

Ardee Educate Together N.S.

Critical Incident Policy

Critical Incident: Policy Ardee Educate Together N.S.

Ardee Educate Together N.S. aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. We have a supportive and caring ethos in the school. We ensure the physical and psychological safety of staff and students, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident.

What is a critical incident?

We recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school" Critical Incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community.

Types of Incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness, or unplanned death.
- An intrusion into the school.
- An accident / tragedy in the wider school community.
- Serious damage of the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An accident involving members of the school community.

Aim:

We recognise that the key of managing critical incidents is planning. We have developed a Critical Incident Management Policy. Our hope is that in the event of an incident this will help staff to react quickly and effectively maintain a sense of control. We aim to return to normality as soon as possible after a potential critical incident and ensure that the effects on the students and staff are limited.

Physical Safety:

We have included into our Health and Safety Policy:-

- ❖ Evacuation plan in the event of a fire (See fire drill).
- ❖ Regular fire drills occur.
- ❖ Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked.
- ❖ Children cannot be taken from school during school hours without being signed out by an adult.
- ❖ Pupils are regularly reminded of the rules of the playground. These rules are discussed and reviewed at staff meetings.

Psychological Safety:

We have created an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help.

- ❖ Our Discipline policy includes an approach to bullying.
- ❖ Our Mission Statement specifies that all children are equal.
- ❖ S.P.H.E. programmes are included in the curriculum to address issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, conflict management, problem solving, help seeking, decision-making, and alcohol and drug prevention.
- ❖ All staff are informed of difficulties affecting individual students, and are aware of and vigilant to their needs.
- ❖ All staff have access to books and resources on difficulties affecting the Primary School Child.

- ❖ The school has developed links with outside agencies such as the N.E.P.S., H.S.E., school nurse, cigire and the I.N.T.O.
- ❖ The staff are aware of the differing needs of international pupils and special educational needs pupils.

Critical Incident Management Team: -

A critical incident management team is a group of individuals from the staff who know the community, the students, and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions when an incident occurs.

Roles:

Key roles have been identified and assigned.

The team includes:

Team Leader...	Ann Middleton
Staff Liaison...	Aishling Duffy
Student Liaison...	Jamie O'Hare
Community Liaison...	Joe Power
Parent Liaison...	Joe Power
Media Liaison...	Ann Middleton
Administrative Tasks...	Patricia Dunlea
Health & Safety...	Ann Middleton

In the event of a critical incident the responsibilities of each role-holder will be as follows:

Team Leader: Ann Middleton

(A person who carries authority and can make decisions during a crisis (e.g. school closure, attendance at memorial services etc.)

1. Alerts the team members of the crisis and convenes a meeting.
2. Co-ordinates tasks of the team.
3. Liaises with the Board of Management and Department of Education & Science.
4. Liaises with the affected family / staff member.

Staff Liaison: Aishling Duffy

(A staff member, known, trusted and liked by the staff)

1. Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and outlines the routine of the day.
2. Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable students.
3. Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.

Student Liaison: Jamie O'Hare

(A trusted and familiar person known to the students).

1. Liaises with other team members to keep them up-dated with information and progress.
2. Alerts staff to vulnerable students.

Community Liaison: Joe Power

(Someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community).

1. Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
2. Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.
3. Co-ordinate the involvement of these agencies. Key parents such as members of the parent's council to be involved. Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources to be liaised with.

Parent Liaison: Joe Power

(Someone who is well-known to parents. This person should be comfortable speaking before a large group and have skills to manage emotional reactions of individual or groups of parents).

1. Facilitates "questions and answers" meeting.
2. Meets with individual parents.
3. Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.

Media Liaison: Ann Middleton

(Someone with good interpersonal skills who would be comfortable talking to the media by phone, or in person. A person who is able to set limits without being offensive.)

1. In preparing for the role, she/he will consider issues that may arise during an incident and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc).
2. In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the Communications Section in the DES.

Administrative Tasks: Patricia Dunlea

1. Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Parents or Guardians.
 - Teachers.
 - Emergency Support Services.
2. Telephone calls need to be responded to, letters sent and materials photocopied.

To do list:

Contact parents / guardians

Contact accident and emergency services.

Contact Chairperson ... life or death situation.

Contact Principal or Assistant Principal.

Contact Class Teacher

Contact First Aid Person / Health & Safety Officer.

Contact the I.N.T.O.

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep detailed records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meeting held, persons met, interventions used, materials used etc. The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Letter to Parents:

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

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

Confidentiality and good name considerations:

The school has 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 see to ensure that pupils do so also. (For instance, 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 a result of suicide. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead).

Critical Incident Room:

In the event of a critical incident, the staffroom will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

Development and communication of this policy and plan:

The final policy and procedures in relation to responding to critical incident has been presented to all staff, Board of Management and P.T.A.

Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan.

This policy will be reviewed as required.

Ratified by Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson BOM