



CNOC MUIRE BEREAVEMENT & CRITICAL INCIDENT

POLICY (under review)

RATIONALE

Cnoc Mhuire will endeavour to facilitate pupils during periods of trauma/ critical incidents/bereavement. The school recognises that many of its students will have to cope with bereavements during the school year and in line with our Mission Statement, will try to facilitate pupils during this sad time. This Policy cannot be prescriptive but is intended as a support in a situation where time to reflect may be at a minimum.

GOALS

To ensure a consistent approach to the critical event which has occurred

The school environment should be a caring one.

Establish the Facts:

It is crucial that the school has the correct information regarding the crisis. Therefore it is important that senior and involved staff gather to establish the facts. This may involve contacting others such as hospitals, Gardai, parents/ chaplain. Staff will be briefed as soon as possible.

A. In the event of the death of an enrolled student of Cnoc Mhuire

All staff will be informed as soon as possible by the Principal or via the school's email/ SMS system. A meeting will take place in school before school starts and the routine for the day will be decided. The home of the bereaved family will be visited by the Principal and/ or Deputy Principal. In the case of a suspected suicide, great care will be taken not to use the term "suicide" until it has been established categorically that the student's death was a result of suicide.

All students will be informed at first class in an assembly by the class tutor. A common agreed statement containing the known facts and relevant details will be given to all teachers to use. School support will be highlighted. The Principal will supply a prayer if the class teacher is comfortable to pray.

The Oratory and adjacent rooms will be made available for students and classmates who are genuinely upset. Teachers who are willing to do so will be made available to spend time with these students on a rota basis. The Guidance Counsellor/ relevant yearhead will be made available to students. Students will be allowed to talk/ cry in their natural friendship groups. Students will be informed of the routine for the day.

If the trauma is linked to one particular class it may be necessary for the Class Tutor to remain with the class for an extended time. This teacher needs to be supported by the staff/ Pastoral Care team.

Students will be allowed home if they are collected by a parent/ guardian at the office. students will not be allowed home if there is no parent/ guardian at home.

Care will be given to vulnerable students eg those who have recently been bereaved/ relatives/ friends of the deceased

The school will seek the help of external Counsellors/ NEPS psychologists if it is a sudden death/ critical incident.

The Principal will give a brief, prepared and factual statement to the media if the need arises. No personal data will be released to the media. Priority will be given to the sensitivities and needs of those affected directly by the crisis. The statement will express the sorrow of the entire school community at the sudden death of one of their members and it should extend sympathy to the bereaved family.

The Chairperson of the Board of Management will also be informed and if necessary an emergency meeting of the Board may be convened.

Students not directly affected will continue with normal classes throughout the day. Hysteria should be discouraged.

In consultation with the deceased pupil's family, an agreed form of representation from the school will be decided upon. The family's wishes will be respected in relation to the school's involvement. This could be a guard of honour that would be organised at the removal or funeral by the religion and/ or class teachers. The relevant year/ class group will be in school uniform. A bus will be provided to take them to the funeral. It could be involvement in the Liturgy.

Other students wishing to attend the funeral can do so with a written note of permission from a parent/ guardian and on the basis that the parent collects them from school. In the event that the school will close for the funeral, all parents will be informed.

B. In the event of the death of a member of school staff.

All staff will be informed as soon as possible by the Principal or via the school's SMS service.

All pupils will be informed at an assembly by the class teacher at 9am. Only known facts and relevant details will be given. The office will supply a prayer if the class teacher is comfortable to pray. Classes will operate as normal for the school day. A whole school prayer service may be held at the last class if feasible. In consultation with the deceased teacher's family, an agreed form of representation from the school will be decided upon. The family's wishes will be respected in relation to the school's involvement. In the event that the school will close for the funeral, all parents will be informed.

C. In the event of the death of a student's immediate family member (parent or sibling).

All staff will be informed as soon as possible by the Principal, especially the relevant class teachers. The home of the bereaved family will be visited by the Principal and/ or Deputy Principal to offer condolences.

The relevant class group(s) will be informed at an assembly by the class teacher. The Religion teacher of the relevant class group(s) will get a Mass Card and get all the class to sign it.

In consultation with the pupil's family, the relevant class group or representatives from relevant classes will be taken to the funeral mass. The family's wishes will be respected in relation to the school's involvement. Pupils will go in uniform. A class teacher or religion teacher will accompany the group. The school will organise and pay for the bus. A guard of honour will be organised at the funeral by the religion and/ class teachers if this has been the agreed representation.

The class teacher and other teachers will need to be aware of the effect of bereavement on pupils and to offer their support in the weeks following a bereavement. Staff will try to be vigilant for signs of distress or uncharacteristic behaviour and to be sensitive and caring in their dealings with such pupils in the immediate and following weeks of bereavement.

D In the event of a Critical Incident

In the event of a critical incident, the involvement of a NEPS psychologist(s) may be sought. Their support may involve advice or a school visit to assist staff in their response to the critical incident. NEPS do not provide counselling but will identify children/ staff most in need of support. NEPS require signed consent to see a child. If this need arises, the school will inform parents in a general letter that consent will be assumed unless the consent slip is signed and returned stating consent is not given.

Follow Up

Each November the school's Religion Department organises class activities to remember those who have died. Eg design a card/ poem/ painting etc The school has a Memoriam Board for deceased past pupils/ staff.

The Pastoral Care team will check in with the bereaved student(s). The guidance Counsellor will offer their services. Staff will be reminded to be sensitive to the needs of those who have been affected. This will be notified to new staff members. Care and sensitivity will prevail if belongings/ lockers etc have to be returned.

Sample Student/Staff (Written) Announcement

Dear Student/Staff

This morning we heard the extremely sad news that _____, who was in _____ class, died last night. We are all shocked and saddened by _____ death and would like to express out sincerest sympathy to all _____ friends, class members and family.

Death is a difficult issue for all of us to deal with and causes a lot of emotional reactions including disbelief, shock, tears and anger. At the moment we do not have the funeral arrangements but we will keep you informed over the course of the day. If any of you feel that you need to talk through things with an adult, just ask your teacher for help.

School Emergency Contact Sheet

Contact		Phone Number
Doctor	Niall Donohue	043 – 6686584
Local Medical Centre	Granard	043 – 6686068
Gardaí	Granard Station Gda Tracy Shanley Community garda	6687667/ 6687660 087 7794633
Hospital Emergency Dept	Mullingar General Hospital	04493 40221
Health Services	Longford/ Westmeath	04493 955508
Counselling Services	The Samaritans	1850-609090
	Community Mental Health Centre	043 3346992 04493 94540
	Aware	1800804848
Lus na Greine Family Resource Centre	Rainbows Programme	043 666 0977
Midland Suicide Bereavement Support	Bernie Carroll Pieta	086 418 0088
Educational Services	NEPS	04493-37004
	Rath Mhuire Resource Centre	(043) 668 6309 rathmhuire@gmail.com
Press and Media	Longford Leader	043-3345241
Local Clergy	Fr. Simon Cadam Fr Tom Healy Edgeworthstown Fr Michael Bannon Mullinaghta/ Gowna Fr Campbell Abbeylara Fr. Oliver Coole Fr PJ Hughes Mullahoran	086 2401295 043 6671046 043 - 6683120 & 087- 2840668 087 2442602 043 6683141

This list was updated on: September 2022