



Powerstown Educate Together National School

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Powerstown Educate Together National School

Critical Incident Policy

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to assist 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.

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Introduction:

In Powerstown Educate Together 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 BoM through the Principal, the Staff and the Parent Teacher Association has drawn up a critical incident management plan. They have established a Critical Incidents 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'. Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff member, 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 in the school
- An accident involving member of the school community or an accident/tragedy in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, natural or technological disaster.
- A major illness/outbreak of disease
- Criminal incidents
- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g. Middleton 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

Aim of Critical Incident Policy

The aim of this policy is to help the school management and staff of Powerstown Educate Together NS 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 this plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos is the school

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

Physical Safety.

- Evacuation plan formulated.
- Regular fire drills.
- Fire extinguishers and exits regularly checked.
- School exterior doors magnetically locked during class time
- Code of behaviour

Psychological Safety.

The management and staff of Powerstown ETNS 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 has access to training for their role in SPHE.
- Staff are familiar with Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to process with suspicions or disclosures.
- The school has a clear policy in bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member, 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.
- School is developing a resource library for staff including resources on difficulties affecting the primary school child.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.
- School has developed links with outside agencies which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onwards referral of students
 - Barnardos
 - HSE
 - NEPS

Critical Incidents Management Team (CIMT)

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

All members of the Critical Incident Management Team will be supplied with a copy of Responding to Critical Incidents. Copies will also be made available to all school staff.

CIMT Roles and Responsibilities

No	Role	Name
1	Team Leader	Helena Trench
1	Garda Liaison	Helena Trench & Catherine Coffey
2	Staff Liaison	Helena Trench & Cróna Glynn
3	Student Liaison	Aoife McGonigle, Ann Marie Kelleher
4	Parent Liaison	Maeve Collopy & Carina Ewertowski (PTA Rep)

5	Community Liaison	Helena Trench & Catherine Coffey (BOM Rep)
6	Media Liaison	Niamh Moran (Chairperson)
7	Administrator	Helena Trench, Ann Dunne

1. Team Leader: (& Gardaí Liaison)

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Liaise with the Gardaí/Emergency services
- Liaise with BOM, DES, NEPS, SEC, Educate Together
- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)
- Consult with Staff Liaison and lead initial briefing meeting 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
- Liaises with bereaved family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident

Postvention

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

2. Staff Liaison

Intervention

- After initial meeting lead by Team Leader & Staff Liaison, will lead briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, and outlines the routine for the day.
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of EAS & Carecall and gives them the contact details

Postvention

- Ensure provision of on-going support to staff

3. Student Liaison:

Intervention

- Advise the staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils
- Alert staff to vulnerable pupils (appropriately)
- Outline specific services available in the school
- Put in place clear referral procedures

- Address immediate needs of students e.g. provide information/counselling
- Provide materials for students (from critical incident folder)
- Keeps record of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervising 'quiet' room where agreed

Postvention

- Provide on-going support to vulnerable students
- Monitor class most affected
- Refer as appropriate
- Review and evaluate Plan

4. Parent Liaison Role:

Intervention

- Co-ordinate contact with families (after consultation with team leader)
- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and are ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident

Postvention

- Provide on-going 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 plan

5. Community/Agency Liaison

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents such as members of the PTA
 - 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
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

6. Media Liaison Role:

Intervention

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with SEC; relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)
- 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

7. Administrator Role:

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

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.

Special Needs Assistant (until secretary is appointed) will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, photocopying materials, sending letters etc.

Confidentiality and good name consideration

The management and staff of Powerstown Educate Together National School 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 the death was due to suicide, and that the family involved consent to its use. The phrases '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 Rooms

In the event of a critical incident;

- Staff Room will be the main room used to meet the staff
- Chestnut Room will be used for meetings with junior pupils, Lime Room will be used for meetings with senior pupils
- Parents Room / Redwood Room will be used for meetings with parents
- Birch Room will be used for meetings with media
- Juniper will be used for individual sessions with students
- Parents Room will be used for other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan.

Students and parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

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 Aoife McGonigle (Staff Liaison).

This plan will be updated annually in September

Appendix 1

Emergency Contact List

Agency	Contact Numbers
GARDAÍ Blanchardstown COMMUNITY GARDAÍ Vincent Connolly Inspector Gda Dáire O’Neill Superintendent John Quirke	01 6667000 086 246 4950 01 6667020
HOSPITAL Connolly	01 6465000
FIRE BRIGADE Blanchardstown FIRE BRIGADE HQ	018202722 01 6734000 HQ
LOCAL GPS Dr Tor Kohistani - Oakland Clinic PrimaCare Tyrrelstown	01 827 2327 01 885 6380
HSE/COMMUNITY CARE TEAM Heath Centre – Roselawn Health Centre - Hartstown Health Office –Nexus Building Child Protection Services – Welmount Finglas PHN Catherine O’Malley PHN Claire Macken	01 6464518 01 8662831 01 8975100 01 8825000 – 01 8567704 087 2954387 / 01 6467863 087 9387113 / 01 6467869
SCHOOL INSPECTOR Mary Dunne	087 9447409
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST Reception Jacqueline Horan	01 4614824 0879444183 / 01 8892736.
DES	090 6483600
INTO	01 8047700 1850708708
EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL OFFICE	01 4292500
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057
Care Call (for teachers & SNAs)	1800 411 057

Appendix 2

Critical Incident Management 2015/2016

Role	Name	Telephone Number
Team Leader	Helena Trench	085 1617270
Garda Liaison	Helena Trench & Catherine Coffey	085 1617270 / 087 2837678
Staff Liaison	Helena Trench & Crona Glynn	085 1617270 / 0858430082
Student Liaison	Aoife McGonigle & Ann Marie Kelleher	08603775104 / 085 2740850
Parent Liaison	Maeve Collopy & Carina Ewertowski	0877691031
Community Liaison	Helena Trench & Catherine Coffey	0851617270 / 087 2837678
Media Liaison	Niamh Moran	087 9338686
Administrator	Ann Dunne & Helena Trench	01 8272018 / 0851617270

Appendix 3

Short Term Activities – Day 1

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

Medium Term Actions (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name	Comment
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of Day 1	Team leader	
Meet external agencies		
Meet whole staff		
Arrange support for students, staff, parents		
Visit the injured		
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements		
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service		
Make decisions about school closure	BOM	

Follow Up – Beyond 72 hours

Task	Name	Comment
<p>Monitor students for signs of continuing distress</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	Class teachers	
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals		
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)		
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	BOM/Staff, parents and students	
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM	

Appendix 4

Evaluation of Critical Incident Policy

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What went well? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where were the gaps? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was most/least helpful? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any unfinished business? 	
Formalising the Critical Incident Plan for the future	
Task	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with NEPS Psychologist 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that new staffs are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	

Appendix 5

Team Leader Checklist

Actions	Comment
SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	
Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish contact with absent staff and pupils 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan visits to injured <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide this in accordance with parent's wishes, school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School closure (if appropriate) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request a decision on this from school management 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish contact with absent staff and pupils 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide this in accordance with parent's wishes, school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School closure (if appropriate) 	
Request a decision on this from school management	

Appendix 6: Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines for Schools –

See more at: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Educational-Psychologist-NEPS-/Critical-Incidents.html#sthash.aAAdr5Lk.dpuf>

Appendix 7: Responding to Critical Incidents Resource Materials for Schools –

See more at: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Educational-Psychologist-NEPS-/Critical-Incidents.html#sthash.aAAdr5Lk.dpuf>