**Laurel Hill Secondary School**

**Critical Incident Management Plan**

**Critical Incident Management Team :**

**Mr. M. Cregan Principal**

**Ms. S. Garrahy Deputy Principal**

**Ms. E. Lyons Guidance Counsellor**

**Ms. M. Trainor Teacher**

**Ms. H. Roberts Teacher**

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**Definition of a Critical Incident :**

A Critical Incident is defined as any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of Laurel Hill Secondary School and disrupts the running of the school.

**Examples Include :**

* The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.
* An accident involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises.
* A physical attach on staff member(s) or student(s).
* Serious damage to the school building.
* An accident/tragedy in the wider community.

**Short Term Actions:**

**Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident :**

**School Staff & Students :**

1. **Obtain accurate information about the incident :-**

* What happened, where and when?
* What is the extent of the injuries?
* What is the location of those injured and not injured?
* How many are involved and what are their names?
* Is there a risk of further injury?
* What agencies have been contacted already?
* Is there a necessity for a whole school assembly?

1. **Convene the Critical Incident Management Team :**

* Agree a statement of facts for staff, students, parents and the media.

Have a written version of this.

* Principal/Deputy Principal to handle phone enquiries and to ensure that a phone line remains open and available for enquiries.
* Principal and member of team to deal with the media.
* Deputy Principal to organise the timetable/routine for the day if necessary.

**Critical Incident Policy/P.3**

1. **Contact appropriate agencies :**

**Principal to contact appropriate agencies :**

* Emergency Services.
* Medical Services.
* N.E.P.S.
* Board of Management.
* D.E.S.

1. **Hold Staff Meeting (out of class time) :**

* Give an account of the facts as known.
* Give an opportunity for staff to express their views and feelings.
* Discuss how the facts will be shared with the students. (There must be an agreed approach).
* Outline the routine for the day.
* Inform staff about which outside agencies have been contacted or are involved and the supports what will be put in place for both students and staff.
* Identify vulnerable students.
* Distribute relevant hand-out material.

**Parents / Guardians :**

**Where children are involved :**

* The Principal, Deputy Principal and other members of C.I.M.T., where necessary will contact parents as soon as possible. Handle with great sensitivity.

**To do :**

* Agree who should share information with parents and how this should be done.
* Make a list of parents/guardians who have been contacted and those who still need to be told.
* Give parents/guardians relevant and factual information.
* Set the Principal’s Office, Guidance Room and R.E. Room aside for distressed students to meet their parents/guardians.
* Provide support to parents who are on their own when they arrive at the school.
* Give telephone numbers for enquiries.

**Where children are not directly involved :**

* Parents of other children in the school should be informed of the incident and that their child may be upset.
* Send a letter to parents stating the facts and brief details of the incident.
* May not be appropriate at this stage to disclose the names of those involved.

**Critical Incident Policy/P.4**

**Inform Students :**

* Inform students of a Critical Incident in class groups or sub-groups.
* Consider the messenger (and their suitability).
* Give facts and avoid speculation.
* Ask students to ask questions, tell their story and express feelings.
* Help students to realise that overwhelming emotions are natural and normal following a Critical Incident.

**Make Contact with the Bereaved Family.**

**Deal with the Media :**

**Team to prepare a written statement which will include :-**

* The facts about the incident.
* What has been done already.
* What is going to be done.
* Positive information or comments about the deceased person.

**If giving a live interview :-**

* Assign task to someone skilled or familiar with dealing with the media.
* Take some time to prepare.
* Keep it simple, factual and brief.
* Decline if you are not ready or think it inappropriate.

**Organise the Re-union of Students with their Parents/Guardians, if necessary :**

* Inform students that their parents/guardians will be collecting them as soon as possible.
* Facilitate distressed students and their parents by providing a private room, where they can meet following an incident.
* Where appropriate, offer help with transport, especially for younger children.

**Medium Term Actions (24-72 hours) :**

1. Review the events of the first 24 hours.

* Reconvene Critical Incident Management Team.
* Decide arrangements for support meetings for Parents/Staff/Students.
* Decide on mechanisms for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students.
* Have review staff meeting with all staff if necessary.
* Ensure all staff are kept up to date on any developments.
* Establish contact with absent staff and pupils.
* Update media, if necessary.

**Critical Incident Policy/P.5**

1. **Arrange Support for individual Students, Group of Students and Parents, if necessary.**

* Provide a suitable room – Guidance Room, R.E. Room, Oratory, Board Room.
* Hold support/information meeting for parents/students in order to clarify what has happened.
* Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings, the choice of opting out.
* Arrange, in consultation with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission.

1. **Plan for the Re-integration of Students and Staff:**

* e.g. Absentees, Injured, Siblings, Close Relatives etc.

1. **Plan Visits to Injured :**

* Name Key Person(s) to visit Home/Hospital.

1. **Liaise with the Family regarding Funeral Arrangements :**

**Designate Staff Member to :**

* Extend sympathy.
* Clarify the family’s wishes regarding the school’s involvement in funeral service.
* Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate.
* Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths.

1. **Attendance and participation at funeral service:**

* Decide in accordance with parents’ wishes and school management decisions.

1. **School Closure :**

* Request a decision on this from the Board of Management.

**Longer Term Actions :**

* All staff to monitor students for signs of continuing distress.
* At a staff meeting, evaluate response to incident and amend the Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately.
* Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries.

**This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Date)**

**Signed : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Chairperson, Board of Management Principal**

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**Date : Date :**