



# HOLY FAMILY JUNIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL

## River Valley, Swords, Co Dublin.

Principal: Ms M McNally  
Deputy Principal: Ms E Keely  
Chairperson: Mrs A O'Toole

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### CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Holy Family Junior National School aims to protect the well being of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. All staff, students, parents and members of the community are part of creating this safe and nurturing school environment.

Holy Family J.N.S has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies 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. Such policies include the School's Enrolment Policy, Special Education Needs Policy, Child Protect Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Health & Safety Policy, School's Code of Behaviour and Mentoring Programme

#### What is a Critical Incident?

Holy Family J.N.S. 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". We will endeavour to maintain the running of the school in accordance with the Rules for National Schools. 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, suicide or murder.
- An intrusion into the school or a physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s)
- 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

Recognising that the key of managing critical incidents is planning, Holy Family J.N.S. has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying Plan. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.



As each critical incident will require the school to respond in a manner appropriate to that particular incident at that time, this policy is intended to serve as a general outline of procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident occurring.

### **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 incident. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.

### **Physical Safety**

- Evacuation plan is formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked and clearly marked
- All external doors are locked during school hours. Access to school building during the day is via the front door/school secretary.
- Rules of the playground encourage positive and safe playtime interaction.
- First Aid training has been undertaken by a number of staff. Defibrillator available in the school hall
- First Aid supplies are available in each playground.
- Adherence to the Code of Behaviour is promoted at all times.

By way of protection of our staff and students all staff will be made aware of the Health and Safety Statement, Fire Evacuation Procedures, the location of the defibrillator and the names of those trained in First Aid. A list of those trained in First Aid is posted near the defibrillator, on the Principal's notice board, in the staffroom and attached to this document. Staff will be reminded of these procedures at the initial staff meeting annually and this information included in the packs provided to new and substitute teachers. There are regular demonstrations and discussions regarding use of anapen, medicines etc., in any current year.

### **School Tours**

In the case of school tours class teachers will provide the following:

- Name of teachers and telephone numbers
- A list of all pupils to include parent/guardian contact numbers
- Relevant medical information on pupils
- Copy of itinerary and teacher contact numbers should be left with principal prior to departure

### **Psychological Safety**

Holy Family J.N.S. aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for same.

- SPHE 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. (The Rainbows Programme may available in this school and is available through Barnardos).
- Our Code of Behaviour/Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policies include an approach to developing strategies for dealing with bullying.
- Our Child Safeguarding Statement Policy endeavours to safeguard all our children.

- All Staff are informed of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware 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, which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students.

### **Critical Incident Management Team**

Holy Family Junior National School has set up a Critical Incident Management Team in line with best practice and will maintain this team in future. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for a least one school year. The members of the team will meet once a year to review and update the plan.

### **Roles**

Key roles have been identified and assigned as follows:

Team Leader	Mary McNally
Staff Liaison	Donna Barry & Emma Keely
Parent Liaison	Emma Keely & Michael Murphy
Community Liaison	Danielle Carty & Audrey Ginty
Media Liaison	Mary McNally & Sarah Coen
Administration	Marlane Moore
Garda Liaison	Mary McNally & Marlane Moore

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

### **Team Leader – Mary McNally**

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Makes decisions e.g. school closures, attendance a memorial service etc.
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management, Department of Education & Skills and NEPS
- Liaises with affected family.

### **Deputy Team Leader – Emma Keely**

### **Staff Liaison – Donna Barry & Emma Keely**

- Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and outlines the routine for the day.
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students.
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Provides information to staff and keeps them updated.



### **Community Liaison – Danielle Carty & Audrey Ginty**

- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies.
- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
  - Key parents, such as member of the parents' association
  - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.
  - Provides information on on-going basis where appropriate

### **Parent Liaison – Emma Keely & Michael Murphy**

- Meets with individual parents and may facilitate at meetings
- Visits the affected family with the team leader
- Provides materials for parents
- Maintains a record of meetings

### **Media Liaison – Mary McNally & Sarah Coen**

- In preparing for the role, she will consider issues that may arise during an incident and how they might be responded to (eg students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc.) We envisage that in all critical incident situations privacy will be deemed as paramount.
- In the event of an incident, will liaise, where necessary, with the Communications Section in the DES.

### **Administrative Tasks – Marlane Moore**

- Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers of :
  - Parents or guardians
  - Teachers
  - Next of kin for all staff
  - Emergency support services
- Telephone calls need to be responded to, letters sent and materials photocopied.

### **Garda Liaison – Mary McNally & Marlane Moore**

- Liaises with Gardai
- Ensures that information about deaths/incidents is checked out before being shared

### **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, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The School Secretary/Administrator will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc. All details relating to a critical incident will be logged and kept in a safe place.

Where appropriate pertinent information will be circulated to the parent body.

## **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 seek 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). 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 the event of a critical incident, the Principal's Office will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

### **Contact Numbers/Emergency Numbers:**

The Secretary has responsibility for maintaining an up to date list of contact numbers/e-mail addresses for student's parent(s) / guardian(s)/emergency contact list for all staff. The school secretary has responsibility for maintaining an up to date list of contact numbers for the emergency support services is displayed in the Staff Room, the Secretary's Office and the Principal's Office.

### **Evacuation Procedures:**

The Fire Safety Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the evacuation procedures are displayed near the door of every classroom. The evacuation procedures (fire drill) are practiced at least once a term.

### **Training and Staff Development:**

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

### **Visitors:**

Visitors, including parents must report to the school's secretary's office, identify themselves and state their business in the school. Visitors will not be allowed beyond the school's reception office except at the invitation of a member of staff.

### **The Media:**

Members of the media must report to the school's secretary's office, identify themselves and state their business in the school. Member's of the media will not be allowed beyond the school's secretary's office except at the invitation of the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Only the Principal or Deputy Principal in consultation with the Critical Incident Management Team if possible will prepare a brief written statement.

The Principal and Deputy Principal in consultation with the Critical Incident Management Team if possible, will prepare a brief, written statement to include:

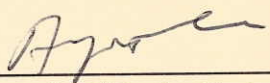


- The Sympathy of the school community for the affected/ bereaved family.
- Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured person(s).
- The facts about the incident (following consultation with the affected/bereaved families).
- What has been done.
- What is going to be done.

#### **Development and Communication of this Policy**

This policy has been presented to all relevant members of the school community. Each member of the Critical Incident Team has a personal copy of the policy. Essential numbers are displayed in the Principal's office and are an addendum to this policy.

*This policy was reviewed October 2022 with the Critical Incident Team and Dr Nollaig Carberry, NEPS Psychologist and will be reviewed annually.*

Signed:   
 Mrs Angela O'Toole, Chairperson  
 Board of Management, Holy Family J.N.S.

Dated: 24/10/22

## *Appendix I*

### EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

OUTSIDE AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
<b>Garda</b>	<b>6664700</b>
<b>Hospital</b>	<b>Beaumont 8375400</b> <b>Temple Street 8784200</b>
<b>Fire Brigade</b>	<b>8401222</b>
<b>Local GP</b>	<b>Boroimhe Medical Centre 8406423</b> <b>Ridgewood Medical Centre 8956601</b> <b>Dr Morris/Dr Coughlan 8403215</b> <b>Plaza Medical Centre 8902414</b> <b>Dr Greenan 8401389</b> <b>Dr Niall Moore 8401389</b>
<b>Health Board/Family Centre</b>	<b>HSE 8164279</b> <b>Duty Social Worker 8160314</b>
<b>Inspectorate</b>	<b>8896553</b>
<b>NEPS Psychologist</b>	<b>8892782</b>
<b>DES Communications</b>	<b>8734700</b>
<b>INTO</b>	<b>8722533</b>
<b>Parish Office</b>	<b>8409043</b>
<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Available from Office</b>
<b>VHI Confidential Bereavement Counselling</b>	<b>1800411057</b>

## *Appendix II*

### USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

<b>Barnardos</b>	<b>4530355</b>
<b>The Samaritans</b>	<b>1850 609 090</b>
<b>Childline</b>	<b>1800 666 666</b>
<b>Parentline</b>	<b>1890 927 277</b>
<b>Aware</b>	<b>6766166</b> <b>1890 303 302</b>
<b>National Suicide Bereavement Support</b>	<b>02495561</b>
<b>Rainbows</b>	<b>4734175</b>
<b>The Bereavement Counselling Service</b>	<b>8391799</b>
<b>Bereavement Counselling</b>	<b>6767727</b>
<b>National Adult Counselling Service</b>	<b>1800 477 477</b>
<b>One In Four</b>	<b>6624070</b>
<b>Rape Crisis Centre</b>	<b>1800 778 888</b>



### ***Appendix III***

#### **Trained First Aiders**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Aoife McCabe	Room 8
Evelyn Linnane	Room 24
Gillian Power	Room 21
Michael Murphy	Room 10
Audrey Ginty	Room 3
Sarah Coen	Room 2
Stephen Clarke	Room 12
Caitriona Roughneen	Room 9
Niall Carter	Room 30

## ***Appendix IV***

### **Trauma Response Plan**

On notification of a critical incident the Principal will convene the Critical Incident Management Team to:

- Ascertain the facts
- Make contact with the family/families concerned
- Contact appropriate agencies e.g. N.E.P.S., D.E.S.
- Inform staff and Board of Management
- Agree on a statement of the facts for staff, pupils, parents/guardians and the media and inform these parties as appropriate
- Identify high-risk pupils
- Appoint one person to deal with phone calls
- Organise supervision/timetable rota for the day
- Organise support and rooms for assistance where appropriate
- Endeavour to maintain the regular school routine, where possible
- When appropriate arrange for representatives from the school to visit the home(s) of the person(s) concerned

In the event of death:

- Inform staff and pupils re funeral arrangements
- Arrange involvement in liturgy if agreed with bereaved family
- Facilitate staff and pupils' response e.g. flowers
- Support distressed pupils and staff and direct towards counselling services.
- Care of the deceased person's possessions in keeping with parents'/guardians' wishes
- Facilitate return to school of siblings and close friends
- Monitor siblings and friends of the deceased
- Update and amend school records and inform D.E.S. and N.E.W.B.

#### **Long Term Tasks**

In the aftermath of a critical incident, a death, accident, serious illness or any such incident there needs to be awareness of:

- Keep in contact with the family/families concerned
- Be sensitive to occasions such as anniversaries, birthdays etc
- Organise school services/memorial as appropriate
- Review the support structure available
- Provide the appropriate support
- Review overall school response



## ***Appendix V***

### ***Sample Press Statement***

As you can appreciate this is a very painful, disturbing, shocking and sensitive time for this school community.

On my own behalf and on behalf of the Board of Management of both schools and the staff on this campus, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest sympathy to the family of \_\_\_\_\_ and especially her two little boys one of whom is enrolled in our Junior Infants. (altered as required)

This school is continuing as normal as possible, and children's needs are being identified and dealt with in a sensitive age appropriate manner.

The staff has available to them the support for the National Education Psychological Service and are receiving tremendous support from the Parish Priest, Curate, Parish Sister and Department of Education & Skills.

The Staff have not made any decisions on how best we can support this family yet, but we will in days to come.

I do not wish to participate in any discussion on this tragic event. I thank you for respecting that.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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October 2022