



POLICY FOR CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Moville Community College Post-Primary School

ETB schools are state, co-educational, multi-denominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
 - Care
 - Equality
 - Community
 - Respect

Mission Statement

Moville Community College is a school where everybody is encouraged and expected to be the best that they can be.

Vision

Moville Community College is a second level school under the management of Donegal Education and Training Board. We provide a broad curriculum and a high quality education to learners in our community. We promote academic success and always recognise our students' achievements. Our staff, supported by parents, enable the students to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become responsible young adults who contribute positively to society. We value mutual respect, tolerance and positive relationships. We celebrate diversity and we seek to



foster a sense of belonging. We include all students in our school and we aim to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

Link to Mission & Aims

Moville Community College aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. It promotes emotional health and well-being which build resilience in both staff and students thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events.

Mental health is a vital element of this work: it can be defined as “the emotional and spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life and survive pain, disappointment and pain” (HEA, 1997.)

The Board of Management in conjunction with the School Principal, has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school’s policies and plans. Our aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

Review and Research

The CIMT have consulted the two NEPS Responding to Critical Incidents documents as well as other relevant resources including:

When Tragedy Strikes: Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools (INTO/Ulster Teachers Union 2000)

Responding to Critical Incidents; Guidelines for Schools (NEPS 2007)

Guidelines for Schools on How to Respond to the Sudden Unexpected Death of a Student (ASTI 1997)

Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group 2002)

Definition

The staff and management of Moville Community College recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school”.

Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence,
- Suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death
- An intrusion into the school



- An accident involving members of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc
- The disappearance of a member of the school community

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 students 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 effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, 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 formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Sign in and out – late entrance and early departure
- An electronic administration system keeps record of attendance by class period

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Moville Community College 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 (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management; resilience; conflict management; problem solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE from a trained facilitator
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures



- Staff are trained in Restorative Practice.
- Students can voice their opinion through their Student Council.
- The Parents Association works with the principal, staff and the board of management to build effective partnership between home and school.
- We are a Cycle Against Suicide Ambassador School.
- A Pastoral Care Team who meet regularly is in existence..
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers e.g. Relationships and Sexuality.
- Student Mental Health is supported through the Jigsaw One Good School Programme including a whole school approach involving teachers, students and parents.
- We are part of the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Programme
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency and in this case parents are informed.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies- e.g CAMHS, Education Welfare Service, HSE, NEPS, Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer, Family Support Service, Jigsaw, Child & Family Resource Centre, St Vincent de Paul, Belongto, Aware, Bodywhys, Donegal Youth Council.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves
- Donegal ETB has a staff welfare officer to support staff.

Critical Incident Management Team

Moville Community College has set up a Critical Incident Management Team consisting of the following personnel:

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principal x2
- The School Secretary
- The School Guidance Counsellors
- The Home School Community Liaison Coordinator

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary. This leadership role may be delegated to the Deputy Principal.

Roles

- Team Leader
- Garda Liaison



- Staff Liaison
- Student Liaison
- Parent Liaison
- Community Liaison
- Media Liaison
- Administrator
- ETB Liaison

Role of Team Leader:

- The team leader alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting of the team
- Coordinates/delegates tasks of the other team members.
- Liaises with The Board of Management, NEPS and the ETB

Garda Liaison

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

Staff Liaison

- 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 Employee Assistance Scheme and gives them the contact number.

Student Liaison

- May coordinate information from tutors and year heads students they are concerned about
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Home School Community/agency Liaison

- In case of bereavement, liaises with the affected family
- 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
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent Liaison

- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- 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
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media Liaison

- This role is normally assigned to the Team Leader but may be delegated to the Deputy Principal
- 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 relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the schools 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, material used etc.

The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The management and staff of Movable Community College have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, *and* that the family involved consents to its use. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead. Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

Critical Incident Room

In a critical incident

- The parents' room will be the main room used to meet students (depending on numbers)
- The staffroom will be used for staff
- A list of other appropriate rooms will be provided at the office

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

- All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan.
- Students and parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.
- Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.
- Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan.
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan.





**CRITICAL INCIDENT
MANAGEMENT PLAN
MOVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

School Principal: Caroline Doherty

School Deputy Principal: Christopher Hegarty, Sue Donaghy

School Secretary: B. McGroarty

School Guidance Counsellors: S McCarron & B Curran

Home School Community Liaison Coordinator: Rita O'Brien

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.



KEY ROLES ASSIGNED BY TEAM LEADER

NAME OF TEAM MEMBER	TASK
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	Team Leader NEPS Liaison Garda Liaison Media Liaison ETB Liaison
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	Staff Liaison
SECRETARY	Administrator
HSCL	Parent & Community Liaison
GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR	Student Liaison



EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

GARDA STATIONS	Moyville 9382002
	Muff 9384002
	Buncrana 9320540
AMBULANCE/FIRE	999/112
HOSPITAL	07491 25888
DOCTOR (Moyville)	9382408 / 9382409
NOWDOC	1850 400 911
NEPS	07491 78592
DONEGAL ETB	074 9161600
HSCCL	087 2118973
CAMHS (referral by GP)	07491 20340
DES	090 648 3600
SEC	090 644 2700
TUI	087 1276538
CLERGY	07493 82057
STATE EXAMS COMMISSION	090 644 2700
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057



Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

Short-term Actions (1st Day)

- o Inform Chairperson of Board of Management
- o Inform Solicitors and Insurance Company as appropriate
- o Ensure the safety of students, staff and visitors
- o Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team and delegate responsibilities
- o Gather accurate information (incident report form)
- o Identify high risk students
- o Contact appropriate agencies and organise support
- o Contact NEPS, the BOM, Donegal ETB and the Parents' Association
- o Appoint people e.g to support the secretary in handing phone enquiries and manning the reception office and the front gate
- o Arrange the supervision of students
- o Hold a staff meeting and distribute resource material
- o Organise a timetable for the day
- o Hold a Students' Council meeting
- o Inform students and parents
- o Make contact with the affected/bereaved family
- o Organise reunion of students with their parents
- o Respond to the media (Principal or Deputy Principal only)



- o Arrange visit to affected/bereaved family
- o Report to the Health and Safety Authority, if necessary

(As far as possible maintain normal school routine)

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS (24-72 hours)

- o Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team to review the events of the first 24 hours and to delegate responsibilities
- o Arrange support for students, staff and parents
- o Update staff, students and the Students' Council
- o Update NEPS, the BOM, Donegal ETB , the Parents' Association and the relevant external agencies
- o Update the media, if necessary (Principal or Deputy Principal only)
- o Liaise with the family and clarify the school's involvement in funeral/memorial services
- o Plan visits to the injured
- o Plan for the reintegration of students and staff
- o Assess the roles of the BOM, the Parents' Association and the Students' Council
- o Plan the restoration of normal school routine
- o Consider the legal and financial consequences
- o Inform the school's insurers



LONGER TERM ACTIONS

- o Monitor students and staff for signs of continuing distress
- o Plan the long-term counselling needs of individuals
- o Plan for anniversaries and memorials
- o Evaluate the school's response to the critical incident and amend the Critical Incident Policy appropriately
- o Evaluate the effect on the student/teacher relationships
- o Evaluate the long-term effect on the educational progress of students
- o Ensure that new staff are aware of the Critical Incident Policy and are informed of which students/staff are affected in any recent incident
- o Ensure that a report is sent to the new school when a student is transferring
- o Evaluate the legal and financial consequences
- o Report to the BOM, Donegal ETB , the Parents' Association and NEPS

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

A Critical Incident Policy Committee will review the policy annually formation .Ongoing review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information, legislation, developments in the school-based programme and feedback from parents/guardians, teachers and students. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning.

This policy is subject to annual review by the Board of Management.



SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS ***

Dear Parents/Guardians

The school has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our students/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury

(Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy.
(Elaborate)

It is possible that your son may have some feelings that he may like to discuss with you. You can help your son by taking time to listen to him and encouraging him to express his feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to his age.

If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at school *(Details)*

Principal.



SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING THE CONSENT FOR INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following the recent (tragedy/ death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to boys either in small groups or on a one to one basis, and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate Your son has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (X). If you would like your son to receive this support, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by

If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school.

Principal.

I/We consent to having our son/daughter meet with

I understand that my son may meet x in an individual or group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____.

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____.

Signed: _____

(Parents /Guardians)



Support Services

- School Support Services (Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, Year Coordinator or any staff member in the school)
- Local GP
- HSE Bereavement Counselling Services
0749123670
- Clinical Psychology Dept Letterkenny
0749104641
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
0749120340

Other Voluntary Sector Groups include:

- AWARE –support for people suffering from depression
1890 303 302
- GROW – support for people recovering their mental health
1890 474 47 www.grow.ie
- Living Links (Suicide Bereavement Group)
086 39990 www.livinglinks.ie
- Mental Health Ireland – Supporting mental health
086 853901 www.mentalhealthireland.ie
- STOP (Suicide Teach Organise Prevent)
071 91642 www.stopsuicide.ie



Helplines and Information Websites:

- Barnardos Bereavement Helpline
01 473 2110
- Childline
1800 666666
- Console Helpline (for anyone bereaved by suicide)
1800 201890
- Samaritans
1850 609090
- Teenline Ireland
1850 833634

www.reachout.com

www.headsup.ie

www.webwise.ie

www.letsomeoneknow.ie

www.barnardos.ie/teenhelp

www.spunout.ie