



North Dublin Muslim National School  
Ratoath Road  
Cabra  
Dublin 7

**Critical Incident Policy**  
December 2020

## **Introduction**

The school policy on Critical Incident Management was revised in December 2020. The policy was discussed as a whole school staff and ratified by the Board of Management of the school. This policy forms the basis of the school's response to the occurrence of a critical incident within our school community. It informs all staff and management of how our school will respond to a critical incident and the roles of staff and management in managing a critical incident.

## **Overview**

The North Dublin Muslim National School aims to protect the well-being of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. We have taken a number of measures to create a coping, caring and supportive ethos in the school. These measures include implementing programmes such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, You Can Do It and an actively enforced Anti-Bullying policy.

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 our school community, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident. These include regular fire drills, vigilant yard supervision, monitoring of entrances/exits in school and working in conjunction with our Child Protection Policy and our Health and Safety policy.

## **What is a Critical Incident?**

National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) recognises a critical incident to be 'any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school.' Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school or our local community.

Types of incidents, that would be considered critical, might include:

- The death of a member of the school community for any reason
- 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
- Physical attack on a staff member or pupil.

## **Aim of the Policy**

Recognising that the key to managing critical incidents is planning, North Dublin Muslim National School has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, that this policy will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. This policy should also help us to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible and ensure the ongoing health of our school community.

## **Creation of a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school**

We have put systems in place to lessen the probability of an occurrence of an incident. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of both staff and pupils.

## **Physical Safety**

- Regular fire drills occur
- Adherence to the Code of Behaviour
- Our evacuation plan is prominently displayed and practiced in all classrooms and school

areas

- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Entrances doors to the school are closed during school times
- Adherence to the Health and Safety Policy
- Safety rules during yard time are in place

### **Psychological Safety**

- SPHE programmes are followed to address issues such as grief and loss, stress and anger management, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking, decision making and substances issues.
- We actively implement our Anti-Bullying Policy in our school
- Staff members are informed of difficulties affecting individual students, on a need to know basis and are aware and vigilant to their needs as required
- Adherence to the Dignity in the Workplace policy.

### **Critical Incident Management Team**

A critical incident team is a group of individuals from the staff of the school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when the incident occurs. The North Dublin Muslim National school has set up a Critical Incident team in line with best practice and this policy will be reviewed and updated as required with their co-operation and collaboration.

### **Roles**

Key roles have been identified and assigned as follows:

- |                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Team Leader                        | Principal-Eoin Walsh                  |
| • Garda and Agency Contact           | Principal- Eoin Walsh                 |
| • Staff Contact                      | Deputy Principal-Aidan Kelly          |
| • Media Contact Administrator        | Eoin Walsh                            |
| • Family Contact                     | Eoin Walsh and Ger Field              |
| • Student Contact                    | Assistant Principal-Suzanne Wehrly    |
| • Other staff contacts               | Mairead Penston & Kirstin Feeney      |
| • Nominee of the Board of Management | Qaasim Hafidh Abdul                   |
| • Nominee of the Parents Association | Secretary of the Parent's Association |

Roles 2020/2021: Deputy Principal-Aidan Kelly,  
Assistant Principal- Suzanne Wehrly

In the event of a team member's absence, his/her role will be taken on by the staff member acting up.

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

#### **Team Leader**

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Contacts National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), if appropriate.
- Liaises with the Board of Management and Department of Education and Skills
- Liaises with the affected families

#### **Staff/Media Liaison**

- Leads meeting to brief staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable students
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- In preparing for the role, he/she will consider issues that may arise during the incident and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc.)
- In the event of an incident will liaise where necessary with the Communications Section in the DES

#### **Family Liaison**

- Facilitates 'Questions and Answers' meetings with families
- Meets with individual parents
- Visits the affected families with the team leader
- Prepares a letter for all parents that will express the sympathy of the school community,

give the facts, advise the parents of relevant supports

- Maintains up to date list of contact numbers of key parents such as members of the Parents' Association

**Student Liaison**

- Liaises with other team members to keep them updated with information and progress
- Alerts staff to vulnerable students
- Assist with administrative tasks

**Emergency Contact Numbers:**

Gardaí (Cabra Station):	016667400
Mountjoy Garda Station:	016668600
Ambulance/Fire Brigade:	999/112
TUSLA:	01 6352500
Department of Education and Skills:	01 8896400
The Village Surgery Cabra:	01 8680289
Cabra Medical Centre:	01 8300116
IFI (Islamic Foundation Ireland):	01 4533242
Mater Hospital:	018032000
Temple Street:	01 8784200
James Connolly Memorial Hospital:	01 6465000
National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS):	01 889 2700

These numbers are displayed in the staffroom and the secretary's office for use in case of emergencies.

### **Administrative Tasks**

Certain administrative tasks need to be carried out in advance. Details of these are below:

- Contact details should be regularly updated and maintained so that communication is speedy and effective in the event of a critical incident.
- Numbers should be available for: students, parents, guardians, staff members and emergency contacts.
- The emergency contact list above will be kept in agreed location. In our school, these will be displayed in the staffroom and the secretary's office.
- A copy of the layout of the school building should be displayed in key places, with exits highlighted in adherence with Health and Safety regulations.
- Templates for letters to parents and templates for press releases should be prepared and available. These should be 'ready-to-go' and on the school computer system and the Google Drive so that they can be adapted quickly when an incident occurs.
- An emergency pack which includes a small number of key documents for members of the Critical Incident Management team, should be readily accessible in the event of an emergency e.g. emergency contact lists, checklist for first 24 hours, layout of school buildings. These will include action plans based on the NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools.

### **Administration in the course of an incident**

- Our school mobile number will become a dedicated telephone line, which will be kept free for important outgoing and incoming calls
- The staff room and support rooms when needed will be used for various purposes, including, individual and group support sessions.
- The Principal's office will become a designated point where a log of events and telephone calls made and received will be kept
- All offers of help should be logged – the name of the agency, what they are offering, a contact name and number through the secretary's office. These agencies may be contacted later if appropriate
- Arrangements will be agreed for dealing with normal school business among the in-school management team.

### **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 also do so. **After consultation with the Board of Management, only the designated person will talk to the media.**

### **Development and communication of this policy**

- All staff members were consulted and their views sought in the collaborative preparation of our whole school Critical Incident Policy and in the subsequent review.
- Our school's final policy and procedures in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.
- A hardcopy of the Critical Incident policy is maintained in the Principal's office and is available for viewing by appointment.
- School management have made copies readily available on our school Google Drive.

- The wider school community are informed of this policy through our school website.
- All new and temporary staff are informed of the details of the plan through their initial mentor meetings in the school

The whole school critical incident policy was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2020.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

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