

Ballinderreen N.S. Critical Incident Policy



Ballinderreen N.S. aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. In keeping with our schools' mission statement, as a school, we aim to provide a well ordered, caring and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical and moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. With this in mind, the BoM, through the Principal, Barry Quinn, has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Our aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

'Critical Incident'

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

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

Aim:

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

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

Physical Safety:

- Evacuation plan
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are checked regularly
- Front gate is locked during school hours
- Rules of the Playground

Psychological Safety:

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

These include:

- SPHE is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management; resilience; conflict management; problem solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision.
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Introduction of the Mind Up Programme-Well being programme for students

- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school are available
- The school has developed links with – NEPS
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated school liaison person, concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves-
<https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life>
- Wellbeing week held annually in the school.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team are post holders in the school. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Roles:

The Key roles and team members are:

- Team Leader
- Garda Liaison
- Staff Liaison
- Student Liaison
- Parent Liaison
- Community Liaison
- Media Liaison
- Administrator

Outlined below are some key points on the key responsibilities of each role.

Team Leader: Barry Quinn

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Coordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the BoM; DES; NEPS;
- Liaises with the bereaved family.

In the absence of the team leader, Maria Murphy will take the lead.

Garda Liaison: Barry Quinn

- Liaises with the Gardai
- Ensures that the information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

Staff Liaison: Barry Quinn

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known.
- Gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day.
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students.
- Provides material for staff.
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses.
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and contacts them individually.

Student Liaison: Conor Cooney

- Liaises with other staff to assist them dealing with vulnerable students.
- Provides material for students.
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

Community / Agency Liaison: Maria Murphy

- Contact emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support.
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies.
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

Parent Liaison: Shelley Brennan

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.
- Arranges parent meetings, if held.
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'.
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaption.
- Sets up room for meetings with parents.
- Maintains a record of parents seen.
- Meets with individual parents.
- Provides appropriate material for parents.
- www.barnardos.ie/resources
- www.irishchildhoodbereavementnetwork.ie
- www.crusebereavement.org.uk
- www.pdst.ie
- www.sphe.ie

Media Liaison: Barry Quinn

- In the event of an incident, will liaise with the CPSMA, INTO, IPPN
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator: School Secretary-Angela Connolly

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

Record Keeping:

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

Angela Connolly, will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations:

The management and staff of Ballinderreen NS have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also.

For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, and that the family involved consents to its use. The phrase 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead. Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

Critical incidents Rooms:

In the event of a critical incident,

- The staffroom will be the main room used to meet the staff
- GP Room: for meeting with students
- GP room for meeting with parents
- Principal's office for meeting with media
- A SET room for individual sessions with students.

Consultation and Communication regarding the plans:

All staff were consulted in the preparation of this policy and plan.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.

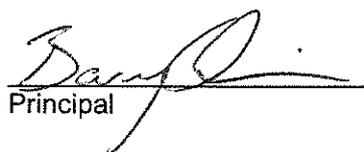
Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal.

The plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on December 3rd 2020.



Chairperson



Principal

The plan will be reviewed in 2023.

Appendix 1

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOL PLAN

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Role	Name	Email
Team Leader	Barry Quinn	principal@ballinderreenns.ie
Garda Liaison	Barry Quinn	principal@ballinderreenns.ie
Staff Liaison	Barry Quinn	principal@ballinderreenns.ie
Student Liaison	Conor Cooney	conorcooney@ballinderreenns.ie
Parent Liaison	Shelley Brennan	shelleybrennan@ballinderreenns.ie
Community Liaison	Maria Murphy	mariamurphy@ballinderreenns.ie
Media Liaison	Barry Quinn	principal@ballinderreenns.ie
Administrator	Angela Connolly	info@ballinderreenns.ie

SHORT TERM ACTIONS - DAY 1

TASK	Name
Gather accurate information	
Who, what, when, where	
Convene a CIMT meeting- specify time and place clearly	
Contact external agencies	
Arrange supervision for students	
Hold staff meeting	
Agree schedule for the day	All staff
Inform students - (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	
Compile a list of vulnerable students	
Contact/visit the bereaved family	
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with the media	
Inform parents/guardians	
Hold end of day staff meeting	

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS - (DAY 2 AND FOLLOWING DAYS)

TASK	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support of students, staff, parent/guardians	
Visit the injured	
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangement	
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

FOLLOW - UP BEYOND 72 HOURS

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