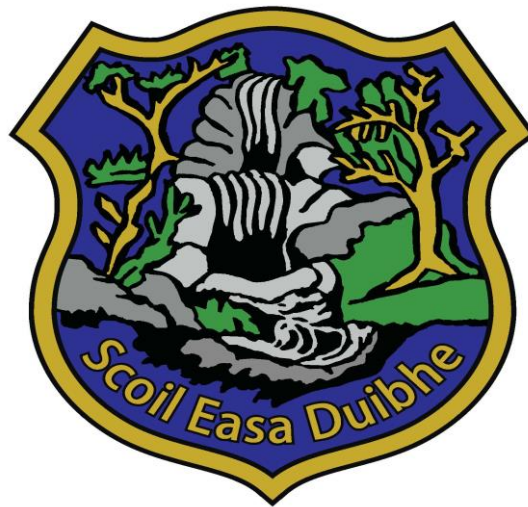


Asdee National School



Critical Incident Policy

Updated May 2021

**Asdee N.S. follow the guidelines set out in
'Responding to Critical Incidents; NEPS Guidelines
& Resource materials for schools (2016)**

Defining a Critical Incident

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school. Some crises affecting schools are listed below:

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.
- An accident involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises.
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community.

Maintaining an up-to-date list of contact numbers

Numbers should be available for:

- Pupils, parents, guardians
- Staff
- Emergency support services.

Compiling emergency information for school trips

This should include:

- List of all pupils/staff involved and teacher in charge
- List of mobile phone numbers for accompanying teachers
- Up to date medical information on pupils with allergies, epilepsy etc

Identifying roles to be fulfilled at the time of a critical incident

External liaison with:

- Outside support agencies i.e. emergency service, DES, NEPS, Health Board etc.
- Parents
- Distressed visitors
- The media

Internal care and communication with:

- Staff
- Students in general
- Students more immediately involved or affected

Maintaining administration and services such as:

- Telephone – keeping a line free for outgoing and important incoming calls
- Rooms for debriefing, parents, quiet room, counselling etc.
- Log of events, letters to parents, telephone calls made and received
- Dealing with normal school business

Maintain the normal routine as far as possible for classes not immediately affected by the incident.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Short-Term Actions (1st Day)

The procedures to be followed will depend on the particular incident that has occurred and the particular arrangements in place in a school.

Gather accurate information.

It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident, otherwise rumours will take over and add to the distress of those involved.

- What happened, where and when?
- What is the extent of the injuries?
- What is the location of those injured and not injured?
- How many are involved and what are their names?
- Is there a risk of further injury?
- What agencies have been contacted already?

Contact appropriate agencies.

- Emergency services
- Medical services
- Health Board Psychology Departments/Community Care Services
- NEPS
- BOM
- DES/School Inspector

Convene a meeting with key staff/Critical Incident Management Team

Arrange Supervision of students

Hold staff meeting

Organise timetable for the day As far as possible maintain normal routines.

Inform parents/guardians

Children directly involved:

Parents/guardians to be contacted as soon as possible, and this first contact should be handled with great sensitivity

- Agree who should share information with parents and how this should be done.
- Make a list of parents/guardians who have been contacted and those who still need to be told to avoid duplication of messages.
- Give parents/guardians relevant and factual information
- Set a room aside for distressed students to meet their parents/guardians.
- Provide support to parents who are on their own when they arrive at the school.
- Give telephone numbers for enquiries.

Children not directly involved:

The parents of other children in the school should be informed of the incident and that their child may be upset.

Send a letter to parents stating the facts and brief details of the incident, it may not be appropriate at this point to disclose the names of those involved.

Inform students

The nature of the event will clearly have an influence on how students are informed. The key points/actions in the process are listed below.

- Give facts and avoid speculation. This will help to dispel rumours which can cause unnecessary stress.
- Allow pupils to ask questions, tell their story and express feelings.
- Help students realise that overwhelming emotions are natural and normal following a critical incident.

Make contact with the bereaved family

Dealing with the media

Prepare a written statement to include:

- The facts about the incident
- What has been done already
- What is going to be done
- Positive information or comments about the deceased person.

Some points to remember if you are asked to give a live interview:

- Consider assigning the task to someone skilled or familiar with dealing with the media.
- Take some time to prepare
- Remember that everything you say is on record and, therefore, keep it simple, factual and brief
- Decline if you are not ready or think it inappropriate.

Consider setting aside a room for the media. This may help to control their access to staff and students.

Brief staff and students and advise them on dealing with the media.

Organise the reunion of student with their parents, if necessary

- Inform students that their parents/guardians will be collecting them as soon as possible
- Facilitate distressed students and their parents by providing a private room where they can meet following an incident. This could be a very emotional time.
- Where appropriate offer help with transport, especially with younger children.

Summary Checklist for Principals

1. Gather the facts – Who? What? When? And Where?
2. Contact appropriate agencies
3. Convene the Critical Incident Management Team
4. Organise for the supervision of students.
5. Inform staff
6. Agree on a statement of the facts
7. Identify high risk students
8. Appoint someone to deal with phone enquiries
9. Organise timetable for the day
10. Inform parents/guardians
11. Inform students
12. Make contact with the bereaved family
13. Organise support
14. Respond to the media.

Maintain the normal school routine when at all possible

Medium-Term Actions (24-72 hours)

- Review the events of the first 24 hours
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary.
- Plan for reintegration of students and staff (e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relatives etc.)
- Plan visits to injured
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service
- Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service
- Make a decision on school closure

Longer Term Actions

- Monitor students for signs of continuing distress.
A referral to the Health Board may be necessary if over a prolonged period of time a student continues to display the following,
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.
- Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately
- Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future.
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate.
- Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (be sensitive to special days and events)

This policy was updated by staff and ratified by the Board of Management in May 2021. This policy will be reviewed in 2023.

Chairperson: Oliver Kearney

Chairperson: _____ Date: _____

Secretary to B.O.M./Principal: Michelle Sheehy

Secretary/Principal: _____ Date: _____

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Asdee N.S. Critical Incidents Management Team

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Board of Management : Oliver Kearney – Chairperson 086 1753209

Communications Role: Bridín Butler - Deputy Principal 083 1470306
Assumpta Collins – APII /Special Ed.Teacher
087 2923907

Chaplaincy Role: Fr. Hussey 087 2386084

Gardai Listowel: 068 50820 068 50827

Gardai Ballybunion: 068 27104

Parent Representatives: Mairead McNamara 086 0655410
Thomas Mulvihill 087 2778798

Board of Management members:

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