-bullying policy, Substance use policy, Health and Safety, Relationships and Sexuality Education programme.
- The school implements a range of curricular and co-curricular programmes to promote positive health e.g. Wellbeing, Health Promoting Schools Initiative
- There is a care system in place in the Intermediate School using a “Continuum of Support” approach as outlined in the NEPS 2010 documents for post primary schools.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – KDYS, Jigsaw, CAMHS
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member, typically the Guidance Counsellor, 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.

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The management and staff of the Intermediate 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 also do so.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident

Immediate and Short-term Response (first 24 hours)

1. Gather Information

Accurate information must be obtained about the incident. Failure to do so may add to the distress of those involved. The following information should be acquired:

- What happened, where and when?
- What is the extent of the injuries?
- What is the location of those injured and not injured?
- How many are involved and what are their names?
- Is there a risk of further injury?
- What agencies have been already contacted?

2. Convene a meeting with Critical Incident Management Team

This meeting should focus on the following topics:

- A statement of facts should be prepared for staff, students, parents and the media.
- Identification of vulnerable students.
- Appointing someone to handle phone enquiries and to deal with the media.
- Ensuring that the phone line remains open and available for enquiries.
- Organising the timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal routine is important if possible).
- Organising the supervision of students during any staff meetings.
- Deciding if an outside professional is to be invited to the staff meeting.

Some of these responsibilities may be delegated to the Critical Incident Management Team.

3. Response Level Required

The type of response required will depend on the nature of the Critical Incident. Responses to Critical Incidents are classified as:

- **Response Level 1**

the death of a student or staff member who was terminally ill; the death of parent/sibling; a fire in school not resulting in serious injury; serious damage to school property.

- **Response Level 2**

the sudden death of a student or staff member.

- **Response Level 3**

an accident/event involving a number of students; a violent death; an incident with a high media profile or involving a number of schools.

4. Contact Appropriate Agencies

Some or all of the following agencies may need to be contacted. A more detailed contact list is found in Appendix 1.

- Emergency services
- Medical services
- Health Board Psychology Departments / Community Care Services
- National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.)
- Department of Education and Skills (D.E.S.)
- Inspectorate

5. Convene a staff meeting

A whole staff meeting should be convened once the Critical Incident Management Team has met. The staff should be briefed about the relevant details of the Critical Incident. The staff should be informed of the school arrangements for the day. The staff may be addressed by an external agency. Staff should be offered support during this time.

6. Meeting with students

The Critical Incident Management Team will decide on the most appropriate method of informing students. Students may be met at a general assembly, in class groups or smaller groups.

7. Support Structures

Support is available for all. Professional advice will be sought for staff members who may need to deal with classes/pupils who might be affected. Pupils will be informed that support is available on an individual and class basis. The school chaplain may also be involved in support and any services that may need to be arranged.

8. Visiting the Family

The Principal or other designated staff member will visit the bereaved family as soon as is deemed advisable. The Principal may be accompanied by another teacher.

9. Media Contact

A good relationship will be maintained with the media; however, the families, relatives and the entire school community will be protected as a matter of priority. Only the Principal, or a person designated by the Manager or Principal, will deal with the media. It is not appropriate for any other member of the school community to contact the media.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident

Medium term Response (24-72 hours)

1. Review

The events of the first 24 hours should be reviewed. This review should be attended by the Response team. The team should be made aware of any additional information that may have come to light. The list of vulnerable students should be verified and confirmed. Support structures may be confirmed and additional supports put in place, if necessary.

2. Plan reintegration

The reintegration of students and/or staff should be planned. Careful consideration should be given to the timing of this reintegration and the most appropriate method.

3. Arrangements

The family should be liaised with regarding the funeral arrangements.

4. Timetable or School closure

A decision must be made regarding the timetable for the coming days. In some instances school closure may be necessary.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident

Long term Response (post - 72 hours)

1. Monitor and review

Affected individuals should continue to be monitored, in the long term, for signs of stress and/or anxiety.

The policy may need to be reviewed in the aftermath of a Critical Incident.

Development and communication of Policy

The development of this policy included staff, parents and pupils. The policy will be made available to the school community upon request.

Ratified:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. O. J. Wiper', is written over a horizontal line.

Date:

13th October, 2023

Appendix 1

Emergency Contact List

Garda	Emergency	-	999
	Killorglin Garda Station	-	066-9761113
			066-9790500
Ambulance	Emergency	-	999
Doctors	Dr. Anne Cronin	-	066-9761014
	Dr. Edmund Prendeville	-	066-9761072
	Dr. Eugene Cotter	-	066-9761072
	Dr. Noel Mulligan	-	066-9761253
Fire Brigade	Emergency	-	999
Hospital	Kerry General Hospital	-	066-7184000
	Bons Secours Tralee	-	066-7149800
N.E.P.S.			
Psychologist	Ms. Eileen Devitt	-	066-7102690
Killorglin Presbytery		-	066-9761172
Counselling Services	Southwest Counselling	-	064-6636416
	Centre, Geraldine Sheedy		
Kerry Mental Health Association	Dan O'Connor	-	087-6998901
National Suicide Research Foundation		-	021-4277499
Living Links (support for suicide bereaved)		-	087-9006300
Employee Assistance Service		-	1800 411 057

Local Second Level Schools:

Killorglin Community College	066-9761168
Presentation Miltown	066-9767168

Local National Schools

Scoil Mhuire	066-9761779
Kilgobnet	064-6644622
Cullina	064-6644788
Cromane	066-9769331
Glenbeigh	066-9768468
Boheeshil NS	066-9760096
Glounaguillagh	066-9769402
Douglas NS	066-9762524