



Woodstock Educate Together National School Critical Incident Policy

Introduction

Woodstock Educate Together National School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment at all times. The school has formulated a number of policies e.g. Well-being Statement & Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Code of Positive Behaviour with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students.

Our Mission Statement is: “Woodstock Educate Together strives to cultivate a welcoming, secure and nurturing learning and teaching environment, aiming to equip each child with the confidence and skills to reach their unique potential. We aspire to excellence in an atmosphere of collaboration, openness and respect. Woodstock ETNS is energised by the principle that “educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

The Board of Management, through Philip McCarthy(Acting Principal), has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) as one element of the school’s policies and plans. This is informed by the NEPS Publication - <https://assets.gov.ie/40700/21b5193521d147c890b4309fe4bfce9d.pdf>

What is a Critical Incident?

Woodstock ETNS recognises a critical incident to be an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school (NEPS 2016). Critical Incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Types of incidents might include but are not limited to the examples below:

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.
- An intrusion into the school which has an adverse impact on the school community.
- 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.
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s).
- An accident or tragedy outside the school community which impacts on the school community.

Aim

Recognising that effective management of critical incidents requires planning, Woodstock ETNS has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying plan. Our goal is that, in the event of an incident, this policy will enable our staff to respond swiftly and efficiently while maintaining a sense of control. It should also aid in restoring normalcy as quickly as possible and minimising the impact on students and staff.

The Creation of a Coping, Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School.

We have put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical Safety.

- Implementation of a comprehensive Health & Safety policy (please refer to the Health and Safety policy on the website for further details).
- Regular fire drills to practice timely evacuation of the premises.
- Regular inspection of fire exits and extinguishers.
- Annual servicing of the Fire Alarm system and maintaining of monitored intruder alarm.
- Strict visitor registration and reporting procedures.
- Students are not released to unknown individuals without parental/guardian verification.
- Regular reminders of playground rules and our School Code of Behaviour. Adequate supervision of students, especially during physical activities and break times.
- Maintenance and availability of first aid kits in the secretary's office.

Psychological Safety/Well-Being:

Woodstock ETNS aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for them. Our strategies to support and ensure the psychological well-being of our pupils include:

- Integration of Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) into the curriculum, addressing topics like grief, communication skills, stress management, conflict resolution, problem-solving, help-seeking, resilience, bullying, decision-making, and alcohol and drug prevention.
- Teaching the Stay Safe programme to students in specific classes.
- Implementation of an Anti-Bullying Policy (please refer to policy for further details).
- Regular review of the Child Protection and Child Safeguarding policies.
- Staff completion of the 'Introduction to Children First' online training program.
- Staff engagement in Restorative Practice training. Staff awareness of and vigilance in identifying individual student needs.
- Establishment of links with external agencies, including HSE, NEPS, Lucena Services, Enable Ireland, CAMHS, and Túsla Child and Family Agency.
- Provision of information on mental health, including signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Careful consideration of external providers and their content when delivering interventions to students.
- Adoption of a clear policy on bullying and adherence to it.
- Implementation of a care system for students based on the "Continuum of Support" approach.

Staff training/ Support links/Outside agencies:

- Staff are informed on a need to know basis of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs, respecting individual privacy.
- Under our Anti-bullying policy respect for LGBTI+ students is celebrated as is all diversity.
- Staff training - Woodstock ETNS Promotes Restorative Practices, having a Positive Behaviour & Anti-Bullying policy. To enhance its integration staff CPD is facilitated. Staff are trained as Friends for Life Facilitator & Nurture School training is to be commenced in 2021.
- Staff have ready access to books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school child.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves. EAS Wellbeing Together Employee Assistance Service (EAS) - Email: eap@spectrum.life/ Freephone: 1800411057/ [WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010](#)/ [SMS: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010](#)

Key Roles 2024 - 2025:

- Team Leader: Philip McCarthy (Acting Principal)
- Staff Liaison: Gráinne Ní Chuinn (Deputy Principal)
- Student Liaison: Emma Byrne (Acting Assistant Principal)
- Community Liaison: Anne Gregory (Chairperson of the BOM)
- Garda contact Lee Doyle (Parent and member of An Garda Síochána)
- Parent Liaison: (Sinead Todd)
- Media Liaison: Gráinne Ní Chuinn (Deputy Principal)
- Administrator: Sinead Todd (Secretary)

Responsibilities in the Event of a Critical Incident:

Team Leader:

- Alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Coordinates team tasks.
- Liaises with the Board of Management, Department of Education and Skills, I.N.T.O., NEPS, and relevant agencies.
- Coordinates with Garda contact when necessary.
- Liaises with any affected families. Identifies and responds to any misinformation which may cause panic or concern within the school community in a timely manner.

Staff Liaison:

- Conducts meetings to brief staff on known facts, allowing staff to express their feelings and outlining the day's routine.
- Advises staff on identifying vulnerable students.
- Identifies and supports vulnerable staff members.

Student Liaison:

- Liaises with other team members to keep staff and students updated on information and progress.
- Alerts staff to vulnerable students.

Community Liaison:

- Collaborates with community agencies for support and referrals.
- Updates team members on external agency involvement.
- Coordinates the involvement of external agencies.

Garda contact

- Contacts emergency support services, and other external contacts and resources.
- Updates other team members in relation to the involvement of emergency support services.
- Advises the team on any actions that the school may need to take.

Parent Liaison:

- Facilitates "questions and answers" meetings.
- Meets with individual parents.
- May visit the bereaved family with the team leader.

Media Liaison:

- Prepares for potential media interactions during an incident.
- Liaises with the Communications Section in the Department of Education and Skills if necessary.

Administrator:

- Maintains up-to-date contact lists of parents/guardians, teachers, and emergency support services.
- Manages telephone calls requiring a response, sends letters, and photocopies materials.

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 do also.

Some Useful Links:

<https://hospicefoundation.ie/>

<https://www.barnardos.ie/>

<https://anamcara.ie/>

<https://spunout.ie/>

<https://www.childhoodbereavement.ie/schools/>

<https://www.rainbowsireland.ie/>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/nosp/about/>

<https://www.childline.ie/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/ireland/samaritans-ireland/>

Childline: **1800 666 666 (free calls) free text Talk to 50101**

The Samaritans: **1850 60 90 90 (Local call cost)**

Spunout: **01 675 3554/ free text SPUNOUT to 50808**

Crosscare (supporting migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people who are homeless): **01 8726775**

Parentline: **01 8733500**

Womens aid: **1800 341 900 Mens aid: 015543811**

