

**CRITICAL INCIDENT  
MANAGEMENT POLICY**  
**Scóil Mhuire na mBráithre**  
**CBS Primary Tralee 18247K**  
**An Edmund Rice School**



*CBS Primary Tralee* 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 *Brendan Smith*, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

### **Review and Research**

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie) including:

Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)

- 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 201 5)
- **Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016) R19-21 P.79-90**

### **Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'**

The staff and management of *CBS Primary Tralee* 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 affect 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 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**

*Through collaboration with staff the following are examples of how we keep school community members safe:*

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard at 8:30am
- Front gate locked during school hours
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the playground – code of behaviour is regularly referenced
- **Risk assessment and safety statements**

## **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of CBS Primary Tralee 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.

- 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
- The school has developed links with a **range of external support/mental emergency providers health, agencies.**
- 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. See DES Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary) or 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)



- 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 on 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](http://www.education.ie)
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. HSCL) 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.
- A number of policies and strategies also support the psychological safety of the pupils and staff.
- • The Child Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
- • Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, addressing areas such as grief and loss, communication skills, conflict management, substance misuse etc. Particularly Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Friends etc.
- • Access to resources and support e.g. INTO Employee Assistance Service, NEPS Resources etc.

### **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. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. 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.

**Team leader:** *Brendan Smith*

#### **Role**

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

**Garda liaison** *Brendan Smith*

#### **Role**

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

**Staff liaison** *Brendan Smith*

#### **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 students impacted by the event
- 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** *Maggie Griffin*

#### **Role**

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Maintains student contact records
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

#### **Community/agency liaison** *Maggie Griffin*

##### **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** *Maggie Griffin+ HSCL (Deirdre McDermott)*

##### **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** *Brendan Smith*

##### **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** *Joan Hill*

##### **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** *Joan Hill*

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.

*Joan Hill* 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 *CBS Primary Tralee* 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.

<b>Critical Incident Rooms</b>	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
Staffroom	Main room for meeting staff
Deputy Principal's Office/Nurture Room	Meetings with students
Deputy Principal's Office	Meetings with parents
Nurture Room	Meetings with media
Deputy Principal's Office	Individual sessions with students
HSCL Room	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 Maggie Griffin. The plan will be updated annually.

Signed: *Anne O'Callaghan*

Dated: *15/04/2024*

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Brendan Smith	0874020234/0863566755
Garda liaison	Brendan Smith	0874020234/0863566755
Staff liaison	Brendan Smith	0874020234/0863566755
Student liaison	Maggie Griffin	0874077673/0864119660 087 3398365
Community liaison	Maggie Griffin+HSCL	0874077673/0864119660 HSCL 087 3398365
Parent liaison	Maggie Griffin+HSCL	0874077673/0864119660 HSCL 087 3398365
Media liaison	Brendan Smith	0874020234/0863566755
Administrator	Joan Hill	0876386917/0877917190

### Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Brendan Smith
Who, what, when, where?	Brendan Smith
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Brendan Smith
Contact external agencies	Maggie Griffin
Arrange supervision for students-if incident happens during the school day	Maggie Griffin
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Brendan Smith
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Maggie Griffin
Compile a list of directly impacted students	Maggie Griffin+HSCL
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Brendan Smith
Inform parents	Maggie Griffin
Hold end of day staff briefing	Brendan Smith



## Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Brendan Smith
Meet external agencies	Maggie Griffin
Meet whole staff	Brendan Smith
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Brendan Smith
Visit the injured	Brendan Smith
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements if required	Brendan Smith
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service if required	Brendan Smith
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	Maggie Griffin
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Staff & Parents
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family if required	HSCL
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	066 7102300 Tralee Garda Station
Hospital	University Hospital Kerry 066 718400
Fire Brigade	066 7123111 Tralee Fire Station
Local GPs	066 7121792 Fairies Cross Medical Centre
HSE	066 7184500 HSE Tralee
Community Care Team	066 7120056 Cumann Iosaef Community Care Centre
Child and Family Centre	066 7127831 Shanakill Family Resource Centre
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	066 7104857 CAMHS Tralee
School Inspector	Gerard Quirke 01 889 6553
NEPS Psychologist	Orlaith Griffin 086 8956625
DES	090 6483600
INTO	01 8047700 Head Office
Clergy	066 712552 St. John's Parish Centre 086 2440556 Tralee Mosque
State Exams Commission	0906 442851
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057