Polasaí Teagmheas Criticiúil

Coláiste an Eachréidh

Faomhadh ó Bhord Bainistíochta

Choláiste an Eachréidh

Dáta: 2-12-25

Glactha ag Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin

Dáta:

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais (NEPS)

TÁ AN CÓD SEO ULLMHAITHE I GCOMHAIRLE LE TUISMITHEOIRÍ, SCOLÁIRÍ, FOIREANN AN CHOLÁISTE, BORD BAINISTÍOCHTA AGUS GRETB

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20.1. **Múinteoirí ag cabhrú le daltaí nuair atá géarchéim nó cás éigeandála**
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20.6. **Frithghníomhartha ar theagmhas criticiúil: Na Mothúcháin**
20.7. **Brón tar éis féinmharú**
20.8. **Dalta ag filleadh tar éis eachtra tromchúiseach**
20.9. **Bealaí chun cabhrú le do pháiste**
20.10. **Ceisteanna Samplacha le n-úsáid mar threoir le dalta**
20.11. **Seicliosta do dhaltaí i mbaol**
20.12. **Comhairle i gcás dalta ag lua Féinmharú agus riosca**
20.13. **Ceisteanna comónta do Phríomhoidí**
20.14. **Ceisteanna comónta do Mhúinteoirí**
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An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais (NEPS)

TÁ AN POLASAÍ SEO ULLMHAITHE DE REIR TREOIRLÍNTE AN BORD NÁISIÚNTA LEASA OIDEACHAIS MAR ATÁ LEAGTHA SÍOS SAN ACHT OIDEACHAIS 2000 ROINN

1.0 POLASAÍ THEAGMHAIS CHRITICIÚIL

Sainmhíniú:
Aithníonn foireann agus bainistíocht Coláiste an Eachréidh gur ionann teagmhas criticiúil agus "teagmhas nó sraith imeachtaí ar bith threascraíonn gnáthmheicníocht déiléala na scoile". D'fhéadfadh go mbainfeadh na teagmhais chriticiúla le dalta amháin nó ball foirne amháin nó le níos mó ná dalta amháin nó ball foirne amháin, nó le ball den phobal áitiúil.

Is iad seo a leanas samplaí a cheaptar ar choir a luadh.

- Cailleadh duine de phobal na scoile trí bhás tobann, timpiste, tinneas foirceanta nó féinmharú.
- Timpiste ag baint le daltaí nó baill fhoirne ag an scoil nó lasmuigh di.
- Ionsaí fisiciúil ar dhalta(í) nó ar bhall/bhaill fhoirne nó briseadh isteach sa scoil.
- Dochar tromchúiseach d'fhoirgneamh na scoile de bharr dóiteáin, tuilte, loitiméireachta, srl.
- Duine de phobal na scoile a dhul ar iarraidh.
- Timpiste/tragóid sa phobal máguaird.

2.0 Aidhm:

Is í aidhm an Phlean Bainistíochta do Theagmhas Criticiúil (CIMP) cabhrú le bainistíocht agus foireann na scoile freagairt thapa agus éifeachtach a thabhairt ar theagmhas, cabhrú linn

smacht a choinneáil ar chúrsaí agus a chinntiú go dtairgtear tacaíocht chuí do dhaltaí agus don fhoireann. Ba chóir gur chabhair é dea-phlean a bheith ag an scoil chun a chinntiú go mbeidh teorainn leis na hiarmhairtí a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ag teagmhas ar na daltaí agus ar an bhfoireann. Ba chóir go gcuirfeadh an plean ar ár gcumas filleadh ar ghnáthghnáthaimh chomh luath agus is féidir é.

3.0 Sábháilteacht Fhisiceach:

Is iad seo a leanas rudaí atá a dhéanamh ag an scoil:

- Polasaí sláinte agus sábháilteacht sa scoil
- Plean aslonnaithe curtha i dtoll a chéile
- Déantar druileanna rialta dóiteáin
- Seiceáiltear slíte amach agus múchtóirí dóiteáin go rialta
- Rialacha an chlóis súgartha – le fáil sa pholasaí sláinte agus sábháilteachta

4.0 Sábháilteacht Shíceolaíoch:

Tá sé mar aidhm ag bainistíocht agus ag foireann *Colaiste an Eachréidh* cláir agus acmhainní atá ar fáil a úsáid chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar fhorbairt phearsanta agus shóisialta na ndaltaí, chun cur leis an meon sábháilteachta agus slándála sa scoil, agus chun deiseanna a chur ar fáil chun machnamh a dhéanamh agus chun cúrsaí a phlé.

<u>Is iad seo a leanas samplaí de rudaí atá a dhéanamh:</u>

- Oideachas Sóisialta, Pearsanta agus Sláinte a imeascadh le hobair na scoile. Tugtar aghaidh ar an imeascadh seo sa churaclam ar bhealach ina dtabharfaí aghaidh ar shaincheisteanna amhail léan agus caillteanas; scileanna cumarsáide; bainistiú struis agus oilc; teacht aniar; bainistiú coinbhleachta; réiteach fadhbanna; cabhair a lorg; bulaíocht; cinnteoireacht agus cosc ar úsáid agus ar mhí-úsaid alcóil agus drugaí, Áirítear meabhairshláinte a chur chun cinn leis an bhforáil sin.
- An fhoireann a chur ar oiliúint ina ról maidir leis a gClár Oideachais Shóisialta, Phearsanta agus Sláinte.
- An fhoireann eolach ar na Treoirlínte agus na Nósanna Imeachta maidir le Cosaint Leanaí agus mionsonraí ar fáil i dtaobh an chéad chéim eile chun cinn i gcás amhrais nó nochta.
- Leabhair agus achmainní ar fáil leis na deacrachtaí a chuireann isteach ar dhaltaí.
- Eolas tugtha don fhoireann sa réimse a bhaineann le feasacht faoi fhéinmharú agus le hidirghabhálacha le daltaí féinmharfacha.
- Eolas curtha ar fáil ar mheabhairshláinte go ginearálta agus ar réimsí sonracha amhail comharthaí agus airí dúlagair agus imní.
- Ceangail forbartha ag an scoil le gníomhaireachtaí seachtracha. i.e. Jigsaw, Donegal Youth Service agus araile.
- Polasaí soiléir sa scoil maidir le bulaíocht agus go ndéileálann an scoil le bulaíocht de réir an polasaí seo.
- Córas cúraim i bhfeidhm sa scoil.
- Go n-aithnítear daltaí i mbaol, go gcíortar cásanna imní agus go dtugtar an leibhéal cuí cúnaimh agus tacaíochta. Go gcuirtear tuismitheoirí ar an eolas agus atreoraítear an dalta chuig an ngníomhhaireacht chuí más cuí.

5.0 Féinmharú

Ní bhainfidh muid úsáid as an téarma 'féinmharú' go mbeidh sé cinnte go hiomlán gur mar thoradh ar fhéinmharú a bhásaigh dalta nó múinteoir. Ina ionad bainfidh muid úsáid as na tearmaí mar 'bás tubaisteach' nó 'bas tobann'. Déanfaidh muid teagmháil leis an teaghlach chun firicí cruinne a fháil agus chun a fháil amach conas mar ba mhian leis an dteaghlach cur síos ar an bhás.

Tabharfaidh muid na firicí atá ar eolas againn do na daltaí agus cruthóidh muid spás sábháilte tacúil leo ionas go mbeidh siad ábalta a mothúcháin a chur in iúl dá chéile. Cuirfidh muid síos ar na dóigheanna éagsúla a thiocfadh leis an scéal dul i bhfeidhm orthu le linn na laethanta amach rompu. Beidh muid cúramach gan ró-adhmholadh a dhéanamh ar an nduine atá marbh nó gan róbhoilsciú ar scéal an fhéinmharaithe. Cuirfidh muid in iúl do na daltaí cén sort tacaíochta atá ar fáil dóibh agus glacfaidh muid i ndáiríre le caint ar bith ó dhaltaí ar fhéinmharú agus cuirfidh muid tacaíocht ar fáil dóibh nó déanfaidh muid iad a tharchur chuig duine oilte láithreach.

Má bhíonn amhras mór ann nó imní faoi dhalta cuirfidh muid é chuig duine oilte ar mheasúnú priacail. Beidh comhrá tuisceanach ag duine de Fhoireann Bainistíochta na géarchéme leis an dalta agus beidh an comhrá díreach agus oscailt. Má thuairiscítear go bhfuil dalta ag caint go hoscailte ar fhéinmharú cuirfidh muid na ceisteanna seo a leanas air/uirthi:

- 'An bhfuil sé/sí ag smaointiú lámh a chur ina bhás fein?'
- 'An ndearna sé/sí iarracht cheana?''
- 'An bhfuil deacrachtaí pearsanta nó teaglaigh tromchúiseacha aige?'
- 'An bhfuil deacrachtaí fisiciúla nó mothúchanacha aige?'
- 'An bhfuil plean aige chun an gníomh a dhéanamh?'
- 'An bhfuil bealach agus áit aige lena dhéanamh?'

Má fhreagraíonn dalta 'Tá' le ceist ar bith anseo;

1. Cuirfidh muid na tuismitheoirí ar an eolas láithreach.
2. Iarrfaidh muid orthu an dalta a thabhairt chuig a ndochtúir teaghlaigh nó chuig seirbhís eile.
3. Tuigeann muid go bhfuil dualgas orainn na tuismitheoirí a chur ar an eolas, fiú gan chead ón dalta féin, má bhíonn an dalta faoi 18 bliain d'aois.

6.0 Foireann Bainistíochta do Theagmhas Criticiúil (CIMT)

Bunaíodh Foireann Bainistíochta do Theagmhas Criticiúil (CIMT) Coláiste an Eachréidh de réir dea-chleachtais. Roghnaíodh baill na Foirne ar bhonn deonach agus tá na róil sin acu ar feadh aon scoilbhliana amháin. Bíonn cruinniú ag baill na foirne le chéile uair sa bhliain chun athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar an bpolasaí agus ar an bplean agus chun iad a thabhairt suas go dáta. Tá cóip den polasaí agus den phlean agus ábhair a bhaineann go sonrach lena ról ar Teams ag gach ball den fhoireann a bheith le húsáid i gcás teagmhais.

7.0 Róil:

Trí na príomhthascanna a thagann chun cinn i ndiaidh do theagmhas titim amach a aithint beidh an scoil in ann rólanna agus na daoine a bheith freagrach as tascanna éagsúla a shocrú. Beidh ról lárnach ag an Phríomhoide go ginearálta, agus beidh sé/sí freagrach as go leor de na tascanna. Ní mór tascanna áirithe riaracháin a dhéanamh ar bhonn leanúnach ionas go mbeidh cumarsáid thapa éifeachtach ann sa chás go dtarlódh teagmhas criticiúil.

Aithnítear na rólanna seo a leanas mar chin lárnacha don Fhoireann Bainistíochta Theagmhas Criticiúl.

Ceannaire Foirne*	*Emma Ní Riain, Príomhoide*
Teagmhálaí leis na Gardaí	*Emma Ní Riain, Príomhoide*
Teagmhálaí leis an bhFoireann	*Seán Ó Mainnín, Leas-Príomhoide* Áine Clancy
Teagmhálaí leis na daltaí Bl.1: Ceannaire Bliana Bl.2: Ceannaire Bliana Bl.3: Ceannaire Bliana Bl.4: Ceannaire Bliana Bl.5: Ceannaire Bliana Bl.6: Ceannaire Bliana	*Ag tacú:* *& Oidí Ranga nascaithe leis an gcás.*
Teagmhálaí leis na tuismitheoirí	*Emma Ní Riain, Príomhoide*
Teagmhálaí leis na Meáin	*Emma Ní Riain, Príomhoide*
Riarathóir	*Lorraine,* Rúnaí na scoile

7.1 Ceannaire Foirne

- Cuireann an ceannaire baill na foirne ar an eolas trí ghlaoch agus glaoitear cruinniú éigeandála.
- Déantar comhordú ar thascanna na foirne, ag dáileadh freagrachtaí éagsúla.
- Déanatar teagmháil leis an mBord Bainistíochta, ETB, An Roinn Oideachas agus Eolaíochta; NEPS; HSE; An Comisiún Scrudaithe Stáit, C na dt.
- Déantar teagmháil leis an dteaghlach i gceist.

*mura mbíonn an príomhoide í láthair, glacann an leas-príomhoide ról an cheannaire.

7.2 Teagmhálaí Gardaí

- Déantar teagmháil leis na Gardaí.
- Cinntíonn sé/sí cruinneas an eachtra sula roinntear an t-eolas.

7.3 Teagmhálaí leis an bhfoireann

- Cuirtear an fhoireann ar an eolas faoi fhíricí ag an tús agus go rialta i rith an lae.
- Tugtar deis don fhoireann ceisteanna a chur, mothúcháin a nochtadh agus tugann imlíne struchtúr an lae dóibh.
- Tugtar comhairle don fhoireann maidir le daltaí i mbaol a aithint.
- Tugtar acmhainní don fhoireann (ón fhillteán Teagmhas Chriticiúil)
- Tacaíocht le múinteoirí faoi bhrú.
- Cuirtear an fhoireann ar an eolas faoi seirbhísí tacaíochta atá ar fail dóibh.
- Eagraítear *'Seomra Machnaimh'* agus feitheoireacht cuí.
- Tugann sé/sí comhairle dóibh go bhfuil an EAS (Employee Assistance Service) ar fáil agus tugann sé an uimhir theagmhála dóibh.

7.4 Teagmhálaí leis na daltaí

- Bailíonn an múinteoir eolas ó na múinteoirí maidir le daltaí a cheaptar atá faoi bhrú.
- Cuirtear daltaí atá faoi bhrú in aithne don Leas-Phríomhoide agus baill eile foirne.
- Tugtar acmhainní ón fhillteán Teagmhas Chriticiúil do dhaltaí.
- Coimeádtar taifead do gach dalta atá feicthe ag seirbhísí seachtracha.
- Cuireann sé/sí seomra *'ciúin'* ar fáil agus eagraíonn sé/sí maoirsiú don seomra seo.
- Eagraíonn sé/sí tae/caife/brioscaí do na daltaí.

7.5 Teagmhálaí le tuismitheoirí

- Tugtar cuairt ar an dteaghlach faoi mhéala.
- Eagraítear cruinniú le tuismitheoirí, más gá.
- Éascú chruinniú ag freagairt ceisteanna, más ann dó.
- Bainistiú ar 'foirmeacha ceadúnais' más gá leo de réir polasaí scoile.
- Cinntíonn sé/sí go bhfuil litreacha samplacha réidh ar an gcóras scoile.
- Eagraítear seomra do chruinnithe tuismitheoirí.
- Coinníonn sé/sí taifead de na tuismitheoirí ar bualadh leo.
- Castar le tuismitheoirí ar leith.
- Cuirtear ábhair ábhartha ar fáil do thuismitheoirí (as an fhillteán ar theagmhas criticiúil)

7.6 Teagmhálaí leis an bPobal

- Eagraítear agus coinníonn liosta reatha d'uimhreacha.
  1. Tuistí ar Chumann na dTuismitheoirí
  2. Seirbhísí Slándála & Eagraíochtaí eile cuí
- Déantar teagmháil le grúpaí seachtracha éagsúla le haghaidh tacaíocht agus chun daltaí a atreorú.
- Cinntíonn sé/sí go bhfuil aitheantas ceart/bailíoch ag na daoine atá ag tabhairt tacaíochta.
- Comhordú na seirbhísí tacaíochta uilig bainteach leis an Teagmhas Chriticiúil.
- Meabhraíonn sé/sí do dhaoine seachtracha lipéid ainm a chaitheamh.

7.7 Teagmhálaí leis na Meáin

- Mar eolas, níl cead ag baill foirne teagmháil a dhéanamh leis na meáin, fógra a chur ar na meáin, píosa taifead a dhéanamh do na meáin. An Phríomhoide amháin a dhéanann teagmháil leis na meáin.
- Go mbeadh treoir cinnte leagtha amach faoi conas ceisteanna/iarratais ó na meáin a láimhseáil (agallaimh a chur ar dhaltaí, grianghrafanna a thógáil sa scoil agus araile)
- Go ndéanfaí teagmháil leis na heagraíochtaí cuí, i.e. gCoimisiún um Scrúduithe Stáit, Ceárdcumainn na múinteoirí agus araile.
- Scríobhfaidh sé/sí ráiteas preasa, tabharfaidh agallaimh do na meáin.

7.8 Riarthóir

- Coimeádann sé/sí uimhreacha teileafóin na ndaoine seo a leanas:
  1. Tuismitheoirí/caomhnóirí
  2. Múinteoirí
  3. Seirbhísí Éigeandála
- Freagraíonn sé/sí glaonna gutháin agus glacann le teachtaireachtaí
- Cinntíonn sé/sí go bhfuil bunchóipeanna d'aon cháipéisí cuí ar fáil
- Ullmhaíonn sé/sí agus seolann litreacha, ríomhphoist agus facsanna
- Fótachóipeálann sé/sí ábhar cuí nuair/más gá
- Déantar taifead ar cad a thiteann amach.

8.0 Taifead

Ní mór do gach ball don Fhoireann Bainistíochta cuntas scríofa a choinneáil ar ghlaochanna teileafóin, litreacha, chruinnithe, idirghabháil, &rl.

9.0 Rúndacht

Tuigeann bainistíocht an Choláiste a ndualgas maidir le príobháideachas agus deá-chleachtas agus beidh an príomhoide san airdeall ar sin agus ráiteas poiblí á dhéanamh. Chun meas agus rúndacht a léiriú, tá sé fíor-thábhachtach go dtuigfidh gach ball de phobal an Choláiste (scoláirí, múinteoirí agus baill eile d'fhoireann an Choláiste) nach bhfuil cead acu eolas faoi aon eachtra chriticiúil a tharla a lua ar aon shuíomh shóisialta na sna meáin ar chor ar bith. Tá an Príomhoide mar bhainisteoir foirne agus is é/í atá freagrach cumarsáid a dhéanamh le duine/daoine atá ceangailte go díreach nó go hindíreach le heachtra chriticiúil.

10.0 Seomraí i gcomhair Teagmhas Criticiúil

Úsáidtear na seomraí seo a leanas i gcas teagmhas criticiúil:

- Is é an *seomra foirne* an príomhsheomra a bheidh in úsáid chun bualadh leis an bhfoireann.
- *Seomra B5* chun bualadh leis na daltaí
- *Seomra A3* le haghaidh na tuismitheoirí
- *Seomra ciúin* le haghaidh seisiún duine le duine leis na daltaí
- *Seomra leas-phríomhoide* le haghaidh cuairteoirí eile.

11.0 Comhairliúchan agus cumarsáid maidir leis an bplean

Chuathas i gcomhairle leis and bhfoireann go léir agus lorgaíodh dtuairimí chun an polasaí agus an plean seo a ullmhú.

- Cuireadh polasaí agus plean deiridh na scoile i ndáil le freagairt do theagmhais chriticiúla i láthair na foirne go léir.
- Tá cóip phearsanta ag gach ball den fhoireann don phlean theagmhas criticiúil.
- Cuirfidh Seán na múinteoirí Gairmiúla san Oideachais agus baill shealadacha go léir ar an eolas faoi mhionsonraí an phlean.

Tabharfar an plean suas go dáta gach 3 bliana.

12.0 GNÍOMHARTHA GEARRTHÉARMACHA

Gníomhartha gearrthéarmacha – Lá 1

Tasc	**Ainm**
Bailigh eolas cruinn: Cé, céard, cén uair, cén áit?	Emma & Seán
Tionóil cruinniú den Fhoireann Bainistíochta do Theagmhas Criticiúil (CIMT) – sonraigh am agus áit go soiléir	Emma
Déan teagmháil leis na gníomhaireachtaí seachtracha	Emma & Seán
Déan socruithe chun feitheoireacht a dhéanamh ar na daltaí	Seán
Cruinniú Foirne a eagrú	Seán
Tionóil cruinniú foirne	An fhoireann go léir
Aontaigh ar sceideal an lae	An fhoireann go léir
Cuir daltaí ar an eolas- (d'fhéadfadh gur ghá an scéal a insint do dhlúthchairde agus do dhaltaí ag a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama astu féin)	Ceannaire Bliana, Oide ranga
Cuir liosta de dhaltaí goilliúnacha i dtoll a chéile	Mairín & Bairbre

Déan teagmháil leis an teaghlach faoi léan/tabhair cuairt orthu	Emma/Seán agus Ceannaire bliana bainteach
Ullmhaigh agus aontaigh ráiteas do na meáin agus déaileáil leis na meáin	Emma / Seán / Cathaoirleach ar an mBord Bainistíochta
Cuir na tuismitheoirí ar an eolas	Emma
Cruinniú foirne deireadh lae a reáchtáil	Seán

13.0 Gníomhartha meántéarmacha – (Lá 2 agus na laethanta ina dhiaidh sin))

Tionóil cruinniú den Fhoireann Bainistíochta do Theagmhas Criticiúil (CIMT) chun súil a chaitheamh siar ar tharluithe lá 1	Emma
Buail leis na gníomhaireachtaí seachtracha	Foireann T.C
Buail leis an bhfoireann go léir	Foireann T.C
Eagraigh tacaíocht do dhaltaí, don fhoireann, do thuismitheoirí	Áine, Bairbre & Pádraig
Tabhair cuairt ar na daoine atá gortaithe	Emma / Seán & Ceannaire Bliana
Téigh i dteagmháil leis an dteaghlach faoi léan maidir le socruithe sochraide	Emma
Aontaigh ar lucht freastail agus ar rannpháirtíocht sa tsochraid	Emma, Seán & Foireann T.C
Déan cinneadh faoin scoil a dhúnadh	Emma & Stiúrthóir Scoile GRETB

14.0 Obair leantach – tar éis 72 uair a chloig

Déan monatóireacht ar dhaltaí chun comharthaí go bhfuiltear fós faoi bhuairt a thabhairt faoi deara	Múinteoirí Ranga, Oidí Ranga, Ceannairí Bliana
Déan teagmháil le gníomhaireachtaí maidir le hatreorú	Emma
Déan socruithe d'fhilleadh an dalta/ na ndaltaí faoi léan	Seán & Ceannaire Bliana
Déan socruithe chun an 'bosca cuimhneacháin' a thabhairt don teaghlach faoi léan	Emma
Déan cinneadh maidir le searmanais chuimhneacháin agus laethanta comórtha	An Bord Bainistíochta/ An fhoireann agus tuismitheoirí
Caith súil siar ar an bhfreagairt don teagmhas agus an plean a leasú	An foireann/ An Bord Bainistíochta

15.0 <u>Gníomhartha níos fadtéarmaí</u>

Déanfaidh muid monatóireacht ar dhaltaí le feiceáil an bhfuil dalta a chiapadh agus faoi strús go leanúnach de bharr na heachtra criticiúla. Má léiríonn dalta na comharthaí seo a leanas thar treimhse fada ama, d'fhéadfadh go bhfuil cuidiú de dhith air ón Fheidhmeannas Seirbhíse Sláinte: iompar nach dual dá charachtar, dul ar gcúl ó thaobh acadúla de, athrú meácháin, tuirse, míshuaimhneas nó méadú ar neamhláithreachas.

Beidh muid tuisceanach maidir le laethanta agus imeachtaí speisialta. Thiocfadh le comóradh, mothúcháin a mhúscailt i ndaltaí nó i mbaill foirne agus thiocfadh leis go mbeadh breis tacaíochta de dhíth orthu ag an am seo. Déanfaidh muid an comóradh a phlé leis an dteaghlach agus beidh idirchaidreamh ann maidir le haon chomóradh a bheadh beartaithe. Beidh muid tuisceanach maidir le laethanta tábhachtacha mar laethanta breithe, an Nollaig, Lá na Máithreacha agus Lá na nAithreacha.

15.0: Athbhreithniú agus Daingniú

Déanfaidh muid meastóireacht ar chúrsaí mar a freagraíodh don eachtra chriticiúil agus déanfar an Plean Bainistíochta Theagmhas Criticiúila leasú más gá. Cuirfidh muid na ceisteanna seo orainn féin:

- Cad iad na gneithe ar éirigh go maith leo?
- Ca háit a raibh bearnaí?
- Cad ba mhó/ba lú a chuidigh?
- An bhfuil na tarchuir riachtanacha ar fad déanta chuig na seirbhisí tacaíochta?
- An bhfuil aon chuid den chúram atá fágtha gan chríochnú?

Déanfaidh an Bord Bainistíochta agus an fhoireann Teagmheas Criticiúil an beartas seo a athbhreithniú ar bhonn bliantúil agus a thabhairt suas chun dáta nuair is gá.

Sínithe:_____
Tomás Ó Coisdealbha
Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bainistíochta

Sínithe:_____
Emma Ní Riain
Rúnaí an Bhoird Bainistíochta

Dáta an chéad athbhreithniú eile: 3-12-26

16 Aguisín A: Liosta Teagmhála i gcás éigeandála

AN GHNÍOMHAIREACHT	UIMHREACHA TEAGMHÁLA
An Garda Síochána	091 844 016 (Baile Átha an Rí 091 538000 (Cathair na Gaillimhe)
Ospidéal UCHG **An Clinic**	091 524 222 091 785 000
An bhriogáid Dóiteáin /otharcharr	091 509070 999 nó 911
Dochtúirí teaghlaigh áitiúla	Athenry Primary Care Centre (091) 844 489 Athenry Health Centre (New Line) 091) 844 274
Feidhmeannacht na seirbhíse Sláinte/foireann cúram pobail/ Ionad leanaí agus teaghlaigh/ Seirbhisí sláinte mheabhrach do leanaí agus d'óganaigh	091-546366 (Galway Duty Social Work - Child and Family Centre) 091-775057 (Child Care unit Merlin Park Galway - Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
Siceolaí na seirbhíse náisiunta Síceolaíochta oideachais	01-8892700 091-864 518 076-1108831
An roinn oideachais agus eolaíochta	01-8896400
Cumann múinteoirí éireann/ cumann na meánmhúinteoirí, éire/aontas múinteoirí éireann	01 492 2588
An sagart paróiste/ an chléir	St. Mary's Parish Office (091) 844076
An comisiún um scrúdaithe staít	0906 442700
An tseirbhís chúnimh d'fhostaithe (EAS)	1800 411 057

17 Aguisín B: Sonraí úsáideacha I gcás Teagmheas Criticiúil

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS: An organisation of bereaved parents who offer support. It is open to all parents who have suffered the loss of a child of any age.

Dublin Tel 01-8322197
Donegal Tel 075-41493
Cork Tel 021-291892
Clare Tel 065-20024
Cavan Tel 049-38436

IRISH FRIENDS OF THE SUICIDE BEREAVED
Support group for individuals bereaved by suicide. P.O. Box 162, Cork. Tel 021-294318

Solas - BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING FOR CHILDREN
Bereavement service for children and their families following the death of a parent, carer or siblings.Barnardo's, Christchurch Sq, Dublin 8. Tel 01-4540355

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE GROUPS
A nationwide group providing weekends for those bereaved through death or loss. The Young Adult Beginning Experience (YABE) is a connected group. Their Dublin address: St Audoen's, High St, Dublin 8. Tel: 01-6791018.

The following is a mere selection of what is available and includes references to books cited in these set of guidelines.

Living with Death by Judith Bisignano. Good Apple USA 1991. A workbook for 12-15yr olds.

The Grieving Child - A Parents Guide by Helen Fitzgerald. Simon & Schuster New York 1992. An excellent guide for parents and adults in a caring role.

Good Grief: Talking and Learning about Loss & Death by Barbara Ward & Janice Houghton. White Cresent Press Luton 1987. A pack format exploring the sensitive issues around death and loss.

The Mourning Handbook by Helen Fitzgerald. Simon & Schuster New York 1994. A comprehensive resource.

Death and Dying: A Resource Pack Produced by Noirin Hynes and Margarita Synnott. Available from MREI, Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9. A valuable teaching resource pack particularly for religion teachers.

When Someone Close Dies. Available from the Medical Social Work Department, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin 9. Tel 01-8093290

Death - Helping Children Understand. Available from Solas, Bernardo's, Christchurch Sq., Dublin 8. Tel 01-4540355

How it Feels when a Parent Dies by Jill Krementz. Victor Gollancz London 1988. An excellent resource for a student bereavement group.

The Chaplain - A Faith Presence in the School Community by Luke Monahan & Caroline Renehan. Columba Press Dublin 1998. Has a very practical chapter addressing death and bereavement in the school setting.

Sorry for Your Trouble - Helping the Bereaved: A Tape by Christy Kenneally. An excellent personal resource.

Communicating with the Sick and Dying: A Tape by Christy Kenneally. Christy offers invaluable insights. Both these tapes are available through Veritas.

Echoes of Suicide edited by Siobhan Foster-Ryan and Luke Monahan. 2001 Veritas: Dublin. A set of resources with particular reference to the school community.

Suicide Among Young People. Northern Ireland Guidelines. 1996. ISBN 1 897592 051. A very clear and practical resource for a whole school response to this issue.

W.I.N.N. Against Suicide by Robert Nelson jr R&E Publishers California 1993. A brief tour through the facts about, and responses to, suicide.

Suicide and the Inner Voice by Robert Firestone. SAGE Publications London 1997. A very complete volume on the topic.

Suicide and the Irish by Michael Kelleher. Mercier: ISBN 1 85635 149 1 A comprehensive study.

Suicide: The Irish Experience by Sean Spellissey. On Stream Cork 1996. A comprehensive study for the Irish context.

A Special Scar: The Experiences of People Bereaved by Suicide by B. Allison Wertheimer. Routledge London 1991. Based on a study of 50 bereaved people - offers practical help.

The Long Sleep: Young People and Suicide by K. Hill. Virago London 1995. A good study of this area.

Suicide, Bereavement and Loss: Perspectives and Responses edited by Luke Monahan. 1999: Irish

Association of Pastoral Care in Education, Dublin: 1999. Contains resources to guide schools in dealing with trauma.

Wise Before the Event - Coping with Crisis in Schools by William Yule and Anne Gold. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation London 1993. Distributed by Turnaround Distribution Ltd. An excellent brief guide for schools.

Guidelines for Schools on how to Respond to the Sudden Unexpected Death of a Student. ASTI 1997. A very useful practical guide for schools. In the Event of a Tragedy - A Response. Available from the Nth-Western Health Board, Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim. Tel 071-60222.

Children in Crisis: A Team Approach in the Schools by Sharon Morgan. Tavior & Francis Ltd London 1985. Focuses on the crisis situations faced by children in our society such as, bereavement, depression and suicide.

Adolescent Problems by Doula Nicolson & Harry Ayers. David Foulton Publishers 1997. A practical guide for parents and teachers.

The Year Head: A Key Link in the School Community by Luke Monahan. Irish Association of Pastoral Care in Education, Dublin 1998. Examines the role of this core role in the pastoral school.

Emotional Problems in Children and Young People by L. Winkley. Cassell London 1996. Provides a good understanding of a range of issues.

Barnardos. (1999). Responding to youth suicide and attempted youth suicide in Ireland: Barnardos Policy Briefing 1. Department of Education, Northern Ireland. (1996). Suicide among young people: Managing the issue in schools.

18 Aguisín C: Preas eisiúintí agus Ráitis Samplacha

Eolas ar fáil ag Samaritans Ireland, Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/publications/samaritans-ireland-media-guidelines-pdf.pdf

- Samaritans' media advice team is available to provide support when covering suicide and self-harm at mediaadvice@samaritans.org Samaritans also offers confidential briefings and advice sessions for media outlets or 116 123

Eolas ar fáil ag an Roinn Oideachais: Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

- 'You may be aware of a recent event within the school community. We ask you to respect the family's privacy and sensitivities by considering if you should post any comments, especially on social media. We will inform you through the normal channels of any relevant developments.

1. **Litir ag Tuismitheoirí na Scoile:**

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS – SUDDEN DEATH/ACCIDENT

Resource for schools: R2

This letter can be used as a template for schools when they are informing parents of a tragedy, offering some advice and outlining what the schools response involves. (Brief details of the incident and, in the event of a death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost).Where text / social media are used for communicating with parents this content will help with drafting

(School Contact Details) (School Crest)

Dear Parents

The school has experienced (the sudden death, accidental injury, etc.) of *Name of student(s)*. We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events.
Our thoughts are with (*family name*).

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. *(Elaborate)*.

It is possible that your child may have some feelings and questions that he/she may like to discuss with you. It is important to give factual information that is appropriate to their age.

You can help your child by taking time to listen and by encouraging him/her to express feelings. All children are different and will express their feelings in different ways. It is not uncommon for children to have difficulty concentrating or be fearful, anxious, or irritable. They may become withdrawn, cry, complain of physical aches and pains, have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares. Some may not want to eat. These are generally short term reaction. Over the course of the coming days, please keep an eye on your child and allow him/her to express their feelings without criticism.

Although classes will continue as usual, I anticipate that the next few days will be difficult for everyone.

(Optional) An information night for parents is planned for (date, time and place). At that time, further information about how to help children in grief will be given.

We have enclosed some information which you may find useful in helping your child through this difficult time.

Young people frequently turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. At these times it is important that you monitor their use and engage with them about what they read. We urge you to reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive and careful about what they post.

If you would like advice you may contact the following people at the school. (*Details*).

Principal's signature

2. Litir i gcás bás foréigneach

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS - VIOLENT DEATH

Resource for Schools: R3

This letter can be used as a template for schools when they are informing parents of a violent death, offering some advice and outlining what the schools response involves. (Give accurate information about the incident, but avoid using the word murder as this will not be established until the court case is completed).

Dear Parents

I need to inform you about a very sad event that has happened.

A child/young person from the neighbourhood, who is the brother of _____, a student here at school, was killed as a result of (a violent attack, violent incident in the street etc.) earlier this week. We are all profoundly saddened by his death.

We have shared this information and have had discussions with all of our students so that they know what has happened. School staff members have been available for students on an on-going basis today. Other support personnel (*including psychologists etc, according to actual arrangements*) are available to advise staff in their support of students.

The death of any young person is tragic, but a violent death is even more difficult. It is hard to have to teach our children about the violence in our world and to accept that sometimes we do not have the power to prevent it.

This death may cause a variety of reactions in your child. Some children/young people may be afraid for their own life and for the lives of those they love. Take time to listen to their fears and reassure them that what has happened is rare.

We have enclosed some additional information that may be useful during this time.

The media are in the vicinity of the school and may approach you or your children. You need not respond to their questions if you are approached. We will not allow the media to interview your child at school and our general advice is that you should not let your children be interviewed. They are not mature enough to judge what to say and may say something they will regret later.

In these times, young people tend to turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. While social media can be of great consolation, we would urge you to reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive around what your son/daughter might post to others.

Our thoughts are with (family name) and with each of you.

Sincerely

3. Fógra ag na Meáin

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MEDIA

Resource for schools: R4

This can be used as a template by schools to be emailed, posted on the school social media site or given to the media. It may help to decrease the number of media calls and callers to the school.

In some instances it is not appropriate to provide names or information that might identify individuals.

This announcement will need to be changed based upon confidentiality issues, the wishes of the victim's family and the nature of the incident.

My name is (*Name)* and I am the principal of *(Name)* School. We learned this morning of the death of (one of our students or *Name* of student). This is a terrible tragedy for _____ family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with *(Name)* family and friends.

Name of student/students was a (5th year boy) and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and (insert other information if relevant) have been with us all day supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time.

The teachers have been helping students to deal with the tragic event.

The school has been open to parents to support them and to offer them advice and guidance.

We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.

19 Aguisín D: Rólanna ag Foireann Bainistíochta na Scoile i gCás eachtra

Mar chuid den chéad chruinniú i gcás éigeandála, Déanann an Príomhoide (nó an duine is sinsirí) comhordú ar thascanna na foirne, ag dáileadh freagrachtaí éagsúla.

Ceannaire Foirne	
Teagmhálaí leis na Gardaí	
Teagmhálaí leis an bhFoireann	
Teagmhálaí leis na daltaí Bl.1: Bl.2: Bl.3: Bl.4: Bl.5: Bl.6:	
Teagmhálaí leis na tuismitheoirí	
Teagmhálaí leis an bPobal	
Teagmhálaí leis na Meáin	
Riarathóir	

Gníomhartha gearrthéarmacha – Lá 1

Tasc	**Ainm**
Bailigh eolas cruinn: Cé, céard, cén uair, cén áit?	
Tionóil cruinniú den Fhoireann Bainistíochta do Theagmhas Criticiúil (CIMT) – sonraigh am agus áit go soiléir	

Déan teagmháil leis na gníomhaireachtaí seachtracha	
Déan socruithe chun feitheoireacht a dhéanamh ar na daltaí	
Cruinniú Foirne a eagrú	
Tionóil cruinniú foirne	
Aontaigh ar sceideal an lae	
Cuir daltaí ar an eolas- (d'fhéadfadh gur ghá an scéal a insint do dhlúthchairde agus do dhaltaí ag a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama astu féin)	
Cuir liosta de dhaltaí goilliúnacha i dtoll a chéile	
Déan teagmháil leis an teaghlach faoi léan/tabhair cuairt orthu	
Ullmhaigh agus aontaigh ráiteas do na meáin agus déaileáil leis na meáin	
Cuir na tuismitheoirí ar an eolas	
Cruinniú foirne deireadh lae a reáchtáil	

Gníomhartha meántéarmacha – (Lá 2 agus na laethanta ina dhiaidh sin))

Tionóil cruinniú den Fhoireann Bainistíochta do Theagmhas Criticiúil (CIMT) chun súila chaitheadh siar ar tharluithe lá 1	
Buail leis na gníomhaireachtaí seachtracha	
Buail leis an bhfoireann go léir	

Eagraigh tacaíocht do dhaltaí, don fhoireann, do thuismitheoirí	
Tabhair cuairt ar na daoine atá gortaithe	
Téigh i dteagmháil leis an teaghlach faoi léan maidir le socruithe sochraide	
Aontaigh ar lucht freastail agus ar rannpháirtíocht sa tsochraid	
Déan cinneadh faoin scoil a dhúnadh	

14.0 Obair leantach – tar éis 72 uair a chloig

Déan monatóireacht ar dhaltaí chun comharthaí go bhfuiltear fós faoi bhuairt a thabhairt faoi deara	
Déan teagmháil le gníomhaireachtaí maidir le hatreorú	
Déan socruithe d'fhilleadh an dalta/ na ndaltaí faoi léan	
Déan socruithe chun an 'bosca cuimhneacháin' a thahbairt don teaghlach faoi léan	
Déan cinneadh maidir le searmanais chuimhneacháin agus laethanta comórtha	
Caith súil siar ar an bhfreagairt don teagmhas agus leasaigh an plean	

20 Acmhainní úsáideach don scoil i gcás éigeandála

20.1 Múinteoirí ag cabhrú le daltaí nuair atá géarchéim nó cás éagandála

TEACHERS HELPING STUDENTS IN TIME OF CRISIS OR EMERGENCY

Handout for teachers R23

1. LISTEN 2. PROTECT 3. CONNECT 4. MODEL & 5. TEACH!

THINK ABOUT your students' "DIRECT EXPERIENCE" with the event ie FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE of the event (physically experiencing or directly seeing it as it happens).

After the event, changes can happen in students' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Your students may worry about family members, classmates, friends, or pets they care about, and may worry that it will happen again. Common reactions to disasters, school crises and emergencies include trouble sleeping, problems at school and with friends, trouble concentrating and listening, and not finishing work or assignments. Your students may become more irritable, sad, angry, or worried as they think about what has happened, and as they experience recovery efforts after the event.

When students share their experiences, thoughts and feelings about the event, LISTEN for RISK FACTORS for adverse reactions.

Risk factors that may indicate a counselling referral is needed for students include:

- loss of a family member, schoolmate, or friend
- observing serious injury or the death of another person
- family members or friends missing after the event, past traumatic experiences or losses
- getting hurt or becoming sick due to the event
- home loss, family moves, changes in neighbourhoods / schools, and/or loss of belongings

If a student has had any of these experiences, you may wish to consider referring her or him to the HSE services. Your NEPS psychologist will be available to provide support and advice.
Now that you know what can affect your students after a disaster, school crisis, or emergency, you're ready to

Listen, Protect, Connect, Model & Teach

1. LISTEN, Protect, Connect – Model & Teach

The first step after an event is to listen and pay attention to what they say and how they act. Your students may also show their feelings in non-verbal ways, like increased behavioural problems or increased withdrawal.

Let your students know you are willing to listen and talk about the event, or to make referrals to talk to an appropria te professional, if they prefer it. Use the following questions to talk with your students. You can listen for clues that indicate when students are having a hard time. Write down a few examples that may be helpful to note:

- What might be preventing a student from coming to or staying in school?
- What might be preventing a student from paying attention in class or doing homework?
- What might be preventing a student from returning to other school based activities

Listen, observe, and note any changes in:

- behaviour and/or mood
- school performance
- interactions with schoolmates and teachers
- participation in school-based activities
- behaviours at home that parents discuss with you

Listen, **2. PROTECT,** Connect, Model & Teach

You can help make your students feel better by doing some or all of the following:

- Answer questions simply and honestly, clearing up any confusion students may have about what happened.
- Let your students know that they are not alone in their reactions.
- Provide opportunities for your students to talk, draw, and play, but don't force it.
- Talk to your students about what is being done by the school and community to keep everyone safe from harm.
- Watch for anything in the environment that could re-traumatize your students.
- Keep your eyes and ears open for bullying behaviours.
- Maintain daily routines, activities, and structure with clear expectations, consistent rules, and

- Make adjustments to assignments to be sensitive to students' current level of functioning.
- Limit access to live television and the Internet that show disturbing scenes of the event.
- Remember, what is not upsetting to adults may upset and confuse students, and vice versa.
- Encourage students to "take a break" from the crisis focus with activities unrelated to the event.
- Find ways for your students to feel helpful to your classroom, the school, and the community.
- List other things you do that help your students feel better. Sharing this list with other teachers may increase ideas to help your students.

Listen, Protect, **3. CONNECT** , Model & Teach

Reaching out to people in your school and community will help your students after a school crisis, or emergency. These connections will build strength for everyone. Consider ways to make some or all of the following connections:

- "Check in" with students on a regular basis.
- Find resources that can be supportive to your students and staff.
- Keep communication open with others involved in your students' lives (parents, other teachers, coaches, etc.).
- Restore interactive school activities, including sports, club meetings, student projects, and student councils.
- Encourage student activities with friends, including class projects and extracurricular activities.
- Empathise with your students by allowing a little more time for them to learn new materials.
- Build on your students' strengths by encouraging them to find ways to help them use what they have learned in the past to help them deal with the event.
- Remind your students that major disasters, crises, and emergencies are rare.
- Discuss feeling safe and times they have felt safe.
- List programs and activities that connect you and your students with the community.
- Share your list with other teachers to create a larger list of activities and resources.

Listen, Protect, Connect, **4. MODEL** & Teach

As you help your students after a disaster, crisis, or emergency, your efforts may be more successful – and you may be less stressed – if you keep in mind:

- It is good to be aware of your own thoughts, feelings, and reactions, these can be seen and may affect your students.
- How you cope and behave after an event will influence how your students cope and behave. Your students will be watching you for both verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Monitor conversations that students may hear.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of the situation, but demonstrate how people can come together to cope after such an event.

Listen, Protect, Connect, **4. MODEL** & Teach

As you help your students after a disaster, crisis, or emergency, your efforts may be more successful – and you may be less stressed – if you keep in mind:

- It is good to be aware of your own thoughts, feelings, and reactions, these can be seen and may affect your students.
- How you cope and behave after an event will influence how your students cope and behave. Your students will be watching you for both verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Monitor conversations that students may hear.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of the situation, but demonstrate how people can come together to cope after such an event.

Listen, Protect, Connect, Model & **5. TEACH**

Talk to your students about expected reactions after a crisis (emotional, behavioural, cognitive, and physiological). There are "normal" reactions to abnormal events.

- Different people may have very different reactions, even within the same family.
- After the event, people may also have different amounts of time they need to cope and adjust.
- Encourage your students to identify and use positive coping strategies to help them after the event.
- Help your students problem-solve to get through each day successfully.
- Help your students set small "doable" goals and share in these achievements as "wins" for the students and your classroom
- Remind students that with time and assistance, things generally get better. If they don't, they should let a parent or teacher know.
- Over time, you, your students, their families, your classroom, can EXPECT RECOVERY

Adapted by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) for Irish schools from Psychological First Aid materials developed by the American Red Cross (2014 and FEMA, see www.ready.gov). We acknowledge with thanks.

20.2 Seisiún le rang tar éis scéal teagmheas criticiúil a chloisteáil

A CLASSROOM SESSION FOLLOWING NEWS OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT

Handout for teachers: R5

Normally, the class teacher, class tutor or other teacher who knows the students should be the person to inform them of the events and lead the classroom session. Students generally feel safe and secure with someone they know. If the teacher feels uncomfortable with this role another staff member may share the task. Teachers should have the opportunity to opt out of this work if they feel unable to handle it and other arrangements should be made for that class group.

The aim of the session is to break the news to give the students an opportunity to discuss what has happened and to express their thoughts and feelings in a secure environment. The teacher needs to listen and be empathic.

The session needs to be tailored to the age and developmental level of the class group.

The outline of the session is as follows:

Step 1 : Giving the facts and dispelling rumours
Step 2 : Sharing stories and allowing and encouraging the sharing of thoughts and the expression of feelings
Step 3 : Normalising the reactions
Step 4 : Worries (for younger children)
Step 5 : Advising about social media usage
Step 6 : Empowerment
Step 7 : Closure
Step 8 : Free Time
Step 9 : Recovery

Step 1: **Giving the facts and dispelling rumours.**
Tell the students in a calm, low key and factual voice

What has happened -
Who was involved -
When it happened -
The plan for the day

Sample Script

I have something very sad I want to share with you. The factual information agreed upon by the staff e.g. (name of student), who attends our school and was missing, has been found. You will probably be aware, through social media, that he is dead. *Yesterday, the Gardaí found his body. They are investigating what has happened and will let us know as soon as they find out more information.*
I am feeling very sad about what's happened. Let's spend some time together now helping each other to talk about how we feel about what has happened.

Step 2: **Sharing stories**
Take some time for discussion. Students may wish to tell their story of the event. As a result they will feel less alone because of their common shared experiences. Assisting them to verbalise their experiences helps their recovery. For those students who find it difficult to verbalise their experiences, or for students with learning difficulties, it may be helpful to allow them to express their feelings and recount their experiences in other ways. Writing stories or using art can be particularly helpful, especially for younger students. A number of materials that can be used are suggested in 'Resources for Schools' pg 45. Give the students a choice as to how they want to represent their experiences. Have a box of tissues at hand.

Sample script

To help us today, we are going to make a memory box for (name of deceased). You can draw a picture of a time you remember with (name of the deceased) or write a poem or a letter to him. If you like we can put these in a nice box and give it to (name of deceased) family sometime soon. This will help them to see how important (name of deceased) was.

Step 3: Normalising the reactions
Tell the children that they will all react differently to what has happened and that there is no right or wrong way. List some possible feelings and reactions, (see **R9**). Explain that their reactions are normal responses to abnormal circumstances. Let the students know that the reactions or symptoms will go away in time. Tell them that if the symptoms haven't gone after a few weeks, they should let you or their parents know. In addition to conversations they may have with friends on social media they may need to talk to someone in person about how they are feeling. Depending on the incident and the age of the students distribute handouts **R7, R8, R9, R10**.

Step 4: Worries (for younger children)

Sample script
You may be worried about (name of the deceased) - that they might be sad or lonely or hungry or cold. When someone dies they don't feel cold or hungry or feelings like that anymore.

You may be worried that the same thing could happen to you or someone in your family. What happened to (name of deceased) doesn't happen very often.

If the classmate has been ill, you could say. *He was very sick and the chances of this happening to someone else you know are low.*

Step 5: Advising about Social Media Usage

Discussions may begin with an outline of the various social media currently being used by members of the group. The value of these as a way of keeping in contact with and supporting friends should be acknowledged. Students may be asked for experiences of ways in which such communication has helped them as well as examples of ways in which it has gone wrong. Media involving live communication such as Skype or Viber are generally more conducive to support and less open to misunderstanding than text-based means. Students will be encouraged to consider how much social media usage is too much, particularly late into the night. More guidance on social media use is contained in R22.

Step 6: Empowerment

Help the students to identify strategies that they might use to help manage their reaction, for example, talking to family and friends, getting enough sleep, taking plenty of exercise and appropriate use of social media - may all help. If appropriate, students can share strategies that

Step 7: Closure
End the session by focussing on the future. Depending on the nature of the incident, help the class/group decide what they would like to do about various issues, e.g., what to do about the person's empty chair, about writing cards or letters. Reiterate the message that their reactions are normal responses to abnormal circumstances.

Step 8: Free Time
After the discussion the teacher may want to allow the student's some play time in the play ground or free time in the classroom or an agreed area, depending on the age.

Step 9: Recovery
It may be useful to continue to do these activities at intervals during the days following and to intersperse them throughout the curriculum in the coming days.

Normal routines should generally be returned to as soon as possible.

- Students should be encouraged to resume sports and other extra-curricular activities
- Help students to identify or establish some supports; help them to identify who they go to for different kinds of help
- It is appropriate that the class curriculum is adjusted or adapted. For example, teachers should avoid presenting new learning material for a while following an incident as concentration may be impaired
- Use opportunities which arise within ordinary class work, where coping and support can be reinforced
- Students could be encouraged to discuss how to avoid future crisis and lessons learnt from their experiences. There will also be opportunities for structured discussion within the school's social, personal, and health education programmes. Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE) curriculum time is an ideal context in which to offer support.

20.3 Tuiscint daltaí de réir aois i gcás duine tar éis bás a fháil

CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING AND REACTION TO DEATH ACCORDING TO AGE

Handout R6 (May be used with various groups and individuals)

Childrens' understanding and reaction to death will depend on their age and their developmental stage. The following are guides only as children will differ in their reactions and grasp of events for a range of reasons other than age alone.

Ages 9 – 12 Years

- Understand the finality and universality of death
- Awareness of their own mortality and may worry about their own death
- May display psychosomatic symptoms i.e. physical complaints like tummy aches
- May wish to stay at home close to parents
- May display anger.

How you can help

- *Dispel fears about their own health or the health of other loved ones by offering reassurance*
- *Encourage them to go to school*
- *Allow them to express their anger, offering appropriate ways to do so*

Adolescents

- Fully understand the finality, universality and inevitability of death. Their experience of death is similar to adults
- May have a range of feelings: guilt, regret, anger, loneliness etc.
- Death adds to the already confused array of emotions experienced by adolescents
- May appear to not care about the death
- May seek support outside of the family.

How you can help

- *Offer them time to listen*
- *Allow them to express their grief in their own way*
- *Be prepared for mood swings.*
- *Don't feel left out if they seem to value their friends more than their parents*
- *Children's use of social media should be monitored and supported by parents.*

If parents are grieving themselves, they may be emotionally unable to support their other children. In this instance, another supportive adult in the child's life, e.g. other family members, friends, neighbours may need to offer emotional support.

It should be remembered that for children with special educational needs, their understanding of what has happened will be in line with their developmental age.

20.4 Céimeanna an Bhróin

STAGES OF GRIEF

Handout R7 (May be used with various groups and individuals)

Grief is a normal, healthy and predictable response to loss. Although there are distinct phases in the grieving process, people go through these stages in different sequences and at different paces. Generally the grieving process in adults is thought to take about two years, while with children and adolescents it may be over a more extended time-frame with different issues arising as they go through developmental milestones.

Denial, numbness, shock (up to 6 weeks)

- Death of the person may be denied
- Emerging feelings may be suppressed
- Refusal to talk about the death
- Bereaved keeps very busy to avoid thinking about the death
- Bereaved may show signs of confusion and forget everyday routines
- Children in shock may display either silent withdrawal or outbursts of crying

Acute grief/searching and longing for deceased (6 weeks to 4 months)

- Acute sadness – crying
- Physical pangs of pain including loss of appetite and disturbed sleep
- Emotional pain accompanied by dejection, hopelessness, lack of concentration
- Fears of life after death, nightmares, ghosts
- Disorganisation
- Strong guilt feelings and questioning of self and others, particularly in the case of a sudden death
- Feelings of anger at the departed for leaving them
- Bereaved may reject offers to comfort them

Adaptation to life without the deceased (6 months to 18 months)

- People begin to adjust to their lives without the person who is gone
- Sense of isolation
- Fearful of forgetting the deceased
- Less crying and irritability
- Exacerbation of existing personality problems. Children with low self-esteem may be at a greater risk of emotional/behavioural difficulties

Normalisation of life

- Getting on with life
- Returned sense of humour and play
- Able to participate emotionally in new relationships
- Changed relationship with the deceased – able to think of the deceased without pain
- Reduction in physical/emotional symptoms
- Less guilt

20.5 Conas déileáil nuair a tharlaíonn rud uafásach

HOW TO COPE WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS

Handout for Students: R8

- Reach out – people do care
- Talk to your friends, family and teachers - talking is the most healing medicine
- Remember you are normal and having normal reactions – don't label yourself as crazy or mad
- It is ok to cry
- It is ok to smile
- If your feelings and reactions seem different from those of your friends, remember everyone reacts differently
- When the stress level is high there is a temptation to try to numb the feelings with alcohol and drugs. This complicates the problems, rather than relieving them
- Some people find that writing or drawing is helpful. What about writing a note or letter to the family of the person who died or the person themselves?
- Spend time with people who have a positive influence on you
- Make as many daily decisions as possible. This will give you a feeling of control over your life, e.g. if someone asks you what you want to eat – answer them, even it you're not sure
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal – don't try to fight them – they'll decrease over time and become less painful
- Make a special effort to take care of yourself during this time. Try to get some extra sleep, eat nutritious foods and get some exercise, even if it is just a walk
- Sticking to your "normal" routine helps. Structure your time – keep busy
- Take time out – go for a walk or kick a football
- Provide some balance to the negative things that have gone on by doing something special or fun for yourself. Think about something that makes you feel good. Then make it happen – like going to the cinema, listening to music, calling a friend, etc. Laughter is good medicine. Watch a funny movie or play a silly game with younger children to lighten your spirits
- Use of social media can help but do not rely on it as your only source of support.
- Useful websites: **www.spunout.ie; www.youth.ie; www.reachout.com.au**

Above all, realise that what you are experiencing is normal following a traumatic event. Be understanding of yourself and others.

20.6 Frithghníomhartha ar theagmhas criticiúil: Na Mothúcháin

REACTIONS TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT

Handout for Students: R9

Following the recent sad event, you may now be experiencing some strong emotional or physical reactions. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to feel but here is a list of difficulties that people sometimes experience following such an event.

FEELINGS	BEHAVIOURAL
Fear	Nightmares
Guilt	Social withdrawal
Shame	Over reliance on use of social media
Regret	Irritability
Anger	Loss of concentration Forgetfulness
Tearfulness	Physical/Verbal aggression Misuse
Loneliness	of drugs, including alcohol
Anxiety	
Mood swings	
Shock	
Yearning	
Numbness	
Confusion	
Isolation	
Insecurity	

PHYSICAL	THOUGHTS
Tiredness	Disbelief
Sleeplessness	Denial
Headaches	Sense of unreality
Stomach Problems Bowel/	Preoccupation with images of the event/person
Bladder problems Loss or	
increase in appetite	

20.7 Brón tar éis féinmharú

GRIEF AFTER SUICIDE OR SUSPECTED SUICIDE

Handout for Students: R10

Remember there is no right or wrong way to react when someone you know dies. People will have many different reactions to what has happened.

- Know that you can survive, even if you feel you can't
- You may feel overwhelmed and frightened by your feelings. This is normal. You're not going crazy; you are grieving
- You may not feel a strong reaction to what has happened. This is ok
- You may experience feelings of guilt, confusion, forgetfulness and anger. Again these feelings are all normal
- You may feel angry at the person who has died, at yourself, at God, at everyone and everything. It is ok to express it
- You may feel guilty about what you did or did not do. Suicide is the act of an individual, for which we cannot take responsibility
- You may never have an answer as to "why" but it is ok to keep asking "why" until you no longer need to ask or you are satisfied with partial answers
- Sometimes people make decisions over which we have no control. It was not your choice
- Feeling low is temporary, suicide is permanent. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. If you are feeling low or having a difficult time, ask for help
- Allow yourself to cry, this will help you to heal
- Healing takes time. Allow yourself the time you need to grieve
- Every person grieves differently and at a different pace
- Delay making any big decisions if possible
- This is the hardest thing you will ever do. Be patient with yourself
- Spend time with people who are willing to listen when you need to talk and who also understand your need to be silent
- Seek professional help if you feel overwhelmed
- If you are thinking of trying to kill yourself, you must talk to a trusted adult
- Avoid people who try to tell you what to feel and how to feel it and, in particular, those who think you should "be over it by now."
- Ask in school about a support group for survivors that provides a safe place for you to express your feelings, or simply a place to go to be with other survivors who are experiencing some of the same things you're going through
- Allow yourself to laugh with others and at yourself. This is healing
- Useful websites: **www.spunout.ie; www.youth.ie; www.reachout.com.au.**

20.8 Dalta ag filleadh tar éis eachtra tromchúiseach

REINTEGRATION OF THE BEREAVED CHILD IN SCHOOL

Handout for schools: R11

Some suggestions are offered here which may help prepare the school and the bereaved child for their return to school. They will help to ensure that the individual, the other students and the staff feel more comfortable and at ease.

- Visit the bereaved student at home to see what he/she would like to happen when they return to school
- Talk to the student's class about how people are affected by grief and encourage them to share their own feelings. Ask about how they have coped with bereavements in their own lives and what has helped
- Discuss how difficult it may be for their classmate to come back to school. Ask how they would like to be treated if they were returning to school after a death. This might be done in pairs or small groups, thus encouraging all to be involved. It will also ensure that a range of preferences are expressed, reinforcing the fact that different people will have different preferences as to how they are treated. Some people may want to discuss what has happened, while others may want to be left alone. In general bereaved students say that they would like others to treat them as before rather than being 'over-nice' to them. However it is a delicate balance as they don't want people to behave as if nothing has happened at all
- It may help if, in advance of the student's return to school, classmates have sent cards or notes or drawn pictures for the bereaved classmate. This will let her/him know that they are in their thoughts
- When they return, acknowledge their loss *"I'm sorry that (name of deceased) died. I know that you are sad. It is ok to cry". (In Post-Primary schools, check that this is done in the first class of the day and not in every class. Teachers can express their own sympathies separately once the general re-entry to class has been managed.)*
- When the student returns, they may have difficulty concentrating or joining in class activities. Be understanding
- Allow them access to a 'quiet room' where he/she can go to be alone. You might suggest: *"We can set up a signal for you to use if you need to leave the class at any time". (Ensure supervision)*
- Link the student in with the guidance counsellor for support if needed.
- Listen when they want to talk: *"If you need to talk at any time, I am here to listen"*
- Carry on normal routines and normal approaches to discipline
- They may have difficulty completing homework and assignments: *"If you are having difficulty doing your homework it is ok to do as much as you can for a while"*
- Allow them as much time as they need to grieve.

20.9 Bealaí chun cabhrú le do pháiste

WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME

Handout for parents: R12

Children do not need to be taught how to grieve. They will do it naturally and in healthy ways if we allow them and if we provide a safe atmosphere, permission and example to do so.

- Listen carefully. Let them tell their story. Tell them that the reactions they are having are normal
- Pay extra attention, spend extra time with them, be more nurturing and comforting.
- Reassure them that they are safe
- Don't tell them that they are "lucky it wasn't worse". People are not consoled by such statements. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and help them
- Do not be surprised by changes in behaviour or personality. They will return to their usual selves in time
- Don't take their anger or other feelings personally. Help them to understand the relationship between anger and trauma. Help them find safe ways to express their feelings e.g. by drawing, exercise, or talking
- Help them to understand that defiance, aggression and risk behaviour is a way to avoid feeling the pain, hurt and or fear they are feeling
- When going out, let them know where you are going and when you will be back.
- If you are out for a long time telephone and reassure them
- Tolerate regressive behaviour such as nail biting, thumb sucking, or the need for a night light
- Share your own experience of being frightened of something and getting through it
- If they are feeling guilt or shame, emphasise that they did not choose for this to happen and that they are not to blame. Even if they were angry with the person who died, or had been mean to them, this did not make it happen
- Work with the school support services and other available services.
- As well as advising your child about appropriate use of social media, monitor their use, particularly during this vulnerable time. Useful website: www. webwise.ie

20.10 Ceisteanna Samplacha le n-úsáid mar threoir do dhalta

A GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS, CHAPLAINS, OTHER DESIGNATED STAFF

Teacher Handout: R13

This can be used to help explore a student's reaction to a critical incident and how it is impacting on them. It can help the student to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions in a safe environment with a caring adult.

Student's name _____ Birth date _____ Age _____ Sex M F Class/Year _____

We are concerned about how things are going for you. Our talk today will help us to discuss what's going well and what's not going so well. If you want me to keep what we talk about between me and you, I will do that – except for those things that I need to discuss with others in order to help you. For example, if you or someone else is at risk in any way, I could not keep that confidential. My job is to help and I will need to do something about it.

In answering, please provide as much detail as you can. At times, I will ask you to tell me a bit more about your thoughts and feelings.

1. Where were you when the event occurred?
2. What did you see or what did you hear about what happened?
3. How are you feeling now?
4. How well do you know those who were hurt or killed?
5. Has anything like this happened to you or any of your family before?
6. How will your life be different now?
7. How do you think this will affect your family in the days to come?
8. What bothers you the most about what happened?
9. Do you think anyone could have done something to prevent it?
   Yes No
   Who?
10. What could you/they have done?
11. Thinking back on what happened

	not at all	a little	more than a little	very
How angry do you feel about it?	1	2	3	4
How sad do you feel about it?	1	2	3	4
How guilty do you feel about it?	1	2	3	4
How scared do you feel?	1	2	3	4

12. What changes have there been in your life or routine because of what happened?

13. What do you usually do when you need help with a personal problem?

14. Which friends and who at home can you talk to about this?

15. Do you use social media to keep in touch with friends?

16. What are you going to do when you leave school today? If you are uncertain, let's talk about what you should do.

20.11 Seicliosta do dhaltaí i mbaol

CHECKLIST - STUDENTS AT RISK

Handout for schools: R14

This checklist may be used as an aid by school staff who are concerned about a student. It should be remembered that the checking of a number of items for any one student may point to other problems. Indication of a number of these factors in any one student should always be followed up.

- Unexpected reduction of academic performance ☐
- Talking about suicide ☐
- Ideas and themes of depression, death and suicide in their work ☐
- Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness ☐
- Change in mood and marked emotionally instability ☐
- Significant grief or stress ☐
- Withdrawal from relationships ☐
- Break up of an important relationship ☐
- Discipline problems, being in trouble in school ☐
- Withdrawal from extra-curricular activities ☐
- Giving personal belongings away ☐
- Loss of interest in things one cares about ☐
- Neglect of physical appearance ☐
- Physical symptoms with emotional cause ☐
- High risk behaviours ☐
- Alcohol or drug abuse ☐
- Bullying or victimization ☐
- History of suicidal behaviour e.g. cutting or overdose risk behaviours ☐
- Family history of suicide/attempted suicide ☐
- Over use or reliance on social media ☐

20.12 Comhairle i gcás dalta ag lua féinmharú agus riosca

EXPLORING SUICIDE RISK AND GUIDANCE IF STUDENT EXPRESSES SUICIDE IDEATION

Handout for school : R15

A student may express suicide ideation or exhibit behaviours that are of concern. The school has a responsibility to make an assessment and take action. The term 'risk assessment' is used in quite a specific sense and such an assessment needs to be carried out by a trained professional. This note is intended to help those professionals (designated school staff, such as guidance counsellors or chaplains) most immediately available to the student, to make a judgement as to whether a student is at risk. Where there is a serious concern about a student, then a referral should be made immediately. It is not easy to gauge the seriousness of such behaviour. The school is not responsible for deciding on the seriousness of the risk. Generally, all threats or reported threats should be taken seriously even if it may appear to be 'attention-seeking'.

What should a teacher do?

Listen. If a student seeks out a teacher to discuss their concerns about suicide, they have an idea that the teacher may be a help to them. Indicate concern and a willingness to help. There may not be time to discuss it properly when the student first approaches. Arrange a time to talk and prepare for the meeting.

Review available information: Review any significant changes observed in the student over recent weeks. The list of warning signs in **R14** should be used to guide a review discussion with concerned staff.

Don't be afraid to use the word 'suicide'. Getting the word out in the open may help the student feel that his/her cry for help has been heard.

Have a sensitive but direct and open discussion with the student. If a student has been reported to be talking about suicide, they should be asked openly, "***Are you thinking about killing yourself?***" This will offer the student the opportunity to talk about their feelings and their thoughts. If they confirm that they have been thinking about it, then this should be explored by raising the following issues with the student:

Previous attempt: Has the student attempted suicide before? You might ask, "***Have you ever tried to harm yourself before?***" If the answer to this is "Yes", then the risk increases.

Personal/family history: The level of risk increases with the number and seriousness of personal/family difficulties e.g. relationship breakdown, loss of friendship, problems with the law, parental separation, recent bereavement, serious illness etc. "***How have things being going for you recently; has anything significant happened in your life recently***?"

Physical/emotional history: A student who has experienced major personal difficulties, whether as a result of physical (recent hospitalisation, chronic illness) or significant emotional difficulties (depression, loneliness, guilt, anger etc.) is more at risk. "***How have things being going for you? Have you been ill? Has anything significant happened to you recently?***"

Plan: Does the student have a plan? If 'yes', ask "***How do you intend to do it?***" Does he/she have a particular day in mind? "When are you thinking of doing it?" Has he/she written suicide notes? The more concrete the plan the more serious the threat.

Means: Does the student have the means and a place to do it. Ask "***How do you intend to do it?***" Are the means available lethal? Have they access to a rope or pills? "***Where would you do it?***" Will the student be in a place where they can be rescued? For example, do they intend to carry out the action when both parents are out and their siblings also?

Onward referral:

The greater the number of "Yes" answers, the higher the risk and the greater the need for immediate onward referral. Parents should be informed and asked to bring the student to their GP or to another service and report what the student has said. Advise about use of Accident and Emergency Services if parents have concerns about accessing a GP out of hours.

Do not send the student home alone if there are concerns. Release the student to the parents if concerns for safety exist. Explain to the student that you have to take action and let them know what action you are taking. If a student is under 18, years teachers are obliged to inform the parents even without the student's consent.

Record the information and the actions taken. Share this with the relevant person in management. Share information as considered necessary with other staff member (e.g. student support team, class / subject teacher) taking into consideration the student's right to confidentiality.

Return to school:

A plan for reintegration of the student will be the responsibility of a designated person from the student support team. Consider the timing of the student's return if there has been an absence from school. Discuss the return with the parents and student. Should the student be under medical supervision? Can the parents provide advice for the school from the medical team who assessed the student? How would the student like to have the absence explained?

Share information about the return as considered necessary (for example with management, student support team, class/subject teacher as appropriate) and with other staff members, remembering confidentiality. Monitoring in the first few days will be an important part of the plan. Have a staff member available to meet them on arrival. Ensure that all teachers know that the student has been through a difficult time. Let the student know which staff member is available if support is needed. Keep routine as normal as possible. Ensure that there is a current family/guardian contact number available should difficulty arise.

Share information about the return as considered necessary (for example with management, student support team, class/subject teacher as appropriate) and with other staff members, remembering confidentiality. Monitoring in the first few days will be an important part of the plan. Have a staff member available to meet them on arrival. Ensure that all teachers know that the student has been through a difficult time. Let the student know which staff member is available if support is needed. Keep routine as normal as possible. Ensure that there is a current family/guardian contact number available should difficulty arise.

Monitor the behaviour of friends and other students who may be providing support to the student to ensure that they are not taking on too much responsibility for the wellbeing of the student. Where a previous suicide has occurred in a school be aware of the possibility of copycat or suicide contagion which occurs when suicidal behaviour is imitated (see 7.6 in the Guidelines).

Preventative and preparatory guidance for schools:

School systems are not only responsible for the intellectual needs of students but also for their emotional, social, and physical wellbeing. A preventative whole school approach to supporting mental health schools should ensure implementation of the *Well-Being Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention* available on the DES website. This includes ensuring that the SPHE curriculum is consistently delivered in the school. SPHE provides a framework for educating young people about their health and wellbeing in a planned and structured way. It is advised to ensure that mental health awareness in included in curriculum delivery at all levels in the school.

If the school does not have a Student Support/Care Team in place consider setting one up. The document *Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools* is a useful resource and available on the DES website. It will provide a system for tracking and monitoring the students who have difficulties. Having such a system reduces anxiety for staff who have the concern as it shares the burden.

Schools are advised to have some members of staff trained in ASIST professional development provided by HSE. Information is available on www.nosp.ie

20.13 Ceisteanna comónta do Phríomhoidí

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Principals: R16

The following is a summary of questions often asked by Principals in the aftermath of a critical incident.

Q. What do I do first on hearing news of the incident/death?

A. If the source of the news is the affected family, express condolences and get as many facts as possible – sensitively. If it is from another source, check for veracity; obtain the facts; the numbers injured etc. Ascertain who is to contact the next of kin. The Gardaí may have already undertaken this role.

Q. Who do I contact for help?

A. If the school is closed (weekends/holidays) contact members of the Critical Incident Management Team with a view to setting up a meeting. Contact the Board of Management and/or outside agencies e.g. NEPS/Health Service Executive. If the State Examinations are in progress, contact the State Examinations Commission (SEC) (0906 442700) as soon as possible, in order to alert the Examination and Assessment Manager (EAM) for the school.

Q. What should I do first thing on the first morning back at school?

A. Call a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team. If the team is not available call a meeting of the BOM and Senior Management. Set up a team for the duration of the crisis.

Q. What should be on the agenda for this meeting?

A.
1. A statement of the facts as known.
2. Delegation of responsibilities.
3. Preparation of what to say at a staff meeting.
4. Preparation of what to say to students.
5. Initial schedule for the day.
6. Preparation of a letter to parents.
7. Discussion of support services/agencies whose support may be needed and agreement about who will contact them.
8. Preparation of a media statement, if appropriate.

Q. How do I manage communication?

A. Schools will need to manage telephone and email contacts as this can be stressful. Assign one or two suitable people to this task. Provide clear guidance on what to say or write. An agreed factual statement should be available. This can placed on the schools' social media site

Q. How do I keep staff up to date?

A. The staff room is a very important room for teachers on this day. Informal briefings can take place during the breaks, as well as more formal meetings at the beginning and end of each day.

Q. How do I dovetail the school's part in the funeral/religious ceremonies with the wishes of the parents?

A. The school chaplain or local clergy/parish priest may be the main link person here. Ensure that the parents' wishes are respected and that participation of any students or friends is agreed with them. Ensure that beliefs about death or particular customs about funerals of different religious or ethnic groups are understood and respected.

Q. How do I handle staff members who want to opt out?

A. All staff would be expected to attend meetings held to disseminate information. However, it should be made clear to staff at these meetings that opting out of support type work is possible if they feel quite unable to cope. Be aware that some staff may be particularly vulnerable and watch out for them.

Q. How do I handle the media? (See Section 8 – Dealing with the media)

A. Delegate one suitable person to deal with the media.
Prepare a media statement.

- State that it is a difficult time for the school community
- Emphasis should be on what is being done to support staff and students
- The 'Media Guidelines for the Portrayal of Suicide' suggest that the media can help prevent copy-cat suicides by not mentioning specific details of the suicide e.g. location and method used; not using colourful phrases to romanticise it; not citing causes of suicide and thereby indirectly suggesting suicide as an option. These guidelines should be adhered to by the school in any communication with the media
- Allow limited and controlled access to the media by providing a press room
- The SEC can help if the incident is during exam time. Teacher unions, trustees of schools and management bodies may also have press officers who are able to advise, if appropriate.

Q. What/when should I tell staff/students about the incident?

A. Give the facts, as you know them. This is the best way to counter rumour and fantasy. It should be done as soon as possible to prevent staff and students hearing from other, sometimes inappropriate, sources.

Q. What if I feel upset myself and find it difficult to talk?

A. It is very important to let children know that it is natural and acceptable to be upset and to cry. It is better to share feelings with them than to hide them, so don't worry if you get upset. It may help to create a safe and open atmosphere for grief. You should also seek and accept support for yourself while dealing with this difficult event.

Q. What if some students do not appear to grieve?

A. Children do not need to be taught how to grieve. They will do it naturally and in healthy ways if we allow them and if we provide a safe atmosphere, permission and example to do so. Don't assume that because overt signs are absent, the person is not grieving. Each individual has his/her own personal way of grieving. It is important that these different individual ways are respected and seen as normal.

Q. How long does it take to come to terms with bereavement?

A. There is no definite answer to this. Each individual progresses at his/her own pace and there are enormous variations, (see **R7**).

Q. How soon should brothers and sisters or friends who are closely involved be encouraged to return to school?

A. They should usually return fairly quickly. They need the support of their peer group and the routine of school will offer them some sense of normality. Their presence at school will offer others an opportunity to express their grief. The sooner they return the easier it is for them to reintegrate. This advice should, however, be tempered by any particularly unusual circumstances and decisions will ultimately be made by parents/guardians.

Q. Where a lot of well-intentioned friends are calling to the house and perhaps staying out late at night, what should I advise a grieving family to do?

A. Encourage them to set clear limits, when friends can call and when they should leave. Often the bereaved adults need to be reminded that setting clear limits is good. Friends may stay too long because they do not know when or how to leave the house. School can help by suggesting time limits to the friends. This is especially important at exam time when rest is essential.

Q. What can I do about phone texting or social media use, especially if unreliable (or inappropriate) messages are being passed about?

A. A critical incident highlights the need for a well established school policy on this issue. (see R22). Students should be advised that they are being given reliable and up-to date information by the school. They should be encouraged to report to a teacher all social media communication received which are at variance with the facts as known, or which are a cause of worry or concern - especially about friends.

Q. How long do we leave the memory area in the classroom / corridor

A. Sometimes out of respect for the deceased a space / table is set up with a picture, candles flowers, messages, cards, etc.. This can offer a focal point in the initial days of grieving. The items can be brought to the funeral service as part of the offertory procession.

20.14 Ceisteanna comónta do Mhúinteoirí

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Teachers: R17

The following is a summary of questions often asked by teachers in the aftermath of a critical incident.

Q. I would like to opt out of support type work for personal reasons. Is this OK?

A. It has been found that their teachers are the best people to support students in school in times of distress because they are with people they know and trust. Accordingly, all teachers and other school staff members are encouraged to help the students at these times. However, nobody should be obliged to do this work and people should be able to opt out of it if they feel they need to. This may be for a number of reasons, including recent personal bereavement, experience of a loss similar to that occurring in the particular incident or other circumstances. However, in order to stay in touch, they would need to be in attendance at staff meetings where information is disseminated in relation to the incident.

Q. I have no qualifications to help out in this area. Shouldn't the job should be left to the experts?

A. You probably have more skills here than you realise. Your experience, competence and skills as a teacher and as an expert in dealing with children and young people are invaluable. Most importantly, the students know you. Students need a safe environment in which to come to terms with what has happened. This security is often enhanced by being able to discuss the events with a familiar teacher in the first instance.

Q. What should I do in the classroom to be helpful?

A. You should acknowledge the situation and clarify the facts, as they are known. Honesty is essential. Encourage questions so that the students have a clear understanding. Try to establish normal routines as soon as possible – but balance this with allowing students opportunities to discuss the incident and to express their thoughts and feelings. Encourage them to resume extra-curricular activities and help them to identify where they can go to for support. Encourage them to be supportive of one another.

Q. What are the signs of grief that I may notice in students?

A. After bereavement students may have a wide range of different reactions – some may become quiet and withdrawn, while others may seem to be aggressive, irritable or angry. They may have mood swings or lack concentration. Try to handle all these 'normal' reactions with patience, do not seem surprised by them and do not get cross (see **R6, R7** and **R9**). If students come from a background where there is family breakdown, serious illness, alcohol or drug related or other difficulties, then you need to take extra note of any behavioural changes.

Q. What if I think that some students are not grieving normally?

A. There is no such thing as a 'correct' way to grieve. Some people cry, some may laugh or become giddy, some show no reaction. The important thing is that all these different ways are natural and normal and you should try to help the student understand this.

Q. What skills do I have that are important?

A. Listening skills are probably the most important. People who have experienced loss or trauma generally feel that talking helps them to cope with their feelings. When you sense a student wants to talk, try to make the time. Be reassuring and patient while gently encouraging them to talk about the loss. Reassure the student that you are there to help.

Q. Is there any one important thing I should say?

A. Yes – emphasise that grieving is a normal healthy process following a traumatic incident. It is the person's way of coping with the event. It is also normal for people to react in different ways – there is no 'right' way to grieve.

Q. Is it a good idea to organise a classroom session following a critical incident?

A. Some schools do and they have found this to be very effective. You will find notes on leading a class session after news of an incident in **R5**. An advantage here is that students may feel safer and more secure with their regular classroom teacher.

Q. What should I do if I feel that a student needs more professional support?

A. Discuss the issue with the principal or guidance counsellor. They, in turn, may wish to discuss it with the NEPS psychologist or other support services and with the student's parents. The outcome may be a referral to the appropriate service.

Q. What is the overall message in helping bereaved children?

A. *"You will get through this difficult time and we are here to help if you need support. Take care of yourself and look out for each other. If you need help, or a friend is in difficulty, it is best talk to us rather than relying totally on social media.*

Q. When should I get back to a normal teaching routine with a class?

A. It is important to give students sufficient time and space to share their feelings and to come to terms with what has happened. However, it is also important to move towards a normal routine as soon as possible. Getting on with the regular and familiar pattern of school life helps reduce stress. Avoid introducing new material in the immediate aftermath of an incident or bereavement, as grief and shock can interfere with concentration and motivation. It is often a good idea to consult the students themselves about returning to the normal routine.

Q. What do I do about the empty chair/a student's belongings etc?

A. A helpful strategy might be to involve students in a discussion about what to do about the chair. This might also present an opportunity to move to a new phase in the process. With regard to the student's belongings, it might be useful to put together a folder or a 'memory box' of the student's work for the parents. This can be given to them at an appropriate time.

Q. Is there a danger that by talking about suicide you make it appear to be an option for others?

A. Talking about the death helps people to make sense of what has happened. People can cope with the truth, but suicide must never be represented as a valid option. There should be no criticism of the person who has died. Separate the person from the behaviour. It is important to talk about how a person can get to the point where suicide may *seem* to be the only option but **emphasise that it is not a good option**. Feeling low is usually a temporary thing, whereas suicide is permanent. With suicide the intention may have been to change life circumstances rather than end life. There is always help available if a person can take the step of reaching out for it. Encourage students to seek help if they need it.

20.15 Ceisteanna comónta do Thuismitheoirí

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Parents: R18

The following is a summary of questions frequently asked by parents after a critical incident.

Q. This incident has upset my daughter/son. As there are many rumours circulating, I would like to know what really happened. How can I find that information?

A. The school will inform students and parents of the core details of the incident insofar as they are known. It sometimes takes some time for the true facts to emerge. In the meantime, it is important to stick to the facts as known. Discourage rumour or gossip as it is often incorrect and can be distressing for the families and friends of those involved. Information on social media is not reliable and always needs to be checked.

Q. Will help be available to the students in the school?

A. This will depend on the particular situation. The school will usually put a plan in place for supporting students. This support may include classroom discussion, small group discussion or individual support for students who need it. If there is particular concern about your son or daughter, you will be informed.

Q. How can I help my child?

A. You are the natural support for your child. He/she may want to discuss their feelings and thoughts with you. You can help by listening carefully. You should tell them it is ok to feel the way they do, that people react in many different ways and that they should talk rather than bottle things up. Advise on and monitor safe use of social media.

Q. How long will the grief last?

A. There is no quick answer to this. It varies from individual to individual and according to circumstances. It will also be affected by the closeness of the child to the event or to person who died. Memories of other bereavements may also be brought up by the incident. Be patient and understanding. It can take time.

Q. Since the incident occurred my child has difficulty in sleeping, complains of headaches etc. Can I be sure these are related to the incident?

A. Grief can affect one physically as well as emotionally and these and other symptoms may be part of a grief reaction. If they persist, consult a doctor for a check up.

Q. If my child remains very upset what should I do?

A. If your child remains distressed after a period of six weeks or so, he/she may need additional support, but there is no fixed rule about the length of the grieving process. If you are very concerned at any point, it is best to seek more help through your GP/ HSE Services.

Q. In what ways are adolescents different from other children?

A. During adolescence there are a lot of changes going on for young people and some may feel confused about themselves and the world around them. Grief tends to heighten these feelings and increase the confusion. At this time, too, the individual may look more to friends than to family for support and comfort. Don't feel rejected by this. Just be available to listen when they need to talk and make sure they know you are there for them when they need you.