When news is received of a tragic or traumatic event of importance to the school community the following plan will be implemented.

The staff member receiving the news immediately contacts the Principal or Deputy Principal or Head of Boarding.

The Principal verifies that the information received is accurate.

The Principal notifies the Chair of the Board, as well as the Department of Education Services (DES) through the Critical Incident Report Form.

Minutes of Board meetings will indicate the date and the time DES was notified in accordance with the Critical Incident Report Form. Details of such critical incidents will be included in the monthly minutes and in the Principal’s Annual Report to the Board as part of Level of Care matters.

The Principal calls a meeting of the co-ordinating team as soon as is practical. The co-ordinating team consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Dean of Curriculum, Dean of Administration, Head of Junior School, Chaplain, Counsellor, Head of Boarding and Link Teacher/Class Teacher/Year Teacher if applicable.

Procedure for the co-ordinating team:

- The team receives a clear explanation of the known facts and from this makes decisions and initiates action on the following areas -
  
  a) The appropriate manner of contact with the distressed family. Contact should include offers of support as well as expressing the school’s sympathy.
  
  b) Identifying and informing those members of the school community most closely involved. This includes the Link teacher, Year Teacher, Class teacher (in the case of the Junior School) and close friends.
  
  c) Informing the staff, and the year group (preferably through Link groups). Also the student body as a whole, again preferably through Link groups, the Board of Governors, Boarding Community (if appropriate) and St Mary's organisations.
  
  d) The Principal drafts and circulates a written notice for the above group.
  
  e) Provides additional guidelines for staff about what information to give students and how to handle reactions including referral to Chaplain/Counsellor.
  
  f) The Principal acts as a liaison with the appropriate authorities and, if necessary, other schools.
  
  g) Means of handling the media. The Principal to be the only contact.
h) Establishes times for follow up meetings for the Crisis Response Group.

i) Establishes a programme for keeping staff fully informed.

j) Establishes a support programme for staff.

The Chaplain convenes a meeting of staff most closely responsible for the wellbeing of the student/family to discuss special care and follow up support. Members of the group to include, class teacher, link teacher, year teacher, Counsellor, boarding staff and, if appropriate, the school nurse.

Arrangements for attendance at funeral, if appropriate, to be made.

Chaplain to contact the family with regard to a memorial service.

‘Normal’ classes should resume as soon as possible.

Opportunity is to be given, for girls who need to, to grieve.