

# CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY



*Scoil Chaitríona Naíonáin* aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, through the Principal and Staff, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

## Review and Research

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and [nosp.ie](http://nosp.ie) including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

## Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *Scoil Chaitríona Naíonáin* recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school". Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include:

- *The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death*
- *An intrusion into the school*
- *An accident involving members of the school community*
- *An accident/tragedy in the wider community*
- *Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*

## Aim

The aim of the CIMP is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

### **Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school**

We have put systems in place through our SPHE programmes 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**

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
  - Side gate closed during school hours
  - Entry to school during school hours is restricted to use of intercom system on front door.
- School policies in place – Health and Safety, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying policy.

#### **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of *Scoil Chaitríona Naíonáin* aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of students, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE through the PDST
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, HSE
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system in place in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2007 for primary schools.
- Where there are concerns about a child the school liaises with parents and NEPs
- Where necessary staff can access support for themselves through the Employee Assistance Service

#### **Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team are the post of responsibility holders. They will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder containing

of                    A copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event  
                          an incident.

Emergency contact list

Copy of the duties of each team member

**Team leader: *Principal***

**Role**

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC
- Liaises with bereaved family, Gardai etc.
  
- Deputy Principal will assume this role in the absence of the Principal

**Staff liaison: *Deputy Principal***

Keeps staff updated on facts as known and outlines routine for the day.

Look after the setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where required.

Advise staff of the availability of Employee Assistance Service and provide contact details.

**Parent/Community/agency liaison: *Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators and Marie Dineen***

**Role**

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
  - Key parents, such as members of the Parents' Association
  - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies
  
- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
  
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents

**Media liaison *Chairperson/Principal***

**Role**

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. students/staff being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with relevant teacher unions.
- Will draw up a press statement (as agreed by school management)

## Administrator: School Secretary

### Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
  - Parents or guardians
  - Teachers
  - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

### Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.

*School Secretary* will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

### Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of *Scoil Chaitríona Naíonáin* have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, e.g. the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, *and* that the family involved consents to its use. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead. Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

### Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Classrooms</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Assembly Hall</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Assembly Hall</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Sensory Room</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Sensory Room</i>	Meetings with other visitors

### Consultation and communication regarding the plan

The Critical Incident Plan was drawn up by the Principal in consultation with the members of the Critical Incident Team.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents will be presented to all staff. Each member of the critical incident team will have a personal copy of the plan.

The plan will be reviewed and updated annually by the Critical Incident Management Team.

The plan was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 20 March 2018.

<b>Critical Incident Management Team</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	
<b>Team leader:</b>	<i>Margo Gillooly</i>	
<b>Garda liaison</b>	<i>Margo Gillooly</i>	
<b>Staff liaison</b>	<i>Mary McCarthy</i>	
<b>Student liaison</b>	<i>Marie Dineen/Class Teachers</i>	
<b>Community liaison</b>	<i>Dervilla Cusack, Peter Loughney</i>	
<b>Parent liaison</b>	<i>Dervilla Cusack/Peter Loughney</i>	
<b>Media liaison</b>	<i>Chairperson/Principal</i>	
<b>Administrator</b>	<i>Mary Stanford</i>	

### Short term actions - Day 1

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Gather accurate information	Principal
Who, what, when, where?	
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Principal
Contact external agencies	Principal/HSCL
Arrange supervision for students	Deputy Principal
Hold staff meeting	<b>All staff</b>
Agree schedule for the day	Principal and Staff
Inform students - (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Class Teachers
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Class Teachers
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Chairperson/Principal
Inform parents	Principal
Hold end of day staff briefing	Principal

## Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Principal
Meet external agencies	Principal/HSCL Co-ordinators
Meet whole staff	Principal
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Deputy Principal Assistant Principal HSCL Co-ordinators
Visit the injured	Principal Deputy Principal Assistant Principal
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	As above
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	As above
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

## Follow-up - beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Principal
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Class Teacher
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Class Teacher
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM



# EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda Community Garda	Coolock: 6664200  6664248
Hospital	8093000
Fire Brigade	999
Local GPs	Dr. Tarek Zourob 44, Malahide Road 8510040          0872100251  Dr. John McGuinness 58, St. Brigid's Road 8328869
HSE	Dublin North 8164200 Information 1850 241850
Community Care Team	Cromcastle - 8164200
Child and Family Centre	
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Darndale/Belcamp 8771550
School Inspector	Fiona Rushe 087 1212102 Fiona_rushe@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist	Dr. Caroline Cleary 0761108670 087 7660813 Caroline_cleary@education.gov.ie
DES	
INTO	8047700
Clergy	Fr. Edwin McAllion
State Exams Commission	
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

