

Critical Incident Policy



Chanel College Critical Incident Policy

Introduction

This policy was formulated following a staff meeting early in August 2008.

Aim

The aim of the policy is to draw up a plan to enable Chanel College to manage a possible critical incident and to cope more effectively in the aftermath of such an incident.

Definition of Critical Incident

- Any incident or sequence of events, which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school.
- The loss of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.
- A serious accident involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.

The term 'suicide' will not be used without the consent of the family involved or until it has been established categorically that the person's death was as a result of suicide. The term 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' should be used instead.

At the discretion of the Principal, other scenarios may be defined as Critical Incidents.

Key Administrative tasks

1. Maintain a list of addresses and phone numbers of students
2. Registration Form Updated
 - Form teachers to update information on Form Class each term and refer updated details to the administration staff. Co-ordination of this information to be agreed at Year Head meetings.

- Updated information will then be available on the Administration system.

3. Staff Addresses & Contact Numbers

- Available from Principal, Deputy Principal and the College Secretary.
- Principal and Deputy Principal's contact information will be available to all staff.
- Establish a Staff chain of communication.

Support Services

- Emergency contact list displayed in staff room, and the offices of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, School Secretaries and the Guidance Counsellors.

Foreign Tours and Other Trips

- Staff organising foreign tours and other trips are responsible for compiling a list of all the students and staff involved in the trip, a list of mobile numbers for accompanying teachers and medical information on students involved.
- A copy of the list of students and relevant data should be left with the Principal, Deputy Principal.
- School mobile phone with roaming facilities available to staff on school trips.

Fire Officer

- Fire Drill twice a year.
- Evacuation procedures are displayed in every classroom.
- Evacuation procedures are displayed in every classroom

Training and Staff Development

The school will provide opportunities for staff, members of the Board of Management and Parent Association representatives to attend information/training meetings on issues such as suicide, grieving and first aid.

The Media

The Principal as Secretary to the BOM will liaise with the media .***

The Principal will prepare a brief written statement to include:-

- The sympathy of the school community for the affected / bereaved family.
- Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured person(s).
- The facts about the incident (following consultation with affected or bereaved families).
- What has been done.
- What is going to be done.

*** In the Absence of the Principal the Deputy Principal.

Members of Critical Incident Team

List is interchangeable depending on the incident.

- Principal

- Deputy Principal
- Year Head
- Form Teacher
- School Secretary
- Caretaker
- Guidance Counsellors
- Chaplain
- Relevant teachers with expertise e. g. First Aid
- Other Professionals

Critical Incident team members need to liaise with staff members directly involved in the Critical Incident.

Roles to be fulfilled by the Critical Incident Team members, staff, Students' Council and Parents' Association are detailed below. The Critical Incident Management Team will delegate the responsibilities of any member of the team who is unable to fulfil their responsibilities.

The Management team decide the member of staff or other professional to liaise with the media.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident

Short-term Actions (1st Day)

- Ensure the safety of students, staff and visitors.
- Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team and delegate responsibilities.
- Gather accurate information (incident report form).
- Identify high-risk students.
- Contact appropriate agencies and organizes support.
- Contact the DES, the BOM, the trustees to support the secretary and caretaker in handling phone enquiries and manning the reception office and the front door.
- Arrange for the supervision of students.
- Hold a staff meeting and distribute resource material.
- Organise a timetable for the day.
- Hold a Students' Council meeting.
- Inform students and parents.
- Make contact with the affected / bereaved family.
- Report to the Health and Safety Authority, if necessary.
- As far as possible maintain normal school routine.

Medium-term Actions (24-72 hours)

- Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team to review the events of the first 24 hours to delegate responsibilities.
- Arrange support for students, staff and parents.
- Update staff, students and the Students' Council.
- Update the media, if necessary.
- Liaise with the family and clarify the school's involvement in funeral/memorial services.

- Plan visits to the injured.
- Plan for the reintegration of students and staff.
- Assess the roles of the BOM, the Parents' Council and the Students' Council.
- Consider the legal and financial consequences.

Longer Term Actions

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

The Principal and Deputy Principal will normally be responsible for:

- The care of and communication with staff.
- Organising the supervision of students.
- Liaising with the administrative, caretaker and other non teaching staff.
- Liaising with the Students' Council and the Parents' Council.
- Liaising with external support agencies, the emergency services, the Board of Management, the Trustees, and the Department of Education and Science.
- Drawing up a letter informing all parents of the critical incident and the schools response.
- Reporting incidents to the Health and Safety Authority.

The Year Head(s) and Form Teacher(s) will normally be responsible for:

- The care of and communication of students in their Year group.
- Identifying and monitoring students at risk.
- Communication with parents of students involved or affected.
- Gathering accurate information about the incident.

The Career Guidance Counsellors and the Chaplain will normally be responsible for:

- The care of students and staff immediately involved or effected.
- The care of distressed visitors.
- Providing rooms for debriefing, parents, quiet room and counselling.
- Liaising with external support agencies e.g. NEPS and the Health Services Executive.

The Health and Safety Representative and the Critical Incident Team will normally be responsible for:

- Assessing the Health and Safety issues.
- Assisting the Principal with reports to the Health and Safety Authority and other relevant agencies.

The Administration Staff will normally be responsible for:

- Ensuring the office is manned at all times.
- Keeping a telephone line free for outgoing and important incoming calls.
- Liaising with the Principal, Deputy Principal and other members of the Critical Incident Team.

The Caretaker will normally be responsible for:

- Controlling access to the school premises.
- Maintaining security procedures.
- Maintaining services e.g. heating.
- Liaising with the Principal, Deputy Principal and other members of the Critical Incident Team.

The Teaching Staff will normally be responsible for:

- Supervising their own and colleagues' classes.
- Assisting in identifying and supporting students at risk or in distress.
- Assisting in information gathering.
- Maintaining normal procedures.

Other Non-Teaching Staff will normally be responsible for:

- Maintaining normal procedures.
- Assisting in identifying and supporting students at risk or in distress.

The members of the Students' Council and the 6th Year Leaders will normally contribute by:

- Assisting in identifying and supporting students at risk or in distress.
- Representing students concerns and wishes regarding school's response to the critical incident.

The Members of the Parents Association will normally contribute by:

- Representing parents' concerns and wishes regarding school's response to the critical incident.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The Critical Incident Policy Committee will review the policy in September of each new school year as an induction for new staff and before the formation of a new Board of Management. 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.