

# **CRITICAL INCIDENTS POLICY**

The aim of this policy is to lessen the effect of a critical incident on the staff, students and parents at Michael's College. It is anticipated that by adopting the procedures outlined in this policy it will be possible to provide a more secure environment for everyone associated with the School.

## **What is a critical incident?**

A critical incident is one which arises suddenly. Critical incidents may occur in school or out of school, but both types will have a major impact on staff and students. An incident might be designated as critical where the result is likely to be serious disruption to the running of the School, or where there is likely to be significant public and/or media attention on the School.

Where the crisis is related to people, such as in the event of a death or serious injury, the assumption is that the School is likely to take the lead, with the support of NEPS as necessary.

## **Examples of in-school critical incidents**

- A serious accident to a child or adult
- The death of a student or member of staff.
- A traffic accident involving a student or staff member
- Violence or assault within school
- A school fire or explosion
- Destruction of part of the school building
- Abduction of a student
- A student or students absconding
- A serious illness contagious within the school or the local community

## **Examples of out-of-school critical incidents**

- An accident to a student or staff while out of school or out of school on school business.
- Death or injuries on a school journey on school business.

- Tragedies involving children from many schools.
- Civil disturbances

**Support Agencies and Personnel** : A list of significant contacts and telephone numbers is included as an appendix to this document.

Please list

### **Practice within school**

Individual class teachers and Year Heads and Year Tutors have an important role to play in managing critical incidents and may well be the best people to deal with the students in their classes.

The main role of specialist agencies such as NEPS is one of support, empowerment and to support students who cannot be helped by the teachers within the School alone. In times of crises, teachers must react as they feel is appropriate and there can be no easy formula for dealing with critical incidents but by ensuring good communication within School a crisis may be managed more effectively.

By outlining the appropriate actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident, the School aims to reduce the effect.

### **Critical Incidents Team**

A central component of this policy is the identification of the composition, roles and responsibilities of the Critical Incidents Team.

The role of the team is to review and direct the handling of the incident and the response and recovery process in order to:

- ensure the safety and security of students, staff, other users of the premises and visitors;
- minimize the loss to the School in physical, human and financial terms;
- manage an incident to minimize disruption to regular operations;
- liaise with appropriate agencies, including the Media.

The Critical Incidents Team will comprise the following personnel:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Chaplin
- Guidance Counselor
- Year Head
- Chairman of the Board of Management
- Health & Safety Representative
- The School's designated Child Protection Officer

- School Premises Manager in the event of damage to the plant

The Critical Incidents Team will, dependent upon the nature of the incident itself, be concerned with any of the following issues:

- adequate assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action;
- analysis of requirements to address these hazards; establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services; development of an effective management plan;
- dissemination of planned procedures;
- organisation of practice drills to test the plan;
- regular review of this plan;
- arranging staff development activities, where necessary.

### **Procedures during an incident**

1. The Principal or Deputy Principal must be informed of any critical incident as soon as possible.
2. As soon as an incident is confirmed, the Critical Incidents Team will meet to decide strategies.
3. The rest of the staff will be informed as soon as possible, preferably at a specially convened staff meeting or through email and text message.
4. All staff should share the same information.
5. Students will be told information simply and sensitively, without fabrication, preferably in smaller group situations.
6. The School will try, as far as possible, to keep to the normal routine.

### **ACTION PLAN**

Major incidents require the following procedures:-

1. Set up a communication network.
2. Convene the Critical Incidents Team.

3. Inform immediately the Chairman of the Board of Management and other appropriate Officers.
4. Collect, record and convey as much accurate information as possible.
5. Identify two telephonists to staff:
  - a) school phone for incoming calls
  - b) mobile phone for outgoing information/staff use.
6. Office area to be used for enquiries
7. Use the up to date list of students' next of kin (record files) and contact parents of affected children
8. Record all actions
9. Head teacher, alone, to act as 'press officer'
10. Refusal of access to press/television on school premises

#### Action Plan Timing

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Obtain factual information at the start	Within hours
Senior staff meeting with support personnel	Within hours
Convene the Critical Incidents Team	Within hours
Contact families	Immediately
Call a staff meeting to give information	Same day if possible
Inform students in small groups	Same day if possible
Arrange a debriefing meeting for staff involved	Same day if possible
Arrange debriefing for students directly involved	Same day if possible
Identify high risk students and staff	Following day
Promote discussion in classes	Following days and weeks
Identify the need for group or individual treatment	Over days and weeks
Organise counselling	As required
Mark anniversary (discreetly)	Annually

