

St Aloysius Secondary School

Critical Incident Policy 2014

Aim of the Policy

The aim of the Critical Incident Policy is that in the event of such an incident as outlined above, the plan will help staff and management react quickly and effectively and to maintain control of the situation. The plan will also help the school return to normality as soon as possible and limit the effects of the incident on students and staff.

With this policy in place, we are providing a caring, safe and supportive environment showing respect to the whole school community, so that all those involved will emerge from any critical incident relating to the school knowing that there are structures in place that will have and will continue to help them.

A Critical Incident Management Policy is necessary to put a set of procedures in place so that we can respond as a school community in a caring a supportive way in the event of a Critical Incident occurring.

What is a Critical Incident

A Critical Incident is any incident where death occurs and could occur. This may result in serious injury or trauma. This incident impinges on the staff or student body, the effects of which are outside the scope of the normal school psychological and pastoral/social care system.

For example in a school this could be:

- Suicide or attempted suicide.
- Murder or attempted murder.
- A child killed in front of others crossing the road.

- Bus crash on a school trip or travelling to or from school where there are multiple injuries or deaths.
- Disappearance of a member of the school community.
- A physical assault of a member of the school community.
- Serious injury or death of a person on school property
- A criminal incident occurring during school time.
- Incidents external to the school which might affect pupils e.g. a local tragedy.
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.
- Health issues - e.g. meningitis, Asian flu.
- Outbreak of disease (Foot & Mouth).

The Critical Incident Management Team

The Critical Incident Management Team should include the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads who wish to be involved, and members of the teaching staff who would like to be involved. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be notified of any critical incidents immediately.

Management responsibilities

Leadership / Family Liaison / Communication

- Confirm the incident has occurred. Get accurate information.
- In a case where the incident has occurred within the school day or during school activities, it is vital that accurate accounts of what happened are recorded immediately or at the earliest possible opportunity. Where appropriate witness accounts should be taken and kept.
- If tragedy occurs over a weekend / holidays a system of informing staff needs to be in place.
- If it is the death of a colleague the Principal or Deputy Principal should contact all members of staff.
- If it is the death of a student, the Critical Incident Team and Chairperson of the Board need to be informed immediately by the Principal/ Deputy Principal. Other staff can be informed later.
- Ensure family knows who the contact person within the school is.

- Consult with family on school involvement with funeral in case of death. (Family wishes to be respected)
- Prepare an announcement for staff / students.
- Plan a staff meeting if required.
- Prepare statement and distribute procedures to roll call teachers on breaking the news.
- Designate office staff for dealing with telephone enquiries from anxious parents. Office staff will work from a prepared statement.
- Prepare media statement.
- Discourage any student or staff from dealing with the media.

School's internal response to student's needs

1. Set up Critical Incident room in the school.
2. Outline services available to affected students during the first hours (access to counselling and pastoral support). Where it is considered necessary, additional counselling resources may be requested from the Guidance Counsellors from NEPS.
3. Deputy Principal to assist Class teacher of the class affected in breaking the news.
4. Have guidelines for staff in dealing with students in distress: i.e. information on grief responses, identifying those in need of counselling and support.
5. Take time with the most affected students in Shalom.
6. Critical Incident members to organise a Year Group prayer service for mid-morning, once all students have been notified.
7. Office staff to contact parents where some students request to go home.
8. Class teachers encourage those who feel able to return to class.
9. Principal/ Deputy Principal to meet and support any distressed parents and staff.
10. In the case of a death Principal and Deputy Principal to liaise with family re any possible school involvement in the funeral arrangements.
11. Principal to liaise with Chairperson of the Board during the day regarding student and staff welfare.

On hearing of an incident

Step by Step

- The Principal, having confirmed the incident, makes contact with the family.
- Critical Incident Team meets as early as possible to plan strategy, keeping in mind the guidelines above.
- Key tasks are distributed as per management and pastoral responsibilities.
- Have all guidelines for teachers ready. Please see Appendix 2.
- Have all written and oral statements ready for communication within the school; Staff Notice, Student Notice, text to be sent to parents, telephone enquiry response.
- Have a notice at entrances to the school for staff to report to the staff room at 8:45 a.m.
- Meet staff (Bring staff roll to meeting and note any absences or late arrivals to ensure that all members of staff hear the news)
- Critical Incident Team outlines to staff the plan for the day and the support available.
- Decide on location of Critical Incident Room (Deputy Principal's Office)
- Class Teachers break news to classes as per written guidelines. Appendix 2.
- Deputy Principal to make sure that Guidance Counsellors and members of Critical Incident Team are freed from classes.
- Plan another update staff meeting later.
- Clarify funeral arrangements for staff where appropriate and if available.
- Critical Incident Team and Year Heads meets to plan procedures for school involvement in removal and funeral where appropriate and in accordance with the wishes of the family.

CIM – Media Arrangements

1. Principal will take the role of media liaison.
2. With the assistance of the CIM Team the Principal will prepare a short statement to address the following –
 - The facts as known at that time.

- Reference to sorrow of staff and students.
 - Schools sympathy for the bereaved family.
 - Outline the supports that are in place for students.
3. The above statement should be held by the secretary and emailed to press on request; if a media briefing has been scheduled they may also send details of when and where this will be held.
4. In the event of a media briefing, staff and students should be made aware of the following –
- Only the Principal (acting as the Media Liason) will be interviewed.
 - The interview will consist of the prepared statement and any pre-agreed questions only; quotes by others will not be responded to.
 - Staff and students will be asked to respect the privacy of the bereaved family by not engaging with the press or referencing the situation on social media or by any other public means.

Critical Incident Management Aftercare

- The aim of the school community should be to return to normality and routine as soon as possible.
- There should be on- going counselling and support for those who need it.
- They should be given a safe space to express their feelings of loss, anger, confusion etc.
- The counsellors and pastoral team will continue to support those deeply affected.

Review of Procedures

Critical Incident Team meets to assess the Critical Incident Plan and check if adjustments need to be made.

Staff feedback and observations will be requested from every member of staff.

Principal to prepare document on the event for the Board of Management.

Appendix 1:

Sample Media Statement and letter to parents

No Interviews with Media

It is with profound sadness that the Board of Management, staff and students of St. Aloysius Secondary School, have learned of the tragic death of
.....

Our sincerest sympathy is extended to the family of N.....

On hearing the tragic news, the Critical Incident Plan was put into immediate operation. The Critical Incident team convened a meeting to ensure that students affected by this loss as cared for adequately. Procedures are in place to ensure that all in the school community affected by this loss are given all the help they need to cope at this time.

The School is offering Counselling and support for students and parents affected by this tragedy. Prayer services have been held with each class in the school.

Our prayers and support are with everyone affected by this tragedy.

Appendix 2:

Teacher Support Material

Please read the prepared student notice at this time. This document was prepared by the Principal, Deputy Principal and members of the Critical Incident Team. This document was further discussed at this morning's staff meeting. We wish for all students to receive the same factual information, and for parents to receive the same factual information from siblings. PLEASE DO NOT ALTER THIS DOCUMENT.

The Class of the student involved in the incident:

Only if incident is confirmed by the family, can it be relayed as such to the students. The Class of the student who has died should be the first to be told with The Deputy Principal, Counsellor and Class teacher present.

Student Notice:

On the ____ *date* __ at __ *time* ____ an event occurred that affected a member of our school community. *Name of the person* __ was involved.

The details are:

Action Taken:

After reading the student notice...

- Encourage questions, but make them aware that you don't know all the answers at this time. Refuse to be drawn into speculation as what you say may be taken out of context or misrepresented and may be very hurtful to people already suffering.
- Expect tears and outbursts.
- Let them know that the school will support them.
- Let them know who else is available to support them
- If a student insists on leaving the room she will be accompanied to Shalom and supervised.
- Don't be afraid to let them know that you are also upset by the news.
- Allow them time to mingle and talk.
- Explain how they can support one another.
- Be attentive to identifying those that are not coping well with the news.
- You may have to remind students again who is there to help, as little information is assimilated once in shock.
- Let them know where the Critical Incident Team will be, Deputy Principal's office.
- Refreshments to be made available in the school canteen.
- A short prayer for the deceased will be said by the Principal.
- If the students appear ready, a Year group assembly may be held later in the day. The Year head will organise and administer the assembly.
- Some students may be able to continue to go to class.
- Some will need to stay with the Critical Incident Team for the morning.
- Encourage students to stay in school to support their friends.
- Some may need to go home (only if parents come and collect them)
- Those that go to class may not be able to concentrate on the work of the class.
- Subject teachers will need to make allowances for distress and lack of concentration.

Common Reactions on hearing Traumatic News:

Emotional and Physical	Behavioural and Mental
Shock	Emotional Outbursts
Fear	Overwhelmed
Guilt	Nausea
Grief	Fainting
Tears	Pain
Panic	Dizziness
Denial	Weakness
Anxiety	Palpitations
Depression	Breathing Difficulties
Anger	Confusion
	Blame
	Poor Concentration
	Disorientation
	Withdrawn
	Restlessness
	Let Down
	Uncertainty

How to help someone who has suffered loss.

- Show genuine care and concern.
- Allow them express their feelings.
- Encourage talking as much as they want to.
- Talk about the person they have lost.
- Reassure them that there was nothing they could have done.

Appendix 4:

Factual Verification Report

Date of Incident: _____

Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Detailed Description of the Incident:

Person(s) Involved:

Action Taken:

Report received from: _____

Report compiled by: _____

Family/Parents/Guardians contacted: Yes _____ No _____

If No, then no information will be given by any member of the school community.

Appendix 5:

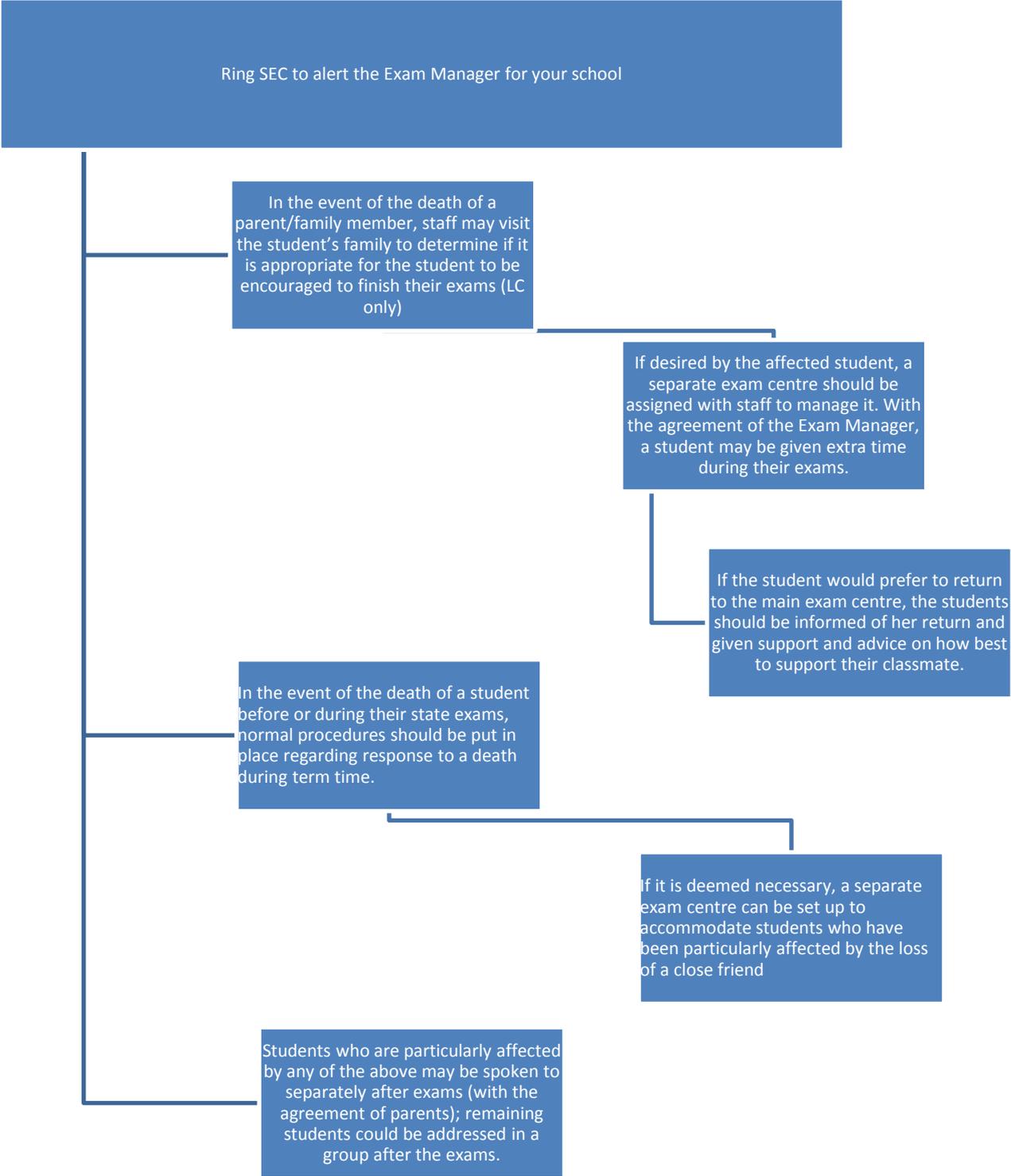
CIMP – Critical Incidents During State Exams

In the event of the death of someone close to a student sitting state exams, the following procedures should be put into action:

1. Ring SEC to alert the Exam Manager for your school.
2. In the event of the death of a parent/family member, staff may visit the student's family to determine if it is appropriate for the student to be encouraged to finish their exams (LC only).
3. If desired by the affected student, a separate exam centre should be assigned with staff to manage it. With the agreement of the Exam Manager, a student may be given extra time during their exams.
4. If the student would prefer to return to the main exam centre, the students should be informed of her return and given support and advice on how best to support their classmate.
5. In the event of the death of a student before or during their state exams, normal procedures should be put in place regarding response to a death during term time.
6. If it is deemed necessary, a separate exam centre can be set up to accommodate students who have been particularly affected by the loss of a close friend.
7. Students who are particularly affected by any of the above may be spoken to separately after exams (with the agreement of parents); remaining students could be addressed in a group after the exams.

CIMP – Critical Incidents During State Exams

In the event of the death of someone close to a student sitting state exams, the following procedures should be put into action:



Date and ratification by the Board of Management.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

This policy will be implemented from _____ and replace earlier Critical Incident policies from this date.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: _____