

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY



Gaelscoil Naomh Pádraig aims to protect the well being of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Gaelscoil Naomh Pádraig has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The Board of Management, through Liam Breathnach has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident.

Review and Research

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)
- Wellbeing Policy Statement & Framework for Practice 2018 -2023 (DES 2018)

What is a Critical Incident?

The staff and management recognises a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school”.

Critical Incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Types of Incidents might include:

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

Aim

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

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have put systems in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of an incident. These include measures to address both physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.

Physical safety

Refer to ***Health & Safety Statement Gaelscoil Naomh Pádraig***

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Yard supervision provided from 8.45
- Front gate locked during school hours
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the playground (See Behaviour Plan)

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Gaelscoil Naomh Pádraig 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.

- **S.P.H.E. programmes** are included in the curriculum to address issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, resilience, conflict management, problem solving, help seeking, decision-making, and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision and implementation will commence in the 2018/2019 school year.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Programmes such as **Circle time (Jenny Mosley), Stay Safe, Self Esteem week.**
- Our **Behaviour and Discipline Policy** includes an approach to prevention of bullying.
- Staff are **informed** of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs.
- Staff have access to books and **resources** on difficulties affecting the primary school child.
- The school has developed links with **outside agencies** such as C.A.M.H.S., Linn Dara, NEPS, etc which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students.
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness if the need arises.
- There is a care system in place in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2007 for primary schools and 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member, 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.
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. . Each member of the team has access to the critical incident policy on the school intranet. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials to be used in the event of an incident.

Team leader: Liam Breathnach/Redempta Ní Sheoighe

Roles.

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

Garda liaison Liam Breathnach

Role

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

Staff liaison: Liam Breathnach

Role

- 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 materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison: Liam Breathnach, Sinéad Ní Shaoraí, Redempta Ní Sheoighe

Role

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records (Records stored in the the principal's office).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison: Liam Breathnach, Brian Ó Fiaich

Role

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Council
 - 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: Liam Breathnach, Sinéad Ní Shaoraí

Role

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison: Liam Breathnach, Brian Ó Fiaich

Role

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

Administrator: School Secretary Pauline Bolger & Elaine Collins

Role

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

Record keeping

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

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

Confidentiality and good name considerations

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

Critical Incident Rooms

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

Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Seomra na Múinteoirí</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Halla</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Halla</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Halla</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Leabharlann scoile</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Oifig an phríomhoide</i>	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent/guardian representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

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 Sinéad Ní Shaoraí.

The plan will be updated annually.

Role	Name
Team leader:	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Garda liaison	Liam Breathnach
Staff liaison	Liam Breathnach
Student liaison	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe/ Sinéad Ní Shaoraí
Community liaison	Liam Breathnach/ Brian Ó Fiach
Parent liaison	Liam Breathnach/ Sinéad Ní Shaoraí
Media liaison	Liam Breathnach/ Brian Ó Fiach
Administrator	Pauline Bolger/Elaine Collins

Short term actions - Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Relevant staff and witnesses
Who, what, when, where?	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe and Sinéad Ní Shaoraí
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe and Sinéad Ní Shaoraí
Contact external agencies	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Arrange supervision for students	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Inform students - (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Inform parents	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Hold end of day staff briefing	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Liam Breathnach
Meet external agencies	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Meet whole staff	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Liam Breathnach/ Redempta Ní Sheoighe
Visit the injured	Management team members
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Management team members
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Staff
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

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

Follow-up - beyond 72 hours

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

Emergency Contact List

(To be displayed in the staffroom, Principals Office etc.)

Eagraíocht sheachtrach/Outside Agency	Uimhreacha Theagmhála/Contact Numbers
Garda	Lucan Garda Station 01-6667300 Community Liaison Officer 01-6667320
Fire (Brigade) Services	999 or 01-4571155/6244455
Hospital	Tallaght Hospital 01- 4142000 Crumlin Hospital 01- 4096100
Local G.P.	Dr. G Hayes 01-6282497
Health Board/Family Centre	TUSLA: Child and Family Agency (Social Work Department - 01-6206387) Dr. Stevens Hospital 01-6352000
DES Communications Department of Education & Skills	Inspectorate - (01)8734700/8896553 DES Athlone - 090647462/0906483600
NEPS Psychologist	Sorcha O'Toole
I.N.T.O	(01) 8047700 1850708708 (01) 8732502
Parish Priest/Clergy	St. Mary's Parish, Lucan (01) 6281487 Father Philip Curran (P.P) (01) 6281756
E.W.O	(01) 4575610
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Useful Contact Numbers/Support Services

Outside Agency/Service	Uimhreacha Theagmhála/Contact Numbers
Barnardos	B.S.O (01) 4530355
The Samaritans	1850 116 123
Childline	1800 666666
Parent line	1890 927277
Aware	(01) 6617211 1800 80 48 48
Console National Suicide Bereavement Support	02495561 1800 201890
Rainbows Support for children of bereaved & separated families	(01) 4734175
The Bereavement Counselling Service	(01) 8391766
Parish Priest/Clergy	St. Mary's Parish, Lucan (01) 6281487 Father Philip Curran (P.P) (01) 6281756 Father Tom Kennedy (01) 6281756
H.S.E (C.F.A) TUSLA: Cherry Orchard Hospital Social Work Department	(01) 62400650
Family Resource Centre - St. Kevins	(1) 4627149
Family Resource Centre - Killinarden	(2) 4527143
JIGSAW - Clondalkin (Young people's Mental Health)	(01) 45380087 clondalkin@jigsaw.ie