Mount Lourdes Grammar School

Critical Incident Policy

**Rationale**

The Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team of Mount Lourdes are committed to the care and welfare of all students and staff. They strive to ensure that in the event of a critical incident, clear procedures are in place to ensure it is managed in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

A critical incident is likely to have a severe impact upon the school community, both in the short term and in the longer term therefore it is necessary for the school to have a Critical Incident Plan in place to protect the wellbeing of every member of the Mount Lourdes school community during and after the critical incident.

A critical Incident can be defined as any sudden and unexpected tragic incident or sequence of events which causes trauma and confusion within a school community and which significantly challenges its normal coping mechanisms. (See Appendix 1)

While it is impossible for a critical incident policy and plan to cover every aspect of recovery from a critical incident it is essential to ensure that the incident is managed effectively while meeting the needs and supporting the whole school community.

It is important that the critical incident plan is clear, understood by all staff and implemented as soon as it becomes necessary.

The following must be remembered in relation to the incident policy:

• That it is followed as closely as possible;

• That designated personnel understand their roles and responsibilities and are competent to carry them out;

• That undesignated individuals do not take unilateral actions;

• That consideration and sensitivity is shown by all;

• That pupils, staff and parents are protected from press intrusion;

• That normal school routines be resumed as soon as possible;

• There is a realisation that recovery subsequent to a critical incident may take a long time.

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are properly carried out when a critical incident has occurred. The members of this team can be identified in Appendix 2 and their roles are outlined in Appendix 4.

**Links with other school Policies:**

* Pastoral Care
* Safeguarding \Child Protection
* School Trips
* Health and Safety
* Fire Safety

**Aims of the Critical Incident Policy**

1. To maintain a duty of care.
2. To minimise disruption within the school.
3. To enable normal routines to be resumed as soon as possible.

**Objectives:**

* To ensure that swift and appropriate action is taken in the case of the school being made aware that a critical incident has occurred.
* To ensure that the welfare of students and staff is the main priority.
* To ensure that the school responds in a sensitive, consistent and effective manner which leads to a reduction in confusion, panic and extreme emotion.
* To have in place a Critical Incident Management Team, the membership of which is known to all relevant parties. (Appendix 2)
* To have in place a Critical Incident Management Plan, the details of which are familiar to all relevant parties. (Appendix 3)
* To maintain normality, as far as possible, in parts of the school which are not affected and to restore normality as soon as possible to the parts which are affected.
* To have immediate access to all relevant contact details (including outside agencies).
* To offer sensitive, non-intrusive support in the short and medium term to all those affected directly or indirectly by the incident.

**Guidelines for Managing a Critical Incident**

* The Principal Mrs Cullen will take charge of the school’s response alongside the CIMT Co-ordinator, Mr Jim Devine.
* In the case of the Principal being unavailable, the CIMT coordinator and Vice Principal, Mr Jim Devine will take charge.
* The Monsignor Cahill Room will be the central liaison point.
* Appendixes 5, 6 & 7 will be used to record attendance of members of the CIMT, action taken and rationale for actions.
* The local clergy will be contacted if appropriate.
* The CIMT will assess immediate practical needs.
* The CIMT will contact next of kin of those directly involved if required.
* A short precise statement of facts will be prepared by the Principal (see Appendix 8 for examples)
* All contact from the media will be dealt with by the Principal, Mrs Cullen or the deputising member of the Senior Leadership Team.
* Secretarial staff taking incoming calls will use a statement agreed by the CIMT.
* When necessary, all members of staff will be informed and will be guided in relation to informing pupils
* The CIMT will determine the involvement of parents if appropriate.
* Short and long term support will be offered to those affected.
* There will be an evaluation of the way in which the incident was managed within 6 weeks of the event occurring. (Appendix 9)

**Appendix 1**

A critical incident is likely to involve death or serious injury to one or more members of the school community and, or, their families either at school, journeying to or from school, participating in a school related activity, at home or in some other context.

**Critical Incidents that may affect a school:**

* Sudden death of a student or member of staff
* Disappearance of a student or member of staff
* Death or injury of a student or staff member on a school outing
* Severe injury to student or staff member as a result of road traffic accident
* Serious assault on student or staff member in school
* Violent/disturbed intruder on school premises during school day
* Serious damage to school building or property through fire, flood or vandalism
* Civil disturbance in local community
* School Fire
* Student or staff member with a contagious illness
* Suicide
* Immediate evacuation of the school with no likelihood of return for a number of hours.

**Appendix 2**

**Members of the Critical Incident Management Team**

* Principal – Mrs Sinead Cullen
* CIMT co-ordinator – Vice-Principal – Mr Jim Devine
* Senior Teacher – Mrs Michelle Judge
* Senior Teacher –\*Mrs Jane McGeoghan (Temporary Senior Teacher 2023/24 will be co-opted to the team for 23/24 and will assist G Quinn in day to day running of school)
* Senior Teacher – Mr Gerard Quinn
* Learning Support Coordinator – Mrs Mary Keaney
* ICT Technician in charge of website and social media communication – Mr Kevin Colgan
* Executive Officer – Secretary - Mrs Ann McCaughey
* Secretary - Mrs Kathleen Maguire
* Secretary – Mrs Anita Curran
* Groundsman – Mr Kevin Mc Manus
* Cleaning Supervisor – Miss Marita Cosgrove
* Manager of Support staff – Mrs Katherine Colton
* Members of the Board of Governors – Monsignor Peter O’Reilly, Mr Damien Murray & Mr Gerry McCabe.

Other members of staff may be co-opted members of the CIMT as and when required. One/two members of staff may be asked to take responsibility for the normal running of the school whilst the CIMT is engaged in dealing with an incident.

**Appendix 3**

**Critical Incident Management Plan**

Depending on the nature of the critical incident, the following key tasks should be carried out as appropriate:

* respond to any inevitable risk or threat, for example evacuation or first aid
* notify the emergency services/other relevant authorities and agreed parties
* mobilise the Critical Incident Management Team to put the Critical Incident plan in place
* agree the school routine for that day
* the school chaplain / local priest will be contacted if appropriate
* inform staff
* establish a dedicated, telephone line
* set-up recovery/designated room
* inform students and parents
* prepare/adapt a media statement
* assess initial impact of the critical incident on staff and pupils

**Longer Term Issues**

* School structures and routines will be re-established
* Support strategies for students and staff will be implemented
* There will be on-going contact with parents
* Actions taken will be reviewed and policies amended if appropriate
* Further staff training will be organised if deemed necessary
* The PD programmes will be reviewed and adapted if necessary
* Staff will be mindful of anniversaries and other special dates.

**The use of appropriate outside agencies is crucial to providing long term support as is the use of appropriately trained members of staff who are known to those in need of support.**

**Preventative Strategies**

* Regular review of relevant policies e.g. Child Protection/safeguarding, Health and Safety, School Trips and Pastoral policies
* First Aid training
* Fire Drills
* PD Programme

**All members of the Critical Incident Management Team must:**

* Have a copy of the Critical Incident Plan and Policy at home and at school
* Have a copy of the contact details for all members of the CIMT
* Be aware of the roles and responsibilities of each member of the CIMT to enable the school to react swiftly and accordingly. (Appendix 4)
* In the event of a school trip /visit, have access to a list of names for staff and students and their contact numbers
* Have contact numbers of each member of the team so as to enable 24-hour contact and have a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies.
* Essential contacts include:
* Enniskillen PSNI- 02890650222
* **Education Authority, Omagh Office Critical Incident Response Team – 028 37512515**
* Social Services – Gateway - 02871611366
* Social Services – Enniskillen - 02866344103
* Out of Hours Social Services - 02895049999
* Emergency Services – 999
* South West Acute Hospital – 028 66382000

A register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies will be available in the Main Office.

Emergency evacuation drills are familiar to all members of the school community and practiced regularly.

Opportunities to explore sensitive issues such as tragedy and death will be built into the PD schemes and pastoral programmes.

**Procedures for Critical Incident Management - Key Roles Appendix 4**

**Principal – Sinead Cullen**

**CIMT Co-ordinator – Vice Principal – Jim Devine**

* Seeks clarification
* Calls emergency services if appropriate
* Summons the CIMT to inform of incident
* Prepares relevant statements/letters for the media, parents, students and office staff
* Convenes and informs staff.

**Senior Teacher – Michelle Judge (Child Protection)**

* Contacts external agencies – EA – Western Region / social services / PSNI
* Contacts relevant parents
* Supports the physical and emotional wellbeing of students/ staff
* Initiates contact using staff phone tree if necessary & appropriate
* Contact local priests

**Senior Teachers – Gerard Quinn &** Mrs Jane McGeoghan (Temporary Senior Teacher 2023/24 will assist G Quinn in day to day running of school)

* Manages the daily arrangements of the school
* Supports the physical and emotional wellbeing of students/ staff

**Groundsman – Kevin McManus**

**Cleaning Supervisor – Marita Cosgrove**

* Ensures access for essential personnel
* Ensures health and safety measures are in place

**Office Manager – Ann McCaughey**

* Ensures phone lines are operative and all office staff available
* Ensures office staff do not vary from the script prepared by the Principal and agreed by the CIMT

**School Secretary – Kathleen Maguire**

* Arranges staff cover if necessary & appropriate

**School Secretary – Anita Curran**

* Administration support

**Manager of Support Staff** – **Katherine Colton**

* Ensures all support staff are informed
* Supports the physical and emotional wellbeing of all support staff

**BOG Members – Monsignor Peter O’Reilly, Damien Murray & Gerry McCabe**

* Give support and advice as necessary

**ICT Technician – Kevin Colgan**

* Ensures, school texting system, parents app, social media and the school website are used appropriately to communicate with the school and wider community regarding the critical incident.

**Learning Support Co-ordinator – Mrs Mary Keaney**

* Supports the physical and emotional well-being of vulnerable students
* Contacts relevant parents
* Liaises with Classroom Assistants

**Appendix 5**

**CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM MEMBERS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NAME** | **SIGNATURE** |
| Monsignor Peter O’Reilly |  |
| Mr Damien Murray |  |
| Mr Gerry McCabe |  |
| Mrs Sinead Cullen |  |
| Mr Kevin Colgan |  |
| Mrs Katherine Colton |  |
| Mr Jim Devine |  |
| Mrs Jane McGeoghan |  |
| Mrs Michelle Judge |  |
| Mr Gerard Quinn |  |
| Mrs Kathleen Maguire |  |
| Mrs Ann McCaughey |  |
| Mr Kevin Mc Manus |  |
| Miss Marita Cosgrove |  |
| Mrs Mary Keaney |  |
| Mrs Anita Curran |  |

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 6**

**CRITICAL INCIDENT RUNNING REPORT**

DATE: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

WHERE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

WHO: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ACTION AND TIME LINES

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**Appendix 7**

**CRITICAL INCIDENT RUNNING REPORT**

**DATE**: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**INCIDENT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| --- |
| ACTION |
| RATIONALE |
| OUTCOME |
| FURTHER ACTION RAISED |

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME

**Appendix 8**

**Announcements**

**After a known fatality…**

We are taking this time to think about ………………………………………………, a Year 12 who died last night in a road traffic accident. ……………………………………… was travelling with her family to …………………………………… We do not know any details about the accident at this time except that the rest of the family is safe and no one is injured seriously.

……………………………..’s funeral is being held at ………………………… on ……………………………… A funeral is a special time to pray and remember a person who has died. The school will let families know about the specific time and address of the funeral in a written note which will be sent home tomorrow.

Let’s take a moment of silence to think of …………………………………………, to remember all the good things about her, and to say goodbye. In our silence we will express our loving thoughts.

**After a suspected suicide…**

A tragedy has happened. …………………………………………, a Year 8 student, has died suddenly.

Details of ………………………………….’s premature death will not be released to protect the privacy of family members. You will be given information about funeral arrangements as soon as possible.

This kind of tragic news is hard to accept. You may experience many feelings within the next few days. Everyone deals with loss differently. It is important to respect the way others grieve. Counsellors are available in ………………………...... Feel free to arrange to go and talk to the counsellors. They want to listen to your feelings and concerns.

**Sample Press Release 1**

Date

School grieves sudden death of student

As reported by the PSNI, a pupil at ……………………………………………………. School died tragically on …………………………. The circumstances of …………………………………’s death are not known at this time and an investigation is currently on-going.

This is a tragic loss to ………………………………….’s family and to our school community. To assist in supporting our staff and students through this time of grief, additional trained staff from the ELB’s Critical Incident Response Team has been assigned to the school to provide support. A letter has been sent by the school to parents, informing them of this incident and providing information on the support services available through the school.

A special assembly to remember ………………………………… has been arranged for

……………………………………………….

Contact: …………………………… Principal, ………………………………… School at

………………………………………………………

**PRO FORMA LETTER (for parents)**

‘With great regret, we have learnt of the death/deaths of .........……….............. and we extend our deepest sympathy to the family circle.

**PREPARED STATEMENT FOR MEDIA**

We are sorry to learn of the tragic……………………………….of ……………………………….….

We hope at this time the school would be given the privacy needed to support our students at this difficult time, etc

NB: If the Principal wishes to comment about the student, they may want to gain permission from the family to include:

Sporting achievements

Musical talents

Academic success

Personal attributes

**SAMPLE LETTER TO ALL PARENTS**

Date:

Dear Parent/ Carer

It is with great sadness that I have to tell you of the sudden death of

NAME, (a student in Year ........../ a Year ........... Teacher/Learning Support Assistant, etc). The children were told this morning by their class teacher/ Principal at assembly.

NAME died of (an asthma attack, meningitis etc) and the students have been assured this is something that does not happen very often. Your daughter may or may not want to talk about it but it is likely that she will need extra love and support from you in the days ahead. This does not mean that anything is wrong with her. It only means that this traumatic event has been too powerful for her to deal with on her own. She may be feeling anxious. Take time to listen to your daughter and try to provide a predictable routine for him at home. Avoid too many absences as best guidance indicates that where possible routines should be resumed as soon as possible. We have enclosed an information leaflet for you which may be useful at this time.

Trained staff from the EA’s Critical Incident Response Team is helping to support us through this difficult time. It is sometimes necessary for a member of the team to speak to a class or individual students who may be distressed. He will be guided by the Principal/ class teacher in this.

If you do not wish your child to receive such support from the team please contact us immediately.

We are deeply saddened by this great loss but are trying, for the student’s sake, to keep the school environment as normal as possible. Our thoughts are with NAME’s family at this tragic time and the school community sends them sincerest sympathy and support.

NAME’s funeral is on DAY/ DATE at TIME am/pm at (Name of Church). We are in touch with the family regarding their wishes for the school’s representation at the Service.

**Appendix 9**

**Pro forma for Review of Management of Incident**

*(To be completed within 6 weeks of the incident happening.)*

Details of key lessons learned through management of this incident:

* What went well?
* What was most/least helpful?
* Were there any gaps?
* Have all necessary referrals to support services been made?
* Are there any identified training needs?
* Does the policy need to be reviewed/changed/updated?
* Is there any unfinished business?

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*Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**Appendix 10**

**Attendance at Funerals**

The management of Mount Lourdes will endeavour to release staff to attend a funeral with due regard to the normal running of the school. The actual number of staff members released will always take account of the needs of the school in a given context.

Flexibility will be shown in relation to student/staff attendance at funerals. The guiding principle will be to offer maximum comfort and support to the bereaved person/family.

A member(s) of SLT will attend funerals of close relatives of staff and students. A Guard of Honour will also be arranged for such funerals when possible.

It will be the policy of the management of the school to arrange representation at funerals in the event of **the death of:**

* A member of staff
* A member of the student body
* A member of the Board of Governors
* The principal of a neighbouring school
* A former member of staff
* A member of the Enniskillen Mercy Community

It will be the policy of the management of the school to arrange, where feasible, representation at funerals in the event of **the death of an immediate family member of:**

* a member of staff
* a member of the student body
* a member of the Board of Governors

(*Representation will be arranged for other funerals not listed as deemed appropriate)*

In the event of the death of a student’s close family relative at a weekend or during a holiday period, the management of the school will make reasonable attempts to contact the student’s subject teachers, form teacher and Head of Year.

In the event of a death of a person associated with the school community at a weekend or during a holiday period, a reasonable attempt will be made to inform all staff using the school’s communication phone tree system.

Appendix 11

Critical Incident Management Team

Contact Details

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Home Number** | **Mobile Number** |
| Sinead Cullen | 028 89531366 | 07753513346 |
| Seamus Devine | 028 66389877 | 07793749267 |
| Michelle Judge | 028 66346826 | 07752771063 |
| Jane McGeoghan | 02866326218 | 07793046050 |
| Gerard Quinn | 02886751947 | 07835106722 |
| Katherine Colton | 028 82898046 | 07867966538 |
| Kevin Colgan | 028 82897811 | 07989968480 |
| Ann McCaughey |  | 07743033673 |
| Kathleen Maguire | 028 66342652 | 07791246135 |
| Kevin McManus | 028 66328730 | 07902370173 |
| Monsignor Peter O’Reilly | 028 66322075 Ext 3  028 66382000 [SWAH and ask to be put through] | 07591404787 |
| Damien Murray |  | 07969755987 |
| Marita Cosgrove |  | 07730275796 |
| Mary Keaney |  | 07815709229 |
| Anita Curran |  | 07808879080 |
| Gerry McCabe |  | 07809220861 |