

St. John the Baptist Parish School

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Rationale

Our school has a responsibility to meet the immediate and long term welfare needs of its members: students, staff and families alike after a critical incident at school. This policy is broadly based to cater for various critical incidents.

Aims

- To meet the pastoral care needs of the school community following a critical incident.
- To find out the facts quickly
- Establish a management plan
- Coordinate support to the school community

RESPONDING TO A TRAUMATIC OR CRITICAL INCIDENT INVOLVING A SCHOOL

- Schools may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event.
- The incident may involve loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance.
- The incident may occur in the school environment or outside.
- It may involve staff, students or those close to them.
- The network of those involved in a traumatic event can be wide, especially if it directly involves the school.
- Feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time.
- Counselling should be provided for all those who need it. This may include many who do not seem to be closely connected to the event or the individual involved.
- The school may be in the position to help grieving families at difficult times eg through the school's participation in the funeral.
- While school should operate as normally as possible, some degree of flexibility should exist.
- It is essential that people be given clear, accurate information at all times.

Implementation

The Principal will act to implement a Critical Incident Plan. The Principal will act to implement the plan with the support of various staff at various times throughout the process.

1. Find out the facts

- Collect information about the incident from reliable sources as soon as possible – maintain accurate notes
- Ensure detailed records of interviews are kept.
- Records in accident book are noted
- Allow time for emotional responses (of students, staff, parents and administrators)

2. Establish a Management Plan

- Schools have a responsibility to be sensitive to and to manage the reactions of students, teachers and families after a critical incident.
- Establish desired outcomes/ aims both for short and long term.
- Consider those directly involved (including observers) families, all teachers the school community.
- Restore regular routines to the school as soon as possible
- Convene support groups and contact relevant support agencies where necessary.
- Refer to relevant policy/legal requirements in developing a consistent and effective management plan.

3. Coordinate support to the school

- Negotiate access to advisers: educational, pastoral & legal.
- Regularly update support needs
- Enlist the expertise of professionals: eg. psychologists, police, etc as appropriate

4. Media

- In the event of media involvement post critical incident, the Principal will contact the Catholic Education Office first and they will be the only access to information for media outlets.

Review

- Review this process after any significant incident.

History of Updates to Policy

Date	Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)
9 th June	Minor review