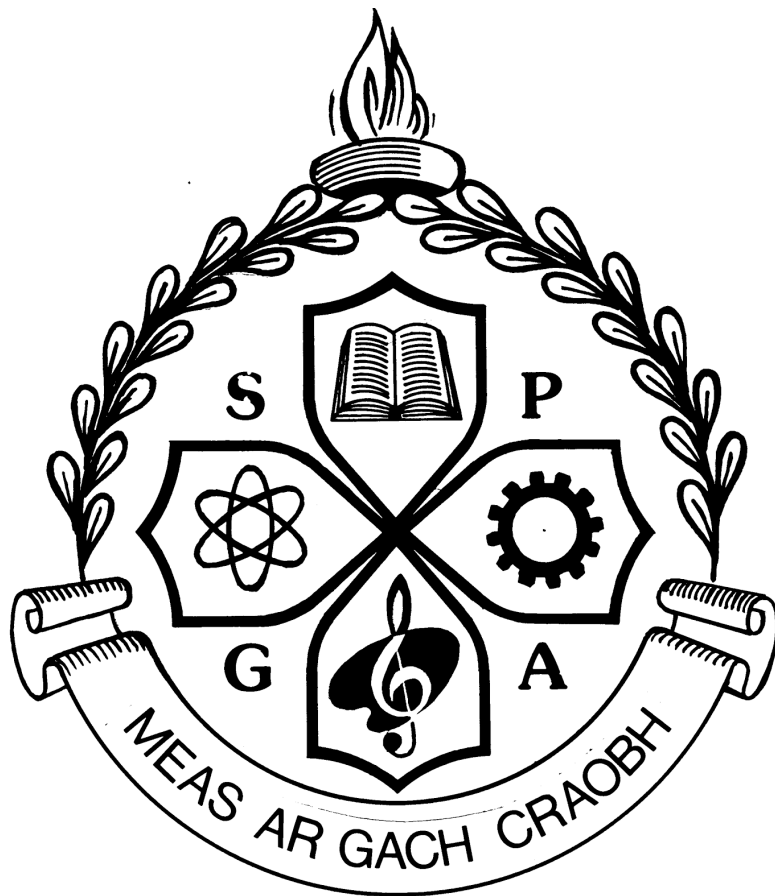


# Critical Incident POLICY



# **Mayfield Community School**

## **Critical Incident Management Policy**

### ***A. Defining a Critical Incident***

Broadly speaking, a Critical Incident is any incident or sequence of events that overwhelm the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school.

### ***B. Critical Incident Management Team***

This team will consist of members of the school's management and pastoral team:

- a. Principal
- b. Deputy Principal
- c. Guidance Counsellors
- d. Home School Liaison Officer
- e. Chaplain
- f. Secretary
- g. (Other personnel as deemed appropriate)

This team will be responsible for identifying key tasks that arise following a critical incident, and who will be responsible for the differing tasks.

### ***C. Roles which may be filled by the Critical Incident Management Team***

- a. Confirming Information
- b. Contact supports for the school
- c. Staff Information
- d. Student Information
- e. Home Contact
- f. Funeral Arrangements
- g. Media relations
- h. Someone to co-ordinate support for students

### ***D. Key Tasks in the Critical Incident Management Process***

- a. Maintain an up to date list of contact numbers
- b. Keep an up to date list of parents/guardians for all students.
- c. Keep an up to date emergency support services contact list.
- d. Outline a protocol for dealing with liturgies and other events to mark a loss.

### ***E. Emergency Information for School Trips***

This should include a list of all pupils and staff involved and the teacher in charge. It should include mobile contact numbers for accompanying teachers and up to date medical information on students with allergies, or other medical conditions.



## ***F. Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident***

### **1. Gather Accurate Information**

This information is important in order to allow the school to deal accurately with the Critical Incident, and to prevent the spread of rumours.

### **2. Contact the Appropriate Agencies**

Agencies that may be listed on the emergency support services contact list:

- a. Emergency Services
- b. Medical Services
- c. Health Board Psychology Departments
- d. National Educational Psychological Service
- e. Board of Management
- f. Department of Education / Schools Inspector
- g. Local Church / Parish Priest

### **3. Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team**

Topics which may be covered include

- a. Agreeing a statement of the facts for staff, students, parents and the media.
- b. Delegating responsibilities to the team.
- c. Appoint someone to handle phone enquiries and to deal with the media.
- d. Organising a timetable / routine for the day.
- e. Organising a staff meeting to deliver an account of the facts, and to discuss procedures and concerns.
- f. Consider re-opening of school if Critical Incident occurs during holiday time.
- g. Give the staff a handout on what to do following a bereavement (appendix A)

### **4. Organise a timetable for the day**

As far as possible, maintain normal routines. It may be appropriate for a directly affected class to have special support and time.

### **5. Inform parents / guardians**

- a. For children directly involved or affected, parents / guardians should be contacted directly as soon as possible. This first contact will need to be handled with great sensitivity.
- b. Agree who should share information with parents and how this should be done.
- c. Give parents / guardians relevant and factual information.
- d. Give telephone numbers for enquiries and set a room aside for distressed students to meet their parents / guardians.
- e. The parents / guardians of other children in the school should be informed of the incident and that their child may be upset.

## **6. Inform Students**

It is best to inform students while they are in class groups or in smaller groups, if necessary. Also, it is best if someone very familiar with a given class is the person to inform that class.

When informing a class:

- a. Give the facts to avoid speculation and rumour. These facts will be included in the agreed statement made by the Critical Incident Management Team.
- b. Allow students to ask questions, and give them a chance to talk to an adult.
- c. Help students to realise that overwhelming emotions are natural following a critical incident.
- d. Offer the support of the school and N.E.P.S, if available.
- e. Be conscious of those who may have been bereaved in a similar manner.

## **7. Make contact with the bereaved family**

- a. Assure them of the school's support.
- b. Include any facts regarding the incident, what has been done already, and what is going to be done.

## **8. Organise contact between students and parents / guardians, if necessary**

Distressed students may wish to be with their families. Provide a room where they can meet in privacy following a critical incident. This could be a very emotional time. Where appropriate offer help with transport, especially for younger children.

## ***G. De-Brief Students and Staff***

At an appropriate time following the Critical Incident, meet with affected students to see how they are coping. It may be necessary to refer some students.

## ***H. The School Community***

Depending on the severity of the Critical Incident, it may be appropriate to mark the incident as a community. This could take the form of an assembly, or a ceremony to mark the incident.

Notes: does the school have an emergency mobile phone?