Critical incident Policy

Libermann Spiritan School Templeogue (LSST) aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. We have taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. We have formulated a policy and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring 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?

LSST recognises 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 pupil, 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 to 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:

At LSST we recognise that the key of managing critical incidents is planning. We have developed a Critical Incident Management Policy and an accompanying plan. Our hope is that in the event of an incident these will help staff to react quickly and effectively maintain a sense of control. We have aimed to compile a policy and to return to normality as soon as possible after a potential critical incident and ensure that the effects on the students and staff would be limited.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school: We have put systems in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of an in incident. These include

measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.

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 informing the principal or secretary.

Psychological Safety:

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

- Our Code of Regulation, Relationships and Behaviour addresses the need to prioritise the student's regulation above all else.
- Our Bí Cineálta Policy encompasses anti-bullying strategies for students and staff
- Our Mission Statement specifies that all children will be given equal hearing.
- 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.
- Staff are informed of difficulties affecting individual students, and is aware and vigilant to their needs.
- All teaching staff has access to books and resources on difficulties affecting the Primary School Child/Secondary school students
- The school has developed links with outside agencies such as the clergy, N.E.P.S., H.S.E, Fórsa and the I.N.T.O.
- The staff will be cognisant of the differing needs of international pupils and the special educational needs of all 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 for when an incident occurs. The members of the teams were selected on a

voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet once a year to review and update the plan. Each member of the team has a Ready-to-go-pack with relevant materials to be used in the event of an incident.

Roles: Key roles have been identified and assigned.

The team includes:

Team Leader - Vivienne Wynne - Principal

Staff Liaison - Sarah Ryan – Deputy Principal

Community Liaison – Heather O'Hara

Parent Liaison - APII

Media Liaison - Vivienne Wynne

Administrative Tasks – Angela Minto – School Secretary

Health & Safety – Sarah Ryan

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

Team Leader: Vivienne Wynne

1. Alerts the team members to 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: Sarah Ryan

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.

Community Liaison: Heather O'Hara

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: APII

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

Media Liaison: Vivienne Wynne

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: Angela Minto

1. Maintenance up-to-date lists of contact numbers of:

- Parents or Guardians.
- Teachers and SNAs.
- 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 NCSE

Contact Kimmage Manor in life or death situation.

Contact Principal or Assistant Principal.

Contact Class Teacher.

Contact First Aid Person/Health & Safety Officer.

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:

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 persons(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 Principals Office will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

Development and communication of this policy and plan:

Our school's final policy and procedures in relation to responding to critical incident have been presented to all staff and Board of Management. 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 by Vivienne Wynne.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management 26/03/2025

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: 26/03/2025

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Due for Review: March 2027