

Critical Incident Management Plan

Benincasa Special School

Introduction:

In Benincasa we aim to protect the wellbeing of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and well catered for environment as outlined in our philosophy statement

The B.O.M. through the Principal and staff with the aid of parents has drawn up a critical incident action 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"

Examples:

- death, major illness/outbreak of disease.
- criminal incidents
- major accidents, serious injury
- suicide
- civil unrest, war
- fire, natural and technological disaster
- disappearance of student from home or school
- unauthorised removal of student from school or home

Critical Incidents Management Team:

Team Leader: Mr. Diarmuid Delaney (Principal)

Garda Liaison: Diarmuid Delaney

Staff Liaison: Alannah McNally

Student Liaison: Alannah McNally

Parent Liaison: Paul Taouk,

Community Liaison: Alannah McNally/Irene Allwright

Media Liaison: Diarmuid Delaney

Administrator: Marie Murray

B.O.M. Rep: Barry O'Brien

The first-named person has the responsibility as defined.

The second-named person assists and only assumes responsibility on the absence of the first-named.

Roles and Responsibilities

Team Leader: Diarmuid Delaney

Intervention

- alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- coordinates the tasks of the team
- liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC
- liaises with the bereaved family, if appropriate

Garda liaison: Diarmuid Delaney

- liaises with the Gardai
- ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy

Staff liaison: Alannah McNally

- leads briefing meetings for 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
- 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 the EAS and gives them the contact number

Student Liaison: Alannah McNally

Intervention

- address the immediate needs of the students
- outline specific services available in school
- put in place clear referral procedures to access services
- alerts staff to vulnerable students appropriately
- keep a record of students seen by external agencies
- looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet room'

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable students
- Monitor class most affected
- Refer on, as appropriate
- Review and evaluate plan

Parent Liaison Role: Paul Taouk

Intervention

- visits the bereaved family with the team leader if appropriate
- arranges parent meetings, if required

- 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 ready for adaptation
- sets up room for meetings with parents if necessary
- maintains a record of parents seen
- meets with individual parents
- provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)
- coordinate contact with families and (following first contact by principal)
- consult with family around involvement of school in e.g. funeral service
- assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident

Postvention

- provide ongoing support to families affected by the incident if appropriate
- involve as appropriate family in-school liturgies/memorial services.
- offer to link family with community support groups
- review and evaluate plan.

Community/agency liaison: Alannah McNally, Irene Allwright

- 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
- coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Media liaison: Diarmuid Delaney

- 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, etc)
- in the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the SEC; relevant teacher unions etc.
- will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator: Marie Murray

- maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - parents/guardians
 - teachers
 - Emergency Services
- takes telephone calls and noted those who need to be responded to
- ensures that templates are on the school 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 and materials used.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff of Benincasa have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to this fact in all dealings.

Critical Incident Rooms:

- The school hall will be the main room used to meet the staff
- The hall will be the main room used to meet the students
- The office will be the main room used to meet the parents
- The office will be the main room to meet the media
- The staff room will be the main room for individual sessions with students
- The library will be the main room for other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan:

- All staff will be consulted about this plan Each member of the Critical Incident Team will have a copy of the plan and a critical incident folder with all relevant materials and templates in it
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Diarmuid Delaney
- This plan will be updated annually in September of each year

Action plan

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)

- 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.
- rooms will made be made available as follows:

- Individual Meetings:
- Parents Room

Media Briefing (if appropriate)

- designate a spokesperson. (Leader)
- prepare a brief statement. (Team)
- protect the family's privacy.
- gather accurate information
- it is important to obtain accurate information about the incident.
 1. What happened, where and when?
 2. What are 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. B.O.M
 4. H.S.E. Psychology Departments/Community Care Services
 5. NEPS
 6. DES/Schools Inspector.
- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team at an appropriate time depending on when the incident happens.
 1. Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate. (9.00 a.m.)
 2. Ensure any absent staff members are kept informed.
 3. Organize timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible).
 4. Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted, list of friends etc, or any other relevant information and give to the Student Liaison person.
 5. Arrange supervision of students
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service in the event of a death
 1. 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.
 2. Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate. (Student Liaison person + Class teacher)
 3. Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS (24-72 HOURS)

- 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
 1. Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team. (8.30 a.m.)
 2. Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff.
 3. Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students.
 4. Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting. (3.00 p.m.)
 5. Establish contact with absent staff and pupils.
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary.
 1. Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened.
 2. Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out.
 3. Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission.
 4. Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc.)
 5. Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.
- Plan visits to injured
 1. Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital.
 2. Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided)
 3. Decide this in accordance with parents' wishes and school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends.
- school closure (if appropriate)
- request a decision on this from school management.

LONGER TERM ACTIONS

- Monitor students for signs of continuing distress.
- 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.
 1. Uncharacteristic behaviour
 2. Deterioration in academic performance
 3. Physical symptoms — e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness
 4. Inappropriate emotional reactions
 5. Increased absenteeism.
- Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately.
 1. What went well?
 2. Where were the gaps?
 3. What was most/least helpful?
 4. Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
 5. Is there any unfinished business?
- Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future
 1. Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
 1. Ensure that new staff are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.

2. Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way.
 3. 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.
- Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (Be sensitive to special days and events)
 1. Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time.
 2. Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
 3. Be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day.
 - Plan a school memorial service.
 - Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
 - Update and amend school records.

Ratified by Board on 08/02/2023

Signed

----- Maighr ad N  Ghallchobhair (Chairperson)