

GOREY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Introduction

Gorey Community School aims to protect the well being of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

Gorey Community School has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident.

What is a Critical Incident?

Gorey Community School 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". (Responding to Critical Incidents in Schools- NEPS)

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
- 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.

Aim

Recognising that the key to managing critical incidents is planning, Gorey Community School 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.

Critical Incident Management Team

Gorey Community School has set up a CI Management Team in line with best practice (A Critical Incident team is "a group of individuals from the staff of the school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs" - Mary Schoenfeldt) 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. Each member of the team has a Ready-to-Go Pack with relevant materials to be used in the event of an incident.

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

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 and Department of Education & Science
- 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 for the day.
- Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable students.
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.
- Arranges for the provision of materials to staff from the Ready to Go Pack.

Student Liaison

- Liaises with other team members to keep them up-dated with information and progress.
- Alerts staff to vulnerable students.
- Provides materials for students from the Ready-to-Go Pack.

Community Liaison

- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies.
- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of key parents, such as members of the parents council, emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.

Parent Liaison

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

Media Liaison

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

Administrative Tasks

- Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers of
 1. Parents or guardians
 2. Teachers
 3. Emergency support services
- Telephone calls need to be responded to, letters sent and materials photocopied.

Garda Liaison

- Liaises with the Gardai.
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

Letter to Parents

Gorey Community School will prepare a brief, written statement to include:

- The sympathy of the school community for the affected/bereaved family.
- 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 have to 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 so also.

Critical Incident Room

In the event of a critical incident Room 501 will be the main room used to meet the staff, parents and visitors involved.

Room 412 will be used to meet students.

Development and communication of this policy and plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of the draft plan. The Board of Management and Parents Council 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

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Gorey Community School

November 2010

Key Roles Assigned

TASK	NAME
Overall Management of Response	Michael Finn
Communications	Michael Finn
Administration Tasks	Stella Kehoe & Frank Duke
Supervision	Stella Kehoe & Frank Duke
Media Liaison	Michael Finn
Parent Liaison	Michael Finn & Year Head(s)
Community Liaison	Guidance Counsellors
Student Liaison	Guidance Counsellors & Year Head(s)
Staff Liaison	Michael Finn, Frank Duke, Stella Kehoe
Garda Contact	Michael Finn

1st Day

TASK	NAME
Gather accurate information	Relevant Staff and Witnesses (accidents)
Contact appropriate agencies- NEPS, Priest etc.	Michael Finn
Convene a meeting with members of critical incident team- 8.15 a.m.	Michael Finn, Frank Duke, Stella Kehoe
Text all staff to meet in staffroom at 8.55 Update student records	Stella Kehoe
Prepare written statement for staff	CIMT
Arrange supervision of students	Stella Kehoe
Organise timetable for the day	Michael Finn 2 nd staff meeting end lunch CIMT meeting at middle and end of day
Identify vulnerable staff members and inform them personally.	Michael Finn
Hold staff meeting- 8.55 a.m. Provide statement for staff to read to classes. (Deputy Principals / Guidance Counsellors can read statement if teacher is not comfortable doing so) Ask staff to send students who are upset to Room 412 CIMT to visit all classrooms with statement as some teachers may not have been in staff room.	Michael Finn
Class tutor and subject teacher may need support around what to say and do in class- provide handouts from NEPS	Guidance Counsellors
Make contact with the bereaved family	Michael Finn, Year Head.
Inform parents (of students most affected)	Management & Guidance Counsellors
Inform students	Teachers of classes (written statement provided to all teachers)
Prepare media statement (NEPS Template R6)	Michael Finn, Frank Duke, Stella Kehoe
Meet with students in small groups and give them the option of going home or staying in school. Allow students to support each other. Identify vulnerable friends- if they are not in school contact should be made with parents. Invite those students to come in to school. Divide students according to year group.	Guidance Counsellors
Check Social Networking sites	Management

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24 – 72 HOURS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
Review the events of the first 24 hours	Critical Incident Management Team
Arrange support for individual/groups of students, parents etc.	Guidance Counsellors
Plan the reintegration of students and staff	Management, Guidance Counsellors & Year Head
Plan visits to injured	Year Head/Principal
Liaise with family re funeral arrangements/memorial service	Year Head/Chaplain
Attendance/participation at funeral service etc.	Principal/Year head
School closure	Principal / Board of Management
Information meeting for staff	Principal- NEPS
Draft letter to parents of tutor group.(NEPS Template R4)	Guidance Counsellors
Draft letter to parents of all students informing them of events. Include NEPS handouts R14 'Ways to help your child through this difficult time', R20 'Frequently Asked Questions'	Guidance Counsellors
A minute's silence and prayer to be arranged while funeral takes place.	Chaplain
Arrange Service for Year Group later in the week.	Chaplain, Religion Teachers

BEYOND 72 HOURS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
Reintegration of bereaved child. Handout for teachers R13	Year Heads/ Guidance Counsellors
Monitor students for signs of continuing stress	Guidance Counsellors, Subject Teachers, Class Tutors, Year Heads
Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident plan appropriately	Stella Kehoe & Aideen Connaughton
Formalise plan for future	Staff / Board of Management
Inform new staff/pupils	Stella
Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries	Guidance Counsellors /Parents /Chaplain and Year Head
Arrange external support for family/close friends where appropriate.	Guidance Counsellors
Return Personal Belongings	Year Head/ Class Tutor

SCHOOL TRIPS:

In the event of any kind of emergency happening outside of school hours, staff members should contact Michael, Stella or Frank.

Any teachers taking students on trips outside school must ensure that they have the school contact details and contact details of the Principal and Deputy Principals. They must also be familiar with the School Tour Policy

CONTACT NUMBERS

OUTSIDE AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
GARDAI	053 9480678
HOSPITAL	053 9153000 (Wexford General)
FIRE BRIDAGE	999
LOCAL GPS	O'Dohertys 053 9421303 Nixons 053 9421336 Kennedys 053 9422267
HEALTH BOARD/FAMILY CENTRE	053 9421374
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	TRISH TYRELL 053 9143272 / 087 4158866
PARISH OFFICE CHURCH OF IRELAND- REV. SUSAN GREENE	053 9421117 087 2620054
ASTI	01 6719144
TUI	01 4922588
BARNARDOS	01 450355
THE SAMARITANS	1850 60 90 90
CHILDLINE	1800 66 66 66
PARENTLINE	1890 92 72 77
AWARE	6766166 1890 30 33 02
CONSOLE CONSOLE-24 HR HELPLINE	053 9122787 1800 201 890
ONE LIFE- TRAINED COUNSELLORS	1800 247 100
NATIONAL SUICIDE BEAREAVEMENT SUPPORT	024 95561
RAINBOWS	01 4734175
THE BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING SERVICE	01 8391766
BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING	01 6767727
SUICIDE RESOURCE OFFICER- SEAN MCCARTHY	087 7670054
HSE DUTY SOCIAL WORKER HSE PSYCHOLOGIST	053 9421374 053 9421374

Further resources available from www.education.ie follow link to NEPS →reports

and publications → responding to critical incidents → resource materials for schools.