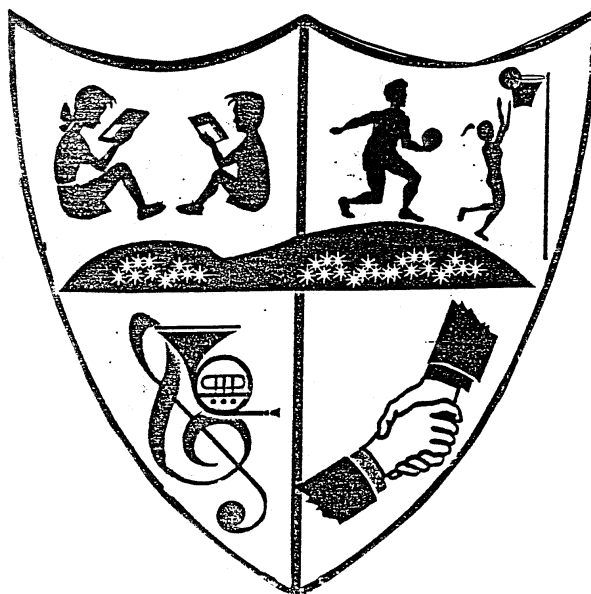


St. Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit Annacloy

"to develop the full potential of each pupil in our care."



Critical Incident Policy

2016

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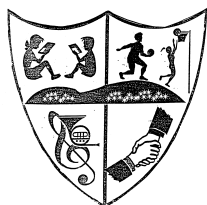
INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Silver



Centre of Excellence

"to develop the full potential of each pupil in our care."



School Aim:

"to allow each child to fulfil their full potential"

Vision Statement

To be a caring school where childhood and community are valued; one, which inspires learning for life and develops the personal qualities needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Mission Statement

We believe that each child will succeed through experiencing quality in:

- A broad and challenging curriculum
- Innovative teaching and an investigative approach to learning
- A stimulating learning environment
- An enriching programme of extra-curricular activities and visits
- A rich, varied and up-to-date range of learning resources
- An ethos of support, challenge and encouragement to succeed
- Learning partnerships between the school, home and parish community

We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by:

- Striving for continuous improvement in all that we do
- Working collaboratively towards common goals
- Being an Investor in People and Pupils

Aims for the Pupils

St. Colman's Primary School and All Saints' NU (Annaclone) promotes high achievement and learning for life by working with the staff and children to:

- Develop enquiring minds and a spirit of curiosity
- Encourage excellence
- Achieve their highest standards in all areas of the curriculum
- Have high self esteem - respecting themselves, others and the environment by our positive approach to behaviour thus ensuring that each individual is motivated to do his/her best
- Be able to work independently and collaboratively
- Be an integral part of the Parish community - one which fosters a faith commitment to Christ and prepares pupils for a fuller participation in the life of the Church
- Seek to extend themselves in mind, body and spirit
- Become highly motivated life-long learners
- Gain advanced technological skills
- Be flexible and adaptable for the modern world

Our School Values:

- Happiness and enjoyment
- Effort, attitude and perseverance
- Team, school and community spirit
- Honesty, fairness and trustworthiness
- Respect and tolerance
- Politeness, kindness and caring
- High standards of behaviour
- Partnership

School Ethos

St Colman's Primary School and All Saints' NU sets out to create a caring and supportive environment, where all children can develop intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially, morally and spiritually.

In addition, the delivery of the curriculum is designed to develop interest and motivation in children using enthusiastic teaching and interesting and relevant learning activities.

- Children are encouraged to achieve high standards and are given as much help as they may need in order to achieve success.
- There are many extra curricular activities that encourage co-operation and discipline through team games. Children are further encouraged through a variety of musical/dramatic productions to develop self-discipline.
- Within this context there is a code of discipline that is consistently enforced to ensure that the education of children take place in an orderly and caring environment.
- Through continual monitoring of individual children's achievements, class teachers provide work pitched at a level that challenges each child yet does not frustrate.
- Good relationships within the School are vital. The staff set an example by working well together with a harmony of purpose and providing an interesting and caring environment within their classrooms.
- As part of the pastoral dimension of the School, children are taught how to care for others, to respect other people's points of view and to respect property. Children are encouraged to contribute to charity and to help people who are less fortunate than themselves.

We are a catholic maintained co- educational school seeking to promote throughout the school community an ethos, which reflects the Christian teaching and values.

We see the school as part of the wider community, responsible to it and providing an important community service. We take seriously our links with the community and encourage the involvement and interests of parents and others in the welfare of individual children and the school as a whole.

We seek to provide an excellent educational service - one that is planned and developed to the highest professional standards so that each pupil may benefit to the full.

Rationale

A critical incident is an unpredictable, unexpected, sudden and possibly tragic event that results in instability and confusion for the staff and pupils in a school. It may affect pupils, staff, parents and governors. It may relate directly to the safety of the school community or it may involve an incident beyond the school premises. As a critical incident is likely to result in a serious situation for the school, our aim is to ensure that St Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit has strategies and procedures in place to protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of all members of the school community.

Aims

- To recognise which incidents are critical for St Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit Primary School
- To develop an understanding of trauma and its impact on pupils and staff
- To enable St Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit to respond to critical incidents in an informed manner

Examples of Critical Incidents

In school:

- Death through natural causes
- Traffic accident
- A deliberate act of violence
- A school fire
- Outbreak of disease
- Disappearance of a child from school

Out of school:

- Deaths or injuries on school journeys
- Tragedies involving children from many schools
- Civil disturbances involving bomb etc
- Suicide
- Sexual, physical, psychological abuse
- Disappearance of a child from home

Definition of a Critical Incident

- A critical incident is not necessarily an event which attracts large media attention and many fatalities.
- "It is an event or events, usually sudden which involves the experience of significant personal distress to a level that can potentially overwhelm individuals".

Supporting Agencies

- Behaviour Support Team
- Educational Psychology Service
- Education Welfare Service
- Health and Welfare Service
- Pupil Personal Development Service

Critical Incident Management

- Critical incident management involves the use of common sense.
- A calm systematic approach is essential to reduce instability and confusion during a critical incident.
- Panic and overt emotional reactions are counterproductive.
- Pupils will respond to a critical incident the way they see the adults around them respond.
- Pupils need consistency and direction.

The role of the school is to provide a supportive structure where adults are in charge.

Critical Incident Management can be divided into 3 main sections:

Critical Incident Prevention:

- Assess the school's vulnerability to a critical incident situation.
- Establish a school critical incident response team to review procedures and to establish strategies for coping with a critical incident.
- Develop plans to manage critical incident/s
- Review plans with staff members

Critical Incident Action:

- Attempt to define the type and extent of the critical incident as soon as possible.
- Follow established critical incident planning guidelines.
- Communicate accurately, timely and on an on-going basis.
- Critical incident team members will be relieved of their normal school duties to focus on the incident.

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Post Critical Incident Activities:

- Evaluate the actual cause of the critical incident and take necessary steps to prevent a recurrence.
- Provide support to those affected by the critical incident.
- Re-evaluate the situation with staff, pupils, Board of Governors, community representatives, to check if further interventions are required.
- Document the incident and strategies used to deal with the crisis.
- Evaluate the entire process and procedures used to determine if modifications are needed in the event of a similar crisis.

In the event of any such incident happening we will follow our Critical Incident Management Plan as attached. This will enable us to mobilise our resources promptly and effectively. Our Critical Incident Team comprises of:

- Mr K. Donaghy - Principal
- Mr K. O' Neill - Vice-Principal
- Mrs C Burns - Child Protection (Primary)
- Mrs E Mc Cann - Child Protection (Nursery)

The Chairman of our Board of Governors, Mrs G Fusciardi, will be contacted immediately in the event of a critical incident occurring:

In the event of a critical incident occurring either within or outside of school hours then the above people can be contacted at:

Name	Out of hours contact number
Mr K Donaghy	07793548825
Mr K O Neill	
Mrs C Burns	
Mrs E Mc Cann	

If an incident occurs within the school day, the Critical Incident Team will meet in the Principal's Office.

If an incident occurs outside of the school day, the Critical Incident Team will meet at the School or the most convenient place which may include in the Parochial House, Annaclone.

Guidelines for Managing a Critical Incident

(In the absence of the Principal the Vice Principal will take charge on site and keep the Principal informed)

In School

- The Principal will take charge of the school's response. In the case of the Principal or Vice Principal being unavailable, the members of the Critical Incident Response Team will take charge. The Principal's office will be the central liaison point.
- The Principal will go to the scene.
- The Critical Incident Response Team will implement the agreed plan of action. If evacuation of the school is necessary, every member of staff should follow the school's evacuation procedures.
- The Principal will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and prepare a statement.
- The Principal or Vice Principal will contact EA Southern Region/CCMS if the situation warrants it.
- The Principal will brief all staff.

Out of School

- The Principal will contact emergency services.
- The Principal will notify all staff.
- The Critical Incident response team will implement the agreed plan of action.
- The Principal will contact the Chairman of the Board of Governors.
- The Principal will contact EA Southern Region/CCMS if the situation warrants it.

News Media Procedures

(Refer Appendix 2 - CCMS Advice)

Information relating to the Critical Incident will be communicated to the school and local community. Consistency in relation to the information communicated is essential.

- ONLY the Principal will deal with all information requests from the community or media before its release. (Liaise with EA Southern Region /CCMS)
- The Principal is the only person who will release any information to the media.
- The Principal will make any public statements.
- News media will **NOT** be permitted on to the school property without the Principal's approval.

(The news media does not have legal access to school property without such consent. This applies to television, radio, print media and photographers).

Checklists

By going through the checklists, the school will realise what it is already doing well and what needs attention.

SAFETY PROCEDURES:

- Check regularly that buildings, playground equipment, fire exits, burglar/fire alarms, etc are in good and safe condition. If repairs have to be undertaken, see that they are attended to promptly.
- Ensure systems are in place to admit visitors to the school, monitoring of entrances and exits, type of information required from a caller to the school before access is granted, extra vigilance of strangers or irregular events around the school.
- Act promptly if you suspect anything out of the ordinary.
- Ensure systems are in place for school evacuation.
- Know what is happening in the community.
- Ensure procedures are in place for dropping off and collection of children at peak times. Regular monitoring of these procedures is crucial.

PROCEDURAL CHECKS:

Prepare, practise and maintain:

- Health and Safety procedures, fire drills, procedures to deal with bomb threats etc.
- Child protection procedures.
- Procedures for dealing with bullying and discrimination (race, gender, disability, age, religion).
- School trips and fieldwork safety guidelines and procedures.
- Critical incident management procedures from rescue through to recovery.
- Contact address lists and telephone numbers for staff and pupils.

SOCIAL SAFETY:

- Create an atmosphere where children, parents and staff feel they are personally safe, emotionally and behaviourally. Check different religious beliefs about death.
- Create shared understandings between parents, staff and pupils about values and codes of behaviour.
- Create and practise respect and inclusiveness for all members of the school community.
- Create consistency but act with flexibility, according to the circumstances.
- Create open lines of communication using external and internal resources.
- Be clear about boundaries, what is negotiable and what is not. Be aware of consequences of actions.
- Keep an eye on the needs of different classes and the staff team.
- Build healthy, positive links between home, school and community.
- Do not avoid difficulties - deal with them at an early stage and avoid problems developing.
- Create a spirit of inquiry - teachers should not be expected to know everything, children and parents can find answers too.

Appendix 1

Critical Incident Management Plan - Key Actions

*No two incidents are alike. Always assess needs first.
We will use our guidelines flexibly and in relation to the
information available.*

Step 1:

Assess the danger, gather factual information and take appropriate action

- Initiate agreed school evacuation procedures if necessary, arrange for first aid
- Establish a 'command' centre, identify who is in charge and set regular briefing times
- Notify the emergency services/other relevant authorities
Chairperson Board of Governors
- Maintain structures and routines where possible
 - Liaise with EA Southern Region/CCMS
 - Create a calm, purposeful environment



Step 2:

Co-ordinate school's response, meet with staff

- Liaise and delegate, discuss intervention plan, agree how and what other pupils will be told
- Collect, record, verify and update details (time, place, those involved etc.)
- Continue to liaise with Chairperson of Board of Governors/EA Southern Region/CCMS
 - Prepare media statement



Step 3:

Organise contact with pupils and parents

- Give the facts of the critical incident, keeping in mind legal implications and respecting aspects of privacy
- Inform parents by 'phone or in person if their child is involved, as soon as the initial information is confirmed. NB the media and/or children with mobile phones may have reached them first with inaccurate information.
- Continue to liaise with Chairperson of Board of Governors/EA Southern Region/CCMS
 - Ensure a correct and consistent message is given
 - Provide sources of help for pupils and families and encourage communication between parents and school
 - Suggest possible reaction of students
 - Confirm the school's response plans





Step 4:

Restore the school to regular routine as soon as practicable

- Plan visits to injured and bereaved, ensuring a member of the SMT remains on site
- Continue to liaise with Chair, Board of Governors/EA Southern/CCMS
 - Plan rituals and assemblies
- Monitor reactions of pupils and staff and **provide** relevant support (CMB, defusing)



Step 5:

Obtain updated factual information

- Continue to inform staff, students and parents
- Principal consults with the families affected to determine their wishes concerning public announcements and information for school staff and students.
- Continue to liaise with Chairperson of BoG EA Southern Region/CCMS



Step 6:

Continue to monitor well-being of students and staff

- Organise assistance, such as transport home, for staff or students who are distressed. Try to ensure that they are not alone on the evening after such an incident
 - Identify at risk pupils, staff, arrange for follow-up support, involvement with other professionals, referrals as necessary
- Assess the need for debriefing of staff and pupils with expert help
 - Arrange for support of Critical Incident Response Team
 - Continue to liaise with Chairperson of BoG/EA Southern Region/CCMS

Appendix 2

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

CCMS staff procedure when dealing with media enquiries

There are two forms of media coverage which affect CCMS.

Proactive- This is press coverage and media interest which we generate by sending out media invites, press releases, statements and photographs to the press.

Reactive- This is when we are contacted by the press for a statement, comment or interview request or when we release a statement in reaction to an article that has appeared in the press that affects the reputation of CCMS. Crisis management situations are handled in a reactive manner.

A Principal aim of all media relations and public relations work is that a positive public profile Catholic Maintained schools, Catholic education for CCMS is maintained. All media coverage should as far as is possible protect the reputation of CCMS and its cognate bodies and continue to build on its relationship with the public and the media.

All media coverage should reflect consistent messages to communicate CCMS key priorities, values and objectives and reach its target audiences.

Proactive media coverage:

What is it?

Proactive media coverage is used to promote the work, achievements and values of Catholic Maintained schools, Catholic education and CCMS.

Proactive public relations is when the communications officer /school PR officer sends out a media invite, statement, comment, press release or photographs to the media with the aim of securing positive press coverage for CCMS or its cognate bodies.

All media invites, statements and press releases that are issued from CCMS have been approved by senior management so we never release any unapproved information via phone or email.

In certain circumstances we send out press releases in relation to school closures, amalgamations or pre-consultations in advance of the media contacting us.

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What to do:

- If you receive a media enquiry in relation to a media invite or press release that has been distributed to the media by the communications officer direct all enquiries to the communications officer.
- If the communications officer is out of the office take a message and contact him immediately on 07595711475 - Kevin.mcgourty@ccmsschools.com, or pass on his mobile number to the journalist.
- If you are taking a message please ensure you get the journalist's name and mobile number, what newspaper, TV or radio station they are calling from, what programme they work for, their and what is the nature of their query. Having all this information makes it much easier for the communications officer to respond quickly and accurately.
- If the communications officer is unavailable please liaise with the Chief Executive's PA 02890426972 (Alison Russell) to determine who the appropriate member of the senior leadership team is to respond to the media query.
- If it is a simple query, for example, when and where a press conference or event is taking place and you have the correct information please endeavour to provide an answer to the journalist.
- **This is the type of media coverage that we want to secure so it is important to reply to all media queries as quickly as possible but we also need to make sure that all information provided is accurate.**

Reactive media coverage:

What is it?

The media may contact CCMS for a statement or spokesperson for interview in reaction to any of these incidents:

- A school specific issues, incident or event.
- A disgruntled parent or relative can approach the media about an incident that they are alleging has affected a child in a CCMS school e.g. bullying.
- A disgruntled teacher or principal can approach the media about an incident that has affected them within a CCMS school and they are unhappy about e.g. suspension.
- An outside agency, e.g. Department of Education or teacher unions, can release a statement or press release to the media that may affect or have an impact on CCMS and its schools.
- A disgruntled group may approach the media about an issue that affects them in relation to a CCMS school e.g. school closure or amalgamation.
- An unexpected incident involving a pupil in a Catholic Maintained school e.g. death or accident.
- Closure or amalgamation of a CCMS school(s).

What to do:

All reactive comments, statements and press releases are approved by senior management. There is often consultation with diocesan office staff in relation to local issues.

- All reactive media queries should be passed straight to the communications officer.
- If the communications officer is out of the office take a message and contact him immediately on 07595711475 - Kevin.mcgourty@ccmsschools.com, or pass on his mobile number to the journalist.
- If you are taking a message please ensure you get the journalists name and mobile number, what newspaper, TV or radio station they are calling from, what programme they work for, their deadline and the nature of their query.

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- If the communications officer is unavailable please liaise with the Chief Executive's PA to determine who the appropriate member of the senior leadership team is to respond to the media query.
- **Never make any 'on record' comment to the media on the phone.**
Always pass the call through to the communications officer or take a message. Anything you say on the phone can always be attributed back to a CCMS spokesperson by the journalist.
- It may not always be appropriate to issue a statement in reaction to a media query.
- If you have been made aware of a potential crisis management situation or the possibility of someone going to the press with a negative story **always make the communications officer aware of this as soon as possible.** It is always better for the communications officer to brief a school principal in advance of a negative story breaking and provide media relations guidance. It also allows CCMS to plan a reactive statement if necessary.