

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Kilcolman National School



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

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

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

Aim

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

Kilcolman National School has the following in place:

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

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Kilcolman National School* 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.

(Some suggestions follow)

- Social, Personal and Health Education (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
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Staff are informed in suicide awareness.
- The school has developed links with NEPS, TUSLA. Staff have undertaken training in Child Protection-Children First.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system in place in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2007 for primary schools.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The staff will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. A critical incident folder is available to staff. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Team leader: *Principal*

Role

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

Garda liaison: *Principal*

Role

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

Staff liaison: *Deputy Principal*

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 contacts them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

Community/agency liaison: *Principal*

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: *Deputy Principal*

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)

Administrator: *Secretary*

Role

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

Record keeping: *All Staff*

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.

Margo Lehane 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 Kilcolman National School 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:
Middle Room	Main room for meeting staff
	Meetings with students
	Meetings with parents
	Individual sessions with students/groups

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 the Principal.

The plan will be updated annually.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Brigid McGoldrick</i>	
Garda liaison	<i>Brigid McGoldrick</i>	
Staff liaison	<i>Ann Dennehy</i>	
Community liaison	<i>Brigid McGoldrick</i>	
Parent liaison	<i>Ann Dennehy</i>	
Administrator	<i>Margo Lehane</i>	

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Brigid McGoldrick
Who, what, when, where?	Brigid McGoldrick
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Brigid McGoldrick
Contact external agencies	Ann Dennehy
Arrange supervision for students	Ann Dennehy
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	All staff
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Brigid McGoldrick/Ann Dennehy
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Brigid McGoldrick/Ann Dennehy
Inform parents	Brigid McGoldrick
Hold end of day staff briefing	All staff

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Brigid McGoldrick
Meet external agencies	Brigid McGoldrick/Ann Dennehy
Meet whole staff	Brigid McGoldrick
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Brigid McGoldrick/Ann Dennehy
Visit the injured	Brigid McGoldrick
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Brigid McGoldrick
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	All staff
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	Brigid McGoldrick
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	All staff
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	All staff
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	
Hospital	
Fire Brigade	
Local GPs	
HSE	
Community Care Team	
Child and Family Centre	
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	
School Inspector	
NEPS Psychologist	
DES	
INTO/ASTI/TUI	
Clergy	
State Exams Commission	
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057