



Critical Incident Policy

SN Cholmcille Naofa aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

SN Cholmcille Naofa seeks to provide a safe and secure environment at all times. The school has formulated a number of policies e.g. Anti Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour and Procedures e.g. School Rules to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students.

What is a Critical Incident?

SN Cholmcille Naofa recognises a critical incident to be an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school. Critical Incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Types of incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.
- An intrusion into the school which has an adverse impact on school community.
- An accident/tragedy in the wider school community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An accident involving members of the school community.
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s).
- An accident or tragedy outside the school community which impacts on school community.

Rationale

Recognising that the key of managing critical incidents is planning, SN Cholmcille Naofa Has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying Plan. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.

Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School.

We have put a system in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of an incident. These include measures to address both physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.

Physical Safety.

These are dealt with under our Health & Safety Policy, Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying Policy.

As teachers need to move between the main building and the yard/prefab the two access doors to the main building are kept closed at all times and entry/exit is gained by the access code at the front door.

Psychological Safety.

SN Cholmcille Naofa. aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for them.

- SPHE programmes are included in the curriculum to address issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking, decision making and alcohol and drug prevention.
- SN Cholmcille Naofa. has an anti-bullying policy.
- Staff are informed on a need to know basis of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs, respecting individual privacy.
- Staff have access to books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school child.
- The school has developed links with outside agencies, including NEPS, Child and Family Services. They may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students.

Critical Incident Management Team

SN Cholmcille Naofa. has set up a Critical Incident Management Team in line with best practice and will maintain this team in future. 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 once a year to review and update the plan.

Roles

Key Roles have been identified and assigned as follows:

- **Team Leader** – Aoife Winston – Principal. & Chairperson of BOM-Maureen Cawley
- **Communication Role:** Aoife Winston – Principal Chairperson of BOM-Maureen Cawley
- **Staff Liaison** – Caitriona Coughlan-Teachers Nominee BOM
- **Student Liaison** - Aoife Winston – Principal & Helena Gaughan - Deputy Principal
- **Parent Liaison** - Chairperson - Parents Association Christy O Boyle
- **Community Liaison** – Helena Gaughan - Deputy Principal

In the event of a critical incident the responsibilities of each role-holder will be as follows:-

Team Leader -Physical

Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting

Co-ordinates the tasks of the team
Liaises with the Board of Management
Liaises with the bereaved family.

Staff Liaison -

Leads Meetings to brief Staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and outlines the routine of the day.
Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable students
Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.
Provides materials to staff from "Ready-to-Go-Pack".

Community Liason - Deputy Principal

Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
Up-dates team members on the involvement of external agencies
Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies
Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
o Key parents such as members of the parents council
o Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources

Parent Liason - Chairperson - Parents' Association

Facilitates 'questions and answers' meetings.
Meets with individual parents
Provides materials for parents from the Ready to Go Pack
Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.

Media Liaison - Principal

In preparing for the role, she/he will consider issues that may arise during the incident and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on premises etc.)
In the event of an incident, the Principal will liaise where necessary with the Communications Section in the DES.

Administrative Tasks

Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers - Parents are asked to supply up to date contact numbers and addresses each September and are asked to inform the school where there is a change of contact details.
In the case of a critical incident, Secretary might be called in over holidays.
Emergency Support Services to be displayed in Office and Staff Room.

Record Keeping

Hardbacked A4 Book for each Team Member to keep records. In the event of an incident, each member of the team will keep detailed records of phone calls made and records of phone calls made 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.

A letter will be sent to parents based on the sample one attached and will include:

The sympathy of the School Community.

Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured person(s)
The facts of the incident
What has been done
What is going to be done

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The school has 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 see to ensure that pupils do also.

Critical Incident Room

In the event of a critical incident, the large classroom will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

Development and Communication of this Policy and Plan.

All staff were consulted and their view canvassed in the preparation of the draft plan. Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments. Our school's final policy and procedures in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.

Each member of the Critical Incident Team has a personal copy.

It was ratified by the Board of Management on April 25th 2012

and will be implemented from April 26th 2012

It will be reviewed on a yearly basis.