

Meánscoil na mBráithre Inis Diomáin

Critical Incident Policy

CBS Ennistymon Secondary School aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The school has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students during the normal course of the school day and in the event of a critical incident.

Such policies would include

- Health and Safety Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- S.P.H.E Programme

Definition of Critical Incident:

Meánscoil na mBráithre recognises a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the normal running of the school”.

Critical incidents may involve students, staff, the school or the local community.

Examples of a critical incident might be;

- The death of a member of the school community, through sudden death,
- accident, suicide or terminal illness
- A serious accident or tragedy in the school community
- Serious damage to the school through fire, flooding vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- A physical attack on a staff member or student
- Intrusion into the school.

Aim of Plan:

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

Critical Incident Management Team:

CBS Ennistymon has set up a Critical Incident Management Team consisting of the following personnel.

The Principal

The Deputy Principal

The School Secretary

The School Chaplain

The School Guidance Counsellor

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.

The Principal will act as Team Leader or in her absence the Deputy Principal.

Role of Team Leader

- The team leader alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting of the team
- Co-ordinates/delegates tasks of the other team members.
- Liaises with The Board of Management and the Department of Education and Science
- In case of bereavement, liaises with the bereaved family

Other areas of responsibilities, which may be delegated by the team Leader to other members of the team would include:

- Contacting Emergency support services
- Briefing and advising the staff and noting their feelings and concerns.
- Organising the supervision of students in the school
- Keeping staff updated on information/developments /progress
- Meeting students to brief them on the situation
- Taking care of “vulnerable students/vulnerable teachers”
- Liaising with external agencies for support or referrals
- Liaising with school organizations such as Parents’ Council, P.P.U. & Students’ Council.
- Meeting with individual parents or groups of parents.
- Visiting bereaved families or families closely associated with the incident
- Preparing a Press release and liaising with the media.
- Preparation of an “Incident Room”

Garda liaison (Mary Lyons)

Role

(May be seen as part of the team leader’s role)

- Liaises with the Gardaí

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

Staff liaison (Michael Clohessy)

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 (Eimear Griffey/Neville Fitzpatrick)

Role

- At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison (Mary Lyons/Gerry Sexton)

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 (*Margaret Molloy/Mary Lyons*)

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 (*Mary Lyons*)

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)
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Administrator (*Brigid O'Brien*)

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 (*Mary Lyons ,Brigid O'Brien*)

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.

Brigid O'Brien will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of Meánscoil na mBráithre 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 Management Plan CBS Ennistymon

MANAGEMENT TEAM

School Principal	Ms. M Lyons
School Deputy Principal	Mr. M Clohessy
School Secretary	Ms. B O'Brien
School Chaplain	Fr. Willie Cummins , Fr Forde
School Guidance Counsellor	Ms. E Griffey / Mr. N Fitzpatrick

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.

Ms Margaret Molloy, Mr Gerry Sexton, Mr Kieran Meehan

Critical Incident Rooms:

In the event of a critical incident, room _ will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

Contact Numbers/Emergency Numbers:

The Secretary has responsibility for maintaining an up to date list of contact numbers for students and their parent(s) / guardian(s). The school secretary has responsibility for maintaining an up to date list of contact numbers for the emergency support services is displayed in the Staff Room, the Secretary's Office and the Principal's Office.

Evacuation Procedures:

The Fire Safety Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the evacuation procedures are displayed near the door of every classroom. The evacuation procedures (fire drill) are practiced at least once a term.

Training and Staff Development:

The school will provide opportunities for staff and members of the Board of Management to attend information/training meetings on such issues such as suicide, grieving, first aid.

Visitors:

Visitors, including parents must report to the school's secretary's office, identify themselves and state their business in the school. Visitors will not be allowed beyond the school's reception office except at the invitation of a member of staff.

The Media:

Members of the media must report to the school's secretary's office, identify themselves and state their business in the school. Members of the media will not be allowed beyond the school's secretary's office except at the invitation of the Principal or Deputy Principal.

The Principal and Deputy Principal in consultation with the Critical Incident Management Team if possible, will prepare a brief, written statement to include;

- The Sympathy of the school community for the affected/ bereaved family.
- Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured person(s).
- The facts about the incident (following consultation with the affected/bereaved families).
- What has been done?
- What is going to be done?

Some of the following procedures may be considered in the event of a critical incident:**Short Term Actions: (1st Day)**

- Ensure the safety of students staff and visitors

- Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team and delegate responsibilities
- GATHER ACCURATE INFORMATION (Incident Report Form)
- Identify high risk students
- Contact appropriate agencies to organise support
- Contact the DES the BOM, NEPS and the Parent's Association.
- Arrange the supervision of students
- Inform students and parents.
- Make contact with the affected/bereaved family
- Organise reunion of students with their parents
- Respond to the media(Principal and Deputy Principal only)
- Arrange visit to affected/bereaved family
- Report to the Health and Safety Authority, if necessary.

As far as possible maintain normal school routine.

Medium Term Actions (24-72 hours)

- Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team to review the events of the first 24 hours and to delegate responsibilities.
- Arrange support for students, staff and parents.
- Update staff and students
- Update the Department of Education and Science, the Board of Management, the Parents' Association and the relevant external agencies.
- Liaise with the family and clarify the school's involvement in funeral/memorial services.
- Plan visits to the injured
- Plan for the reintegration of students and staff.
- Assess the roles of the Board of Management and the Parents' Association
- Plan the restoration of normal school routine
- Consider the legal and financial consequences.
- Update the media, if necessary (Principal/Deputy-principal only)

Long Term Actions

- Monitor students and staff for signs of continuing distress.
- Plan the long term counselling needs of individuals
- Plan for anniversaries and memorials
- Evaluate the effect on the student/teacher relationship
- Evaluate the long term effect on the educational progress of the students
- Ensure that new staff are aware of the Critical Incident Policy and are informed of which students/staff were affected in any recent incident.

- Ensure that a report is sent to the new school when a student is transferring.
- Evaluate the legal and financial consequences.
- Report to the Board of Management, the Parents' Association and the Department of Education and Science.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed 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 (Name of team member)

The plan will be updated annually (*edit* name month)

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Ms Mary Lyons</i>	(086)3889898
Garda liaison	<i>Ms Mary Lyons</i>	(086)3889898
Staff liaison	<i>Mr Michael Clohessy</i>	(087)2969302
Student liaison	<i>Ms Eimear Griffey</i>	(087)2594939
Community liaison	<i>Mr Gerry Sexton</i>	(085)1450516
Parent liaison	<i>Ms Margaret Molloy</i>	(087)9885847
Media liaison	<i>Ms Mary Lyons</i>	(o86)3889898
Administrator	<i>Ms Brigid O Brien</i>	(0872267113

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Mary Lyons
Who, what, when, where?	
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Mary Lyons/Michael Clohessy
Contact external agencies	Mary Lyons
Arrange supervision for students	Michael Clohessy
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Eimear Griffey/ Neville Fitzpatrick
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Neville Fitzpatrick
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Mary Lyons , Michael Clohessy ,Kieran Meehan, NEPS
Inform parents	Mary Lyons , Brigid O Brien
Hold end of day staff briefing	All

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	Mary Lyons
Meet whole staff	Mary Lyons, Michael Clohessy
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Neville Fitzpatrick, Eimear Griffey
Visit the injured	Any member of team
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Margaret Molloy/ Mary Lyons
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Mary Lyons /Michael Clohessy
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers Neville Fitzpatrick, Eimear Griffey
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Mary Lyons
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Team
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Team
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	065-7072180
Community Guard- Deirdre Scanlon	087-6758756
Fire Brigade	065-6846302
Local GPs	Dr. Wheeler 065-7071207 Dr. Kelleher 065-7081234
HSE	Ennistymon Health Centre 065-707114 Ennis Health Centre 065-6868090
Hospital	065-6824464
<u>Social Work and Child Protection Services</u> Social Work Department, River House, Gort Rd, Ennis	065 686 3907
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	065 670 6601
School Inspector	
NEPS Psychologist NEPS South Western Region	(065) 686 5904
DES	
INTO/ASTI/TUI	
Clergy	Parish Office 065-7072053 Fr. Cummins 065-7071063
State Exams Commission	

**Sample letter requesting consent for
Involvement of Outside Professionals.**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following the recent (tragedy/ death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to boys either in small groups or on a one to one basis, and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate

Your son has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (X). If you would like your son to receive this support, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school.

Principal.

I/We consent to having our son meet with

I understand that my son may meet x in an individual or group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____.

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____.

Signed: _____

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parents/Guardians

The school has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our students/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury

(Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy.

(Elaborate as appropriate)

It is possible that your son may have some feelings that he may like to discuss with you. You can help your son by taking time to listen to him and encouraging him to express his feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to his age.

If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at Meánscoil na mBráithre

Principal.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ 07-02-2018

Signed: Bridgette Meehan
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed :Mary Lyons
Principal

Date: 07-03-2018

Date: 07-03-2018

Date of next review: _March 2019

