



Critical Incident Policy for San Carlo J.N.S. 2022 – 2024

Covid 19: “Responding to Critical Incidents during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from Covid 19” is a separate document which is located in the Covid 19 File. Its procedures are very similar to the ones listed here.

General Policy and plan

Introduction:

In San Carlo J.N.S. 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 B.O.M. through the Principal, the Staff and the Parents Association has drawn up a critical incident management plan. We 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’.

Aim: The aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) is to help 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 pupils and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to return to normality as soon as possible.

Examples:

- Death, major illness/outbreak of disease (Covid 19/ Foot & Mouth)
- Criminal incidents (e.g. Shooting at first communion in Ballymun, murder suicide in Cavan.)
- Major accidents, serious injury (e.g. ‘Navan bus crash’)
- Suicide
- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing in Cork)
- Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g. Midleton 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.

The ethos of San Carlo J.N.S is one of care and support for all. We have put systems in place to help build resilience in both staff and pupils, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical Safety

- Evacuation plan for school formulated
- Regular fire drills are practiced. Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision is in place
- Covid 19 reopening plans put in place and communicated with the whole school body.
- All guidelines issued by the HSE and the DES to be followed
- All recommendations around sanitising stations and cleaning protocols are in place.
- Safety Statement is in place
- School doors locked during school hours
- Entrance to the school by buzzer only
- Admittance to the school grounds to be limited via a barrier system
- Rules of the school on display throughout the school
- CPR and First Aid Training to be provided for the staff
- First Aid boxes are available at all times.

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of San Carlo J.N.S. 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 (S.P.H.E.)
- Staff have access to training for their role in S.P.H.E.
- A Child Safeguarding Statement is in place. We follow all procedures and guidelines issued by the DES.
- Staff have been provided with training in the area of Child Protection Guidelines and procedures. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons.
- The school has a policies on Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying which are updated annually.
- Staff are informed about access to support services for their pupils and themselves

Critical Incidents Management Team:

The CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team will retain their roles for at least a year. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan.

The first-named person in the following list has the responsibility as defined.

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

Delegation of short term, medium term and follow-up actions are outlined in the attached sheets.

Leadership Role: Clara Malaniff (Principal), Shibu Avarachan (Chairperson)

Communication Role: Ms. Clara Malaniff / Ms. Grainne Flood (Deputy Principal)

Student Liaison/ Counselling Role: Ms. Malaniff / Ms. Smyth

Chaplaincy Role: Fr. Gregory/ Fr. Aloyious

Family Liaison Role: Mrs. Malaniff/Ms. Flood

Community Liaison: Mrs. Malaniff/Ms. Flood

Parents Association Rep: Clara Malaniff

B.O.M. Rep: Clara Malaniff

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Leadership Role:

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident response team
- Liaise with the Gardaí/Emergency services
- Lead briefing meetings 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
- Express sympathy to family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Make contact with other relevant agencies
- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)

Follow-up

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

2. Communication Role:

Intervention

- With Team, prepare a public statement
- 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

Follow-up

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

3. Student Liaison/ Counselling Role: Intervention

- Advise the staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils
- Alert staff to vulnerable pupils
- Outline specific services available in the school
- Put in place clear referral procedures
- Address immediate needs of staff
- Provide materials for staff (from critical incident folder)
- Provide information
- Provide counselling

Follow-up

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

4. Chaplaincy Role: Intervention

- Visit home(s), if appropriate
- Assist with prayer services
- Make contact with other local clergy
- Be available as personal and spiritual support to staff

Follow-up

- Provide follow-up support to families in conjunction with Home School Community Liaison
- Work in partnership with Critical Incident team
- Review and Evaluate Plan

4. Family Liaison Role: Intervention

- Co-ordinate contact with families (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

Follow-up

- Provide ongoing 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

Action plan

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)

(In the event of a Covid 19 outbreak in the school the guidelines issued by the HSE/DES will be followed)

In the event of a critical incident the following actions will be taken (this will be done in cooperation with NEPS)

- 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)

- 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

5. BOM

6. DES/Schools Inspector

- 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 this is 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)

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

- 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

- What went well?
- Where were the gaps?
- What was most/least helpful?
- Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any unfinished business?

Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future

- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
- Ensure that new staffs are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area
- Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way
- 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)

- Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time
- Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
- Need to 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

Signed off by the Board of Management of San Carlo Junior School on 25.03.2021

Review Date: March 2024

Signed: *Shibu Avarachan* **Date:** 11/3/22
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: *Clara Deloriff* **Date:** 11/3/22
Principal

