

**LE CHÉILE EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL
SCHOOL
MORNINGTON ROAD
DROGHEDA
CO. LOUTH**



Roll No: 20146Q

Critical Incident Management Plan

2016

Principal: Fiona Rock
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CREATION OF A COPING, SUPPORTIVE AND CARING ETHOS

This can be done in the following ways, and to a great extent already exists within our school;

- *Creating a physically and psychologically safe school through the development of areas such as an anti-bullying policy, peer support programmes, suicide awareness programmes, fire drills, and equipment and building checks. (Principal and Kim are responsible for fire drills within the school, and one will be held per term.)*
- *Inclusion of SPHE and Learn Together programmes in the curriculum, covering such areas as communication skills, self-esteem, decision making, bereavement, stress management, and coping skills*
- *Creating pastoral care structures and reviewing their effectiveness*
- *Accessing training, if available, for staff to deal with critical incidents*
- *Developing links with outside agencies and procedures for referral.*
- *Supporting Staff: e.g. through the Employee Assistance Scheme.*

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT

“A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school”.

Examples:

- *Death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide*
- *Criminal incidents (e.g. Dunblane shooting, Shooting at first communion in Ballymun)*
- *A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school*
- *Major accidents or serious injury involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises (e.g. ‘Navan bus crash’)*
- *Civil unrest, war (refugees may be traumatised by events that happened elsewhere)*
- *Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing in Cork)*
- *Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g. Midleton incident in Cork)*
- *Unauthorised removal of student from school or home, or the disappearance of a member of the school community.*

School Trips

In the event of an incident on a school tour, the teacher on tour will contact the Principal. The Principal and Deputy Principal will then decide if it is a critical incident, and whether or not to contact CIT members.

School Holidays

Should a critical incident occur during school holidays, efforts will be made to contact all CIT members. A judgement will then be made if all staff are to be informed, and a meeting will be called if necessary. A judgement will then be made as to how to proceed.

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

“It is a group of individuals from the school community who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs.”

The team has been created from the staff, and includes members of the Board of Management and Parent-Teacher Association.

Critical Incident Management Team

Chairperson BOM: Paul Corry

Team Leader: Fiona Rock / Rosemary Mc Gonagle

Staff Liaison: Monica Mc Keever, Anne Killeen, David Brennan

Student Liaison / Counsellor: Class Teacher

Parent / Community Liaison: Cara Driscoll, Vincent Moore

NEPS representative: Siobhan Gahan

The first named person has the responsibility as defined.

The second named person assists and only assumes responsibility on the absence of the first named.

Wallet sized emergency contact cards are issued to all members, and should be kept with the member at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities

TEAM LEADER

- Alerts team members of a crisis
- Convenes meeting
- Coordinates tasks for team
- Keeps in touch with all members
- Communicates with BoM, DES, NEPS, Gardaí, Emergency Services and Hospitals etc.
- Liaises with bereaved family

STAFF LIAISON

- Information meeting for staff – facts, vulnerable students, expression of feelings, routine for day
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and circulates building
- Distributes “Ready to Go” information packs
- Induction for new staff on Critical Incident Policy.

STUDENT LIAISON / COUNSELLOR

- *Identification and monitoring of vulnerable students*
- *Alerts staff to vulnerable students*
- *“Ready to Go” – support pack for teachers*

PARENT LIAISON

- *Questions and Answers meeting (with outside assistance if needed)*
- *Meet individual parents*
- *Liaise with parent of the deceased*
- *“Ready to Go” pack*

COMMUNITY LIAISON

- *Network with community agencies (NEPS/ HSE/religious/voluntary groups/library/Gardaí)*
- *Coordinate community involvement in school*
- *Keep records of involvement*
- *Update team members*
- *Keep up-to-date lists of contact details.*

MEDIA LIAISON

- *The Principal and Deputy Principal (or Senior Post-Holder) in conjunction with the BoM are responsible for any Press Release which is to be prepared in advance of any interview.*
- *It is advisable not to rush any such statement, and it must be declined if the statement is not ready.*
- *Staff are not to give information to the media*
- *Staff will be directed by the Critical Incident Team*
- *Children will not be interviewed on the way home from school etc.*
- *Camera / Media exclusion from school grounds.*
- *Board members are to be directed not to make their own statement to the press. Likewise, PTA members are to be directed not to make a statement unless it is a prepared statement from the CIT chairperson*
- *An official written record will be kept of any press release and all press contacts*

“READY TO GO” PACKS

- *Sample letter to school community in the event of a tragedy*
- *Sample letter requesting opt-out of involvement of outside professional(s)*
- *FAQs*
- *Helping Children Understand – Barnardos booklet*
- *Critical Incident Resource Pack – available from N.E.P.S.*
- *What to expect after Trauma : Possible Reactions in Primary School Students*
- *Pastoral contacts*

KEY ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

- *Maintaining an up to date list of contact numbers. Numbers should be available for*
 - *Pupils, parents, guardians*
 - *Staff*
 - *Emergency Support Services (see list attached, to be displayed in the Principal's office, the Secretary's office and the Staff Room)*
- *Compiling emergency information for school trips to include*
 - *List of all pupils/staff involved and the teacher in charge*
 - *Parental permission slips must be signed with contact numbers.*
 - *List of mobile phone numbers for accompanying teacher(s)*
 - *Up to date medical information on pupils with allergies, epilepsy etc (the school policy on treating anaphylaxis should be distributed on each trip)*

- *Identifying roles to be fulfilled at the time of a critical incident*

External liaison with

- *Outside support agencies i.e. emergency service, DES, NEPS, HSE etc*
- *Parents*
- *Distressed visitors*
- *The media*

Internal care and communication with

- *Staff*
- *Students in general*
- *Students more immediately involved or affected*

Maintaining administration and services such as

- *Telephone (e.g. keeping a line free for outgoing and important incoming calls)*
- *Rooms for debriefing, parents, quiet room, counselling etc*
- *Log of events, letters to parents, telephone calls made and received*
- *Dealing with normal school business*

AIM OF PLAN

The aim of the Critical Incident Plan is that in the event of such an incident as outlined above, the plan will help staff and management to react quickly and effectively and to maintain control of the situation. The plan will also help the school to return to normality as soon as possible and limit the effects of the incident on staff and students.

The plan is an extension to the existing Health and Safety policy, and is linked to the Stay Safe policy, the RSE and SPHE programs. It is also being developed in recognition of the school's duty of child protection in all its forms.

Action plan

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (Day one)

- **Gather accurate information**
 - *What happened, where and when?*
 - *What is the extent of the injuries?*
 - *How many are involved and what are their names?*
 - *Is there a risk of further injury?*
 - *What agencies have been contacted already*

- **Contact appropriate agencies**
 - *Emergency services*
 - *Medical services*
 - *H.S.E. Psychology Departments/Community Care Services*
 - *NEPS*
 - *BOM*
 - *DES/Schools Inspector.*

- *Having determined that a Critical Incident has occurred (defined by Principal / Chairperson), the Chairperson/Principal will call a CIT meeting of all members and a staff meeting if appropriate.*

- **CIT MEETING**
 - *Agree a statement of facts*
 - *Delegate responsibilities*
 - *Keep phone line open*
 - *Organise the timetable/routine for the day*
 - *Decide on involvement of outside professionals*

- **STAFF MEETING**
 - *Give an account of the facts as known*
 - *Opportunity for staff to express their views and feelings*
 - *Discussion with staff regarding the sharing of facts with students with a view to agreed approach*
 - *Outline daily routine*
 - *Information regarding the supports to be put in place for students and staff*
 - *A procedure for identifying vulnerable students*
 - *Distribute supporting materials (Section 4 – NEPS pack)*
 - *Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted, list of friends etc, or any other relevant information and give to the Staff Liaison person*
 - *End of school day meeting.*

- **Inform parents & guardians**
 - *Parents of children directly involved*
 - *Contact parents systematically*
 - *Give relevant and factual information*
 - *Make a room available for parents / students*
 - *Support parents as they arrive at the school*

- *Parents of children not directly involved*
 - *Inform parents of the incident and outline that their child may be upset*
 - *A letter to parents stating the facts and brief details of the incident is a good way*
- ***Inform students***
 - *Careful preparation is recommended*
 - *Consider age of pupils / optimum group sizes*
 - *Suitability of messenger is important*
 - *Give facts and avoid speculation. This helps to dispel rumours.*
 - *Allow pupils to ask questions, tell their story and express feelings*
 - *Help students realize that overwhelming emotions are natural and normal*
 - *Recognize that students will react in a variety of ways*
- ***Make contact with the bereaved family***
- ***Deal with the Media***
 - *The Principal is designated as spokesperson (see notes above)*
 - *The Team will prepare a brief statement.*
 - *Protect the family's privacy.*
- ***Organise the reunion of students with their parents if necessary.***

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS (24-72 HOURS)

- ***Reconvene CIT members***
 - *Check how well members are coping*
 - *Update all staff on factual developments*
 - *Be sensitive to how staff are coping personally and professionally*
 - *Update staff on arrangements for supporting students / parents / staff*
 - *Consider need for media update*
- ***Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary.***
 - *Provide a suitable room*
 - *Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened.*
 - *Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out.*
 - *Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission*
- ***Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc. Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.***
- ***Plan visits to injured***
- ***Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service. Decide this in accordance with parents' wishes and school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends.***

- *School closure - request a decision on this from school management and inspector.*

LONGER TERM ACTIONS

- *Monitor students for signs of continuing distress.
If, over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he/she may need assistance from the H.S.E.*
 - *Uncharacteristic behaviour*
 - *Deterioration in academic performance*
 - *Physical symptoms — e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness*
 - *Inappropriate emotional reactions*
 - *Increased absenteeism.*
- *Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately.*
 - *What went well?*
 - *Where were the gaps?*
 - *What was most/least helpful?*
 - *Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?*
 - *Is there any unfinished business?*
- *Amend the Critical Incident Plan for the future if necessary.*
 - *Consult with NEPS Psychologist*
- *Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate*
 - *Ensure that new staff is aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.*
 - *Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way.*
 - *When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, it would be useful to brief the Principal of the new school.*
- *Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (Be sensitive to special days and events)*
 - *Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time.*
 - *Acknowledge the anniversary with the family*
 - *Be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day.*
- *Plan a school memorial service.*
- *Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?*
- *Update and amend school records.*

DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH OF A SUSPECTED SUICIDE

When a person dies through suicide, those who know the person experience a deep sense of shock. The unexpectedness of the death and the taboo associated with suicide can leave a school community feeling unsure of how to proceed.

The term 'suicide' should not be used if at all possible, even if it has been established categorically that the student's or teacher's death was as a result of suicide. The phrase 'sudden death' should be used instead.

Family

- *A staff member should contact the family to establish the exact facts and the family's wishes about how the death should be described*
- *Acknowledge their grief and loss*
- *Organise a home visit by two staff members*
- *Consult with the family regarding the appropriate support from the school e.g. at the funeral service.*

Staff

- *Convene a staff meeting to brief staff on the above details. It may be necessary to do this in shifts therefore ensuring staff are available for support to students and for cover at all times. Remember to include auxiliary staff.*
- *Students need to be with people they know and trust. If possible, it is better if the teachers provide support for the students. The external "expert" visitor should therefore be primarily used to brief the teachers.*
- *Help teachers to prepare for breaking the news to students. Close friends and relatives of the deceased in the school need to be told first. This needs to be done in a private location.*
- *Outline the possible reactions.*
- *Give them information from the schools pack on dealing with the students in the classroom and on reactions to grief*
- *Identify high-risk students and what supports are available*
- *Remind them of the school's critical incident plan*
- *Decide on the strategy to deal with queries from parents & guardians. Prepare a letter setting out the facts, how the school is dealing with the events, and how parents or guardians can support their child*
- *Ensure that a quiet place can be made available for students & staff*
- *Hold further staff briefings during the day to update information, to offer support and to further identify high-risk students.*



EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Gardaí (Drogheda)</i> | <i>041 9874211</i> |
| <i>Hospital (Our Lady of Lourdes)</i> | <i>041 9837601</i> |
| <i>Poisons Unit – Beaumont Hospital</i> | <i>01 8092566</i> |
| <i>Children’s Services, Navan</i> | <i>046 9097802</i> |
| <i>HSE Info line Head Office</i> | <i>1 850 241850 01 45880400</i> |
| <i>HSE Health Centre, Ballsgrove</i> | <i>041 9838574</i> |
| <i>Community Care Services (Louth-Dundalk)</i> | <i>042 9332287</i> |
| <i>Dept. of Social & Family Affairs (Drogheda)</i> | <i>041 9871130</i> |
| <i>Duty Social Worker Drogheda – Ballsgrove Navan</i> | <i>041 9838574 046 9874200</i> |
| <i>NEPS (Pól Bond)</i> | <i>041 9876940</i> |
| <i>NEPS - Frederick Court (all hours)</i> | <i>01 8892700</i> |
| <i>Pastoral Care</i> | <i>See next page</i> |