

Critical Incident Policy

Policies

Critical Incident Policy, St. Lawrence's N.S., Glynn, Roll No. 17005E

Our school fosters the physical, social, academic and spiritual development of our children. We cherish the self esteem and individuality of each child emphasising their many and varying gifts. In this context we value the cooperation of the staff, parents, Board of Management and the local community.

Glynn N.S. also aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times, to this end we have compiled a Critical Incident policy. This shall be developed, reviewed and implemented by a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

Critical Incident

The staff and management of Glynn N.S. recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school"

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

Types of incidents might 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 involving the wider community.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.

The aims of the CIMT are:

- 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
- To ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff
- To help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited
- To enable us to return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School

We have put systems into place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical Safety:

The school has the following elements in place

- An evacuation plan
- Regular fire drills
- Fire extinguishers are serviced annually
- Health and Safety audits are carried out regularly and the issues arising reported to BOM.
- School rules are in place to ensure the safety of pupils.
- All visitors are asked to report to the office on entry to the school.

This area is covered in more detail under our Health and Safety Policy.

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Glynn 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.

1. Social, Personal and Health education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing such issues 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.
2. Staff has access to training for their role in SPHE.
3. Staff is familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures.
4. Books and resources on difficulties affecting Primary school pupils are available.
5. Information is available on mental health in general and such specific areas on signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
6. The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, HSE, Gardaí
7. The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
8. Staff is informed on how to access support for them.
9. Some members of staff have attended training courses in “Rainbows”.

Critical Incident Management Team

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

The members of the CIMT shall include:

Team Leader: Principal: Joe Ryan

Staff Liaison: Deputy Principal: Carmel Mackey & Staff Rep: Patricia Crean

Chairperson of the Board of Management: Rev. P. Stafford

Community Liaison: Community Rep from the Board of Management: Pat O Rourke and

Athol Henwick, Parents' Association.

School Secretary: Elizabeth Fox

In the event of a Critical Incident, NEPS and Garda Liaison may be contacted

Leadership Roles Team Leader – Principal

- ◇ Confirms the event
- ◇ Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- ◇ Co-ordinates the tasks of the team.
- ◇ Liases with the Gardaí.
- ◇ Liases with the Board of Management, Department of Education & Science and NEPS.
- ◇ Liases with the bereaved family.
- ◇ Prepares a public statement with the CIMT team, organises designated room to promptly address the media.
- ◇ Ensures the provision of ongoing support to staff and students.
- ◇ Facilitates any appropriate memorial events.
- ◇ Reviews plan.

The Deputy Principal will replace Principal in his absence.

Staff Liaison -Deputy Principal and Staff Rep on CMIT

- Leads briefing meeting for the staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day.
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students. Is alert to vulnerable members of staff and makes contact with them individually.
- Provides resources for the staff and pupils (from Critical Incident Folder), outlines services available.
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses.
- Keeps a record of students seen by external agency staff.
- Looks into the provision and supervision of a “quiet room”.

Community Liaison Pat O Rourke and Liz McGarry

- ▶ Maintain up-to-date lists of contact numbers of key parents, such as members of the Parents' Council.
- ▶ Coordinate the involvement of volunteers from wider community whose help may be required.
- ▶ Assist the team leader in the provision of appropriate materials to parents (from Critical Incident Folder)
- ▶ Provide the team with any local information, which may be useful in the management of the incident.

Record Keeping

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

The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, photocopying materials and sending and receiving all letters etc.

Confidentiality

The management and staff of Glynn N.S. have a responsibility to protect the good name and privacy 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 the 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.

Critical Incident Room

In the event of a critical incident:

The staff room will be the main room used to meet the staff.

The PE Hall will be the room used to meet the pupils.

The PE Hall will be used to meet parents.

Resource Teacher's Rooms will be used for individual sessions with the pupils.

Resource Teacher's Rooms will also be used by other visitors. Mobile Phones

Quiet Room – Learning Support Room has been identified for this purpose.

Consultation and Communication

Staff was consulted and their views canvassed in preparation of this plan. Parents' representatives have also endorsed the policy.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.

Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Liaison reps.

The plan will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. It was last reviewed in June 2014.