

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN



Our mission is: “To be an inclusive and caring community. To nurture all our talents. To foster awareness of spirituality. To respect differences and develop individuality. And to empower our students to meet the challenges of education and life.”

Bunscoil Chríost Rí aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. 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. To this end a Critical Incident Management Plan(CIMP) has been drawn up.

The aim of the CIMP is to help staff and school management 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.

The plan comprises the following sections:

- Defining the critical incident
- Goals and objectives of the CIMP
- Preparation for a Critical Incident
- Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident
- Recovery and Follow-up
- Dealing with the aftermath of a tragic death
- Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

The staff and management of Bunscoil Chríost Rí 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 or other unexpected death
- Criminal incidents to building through fire, flood, vandalism etc
- Major accidents, serious injury
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community
- Sexual, physical and psychological abuse
- The disappearance of a student from home or school.

CIMP January 2024

Goals/ Objectives

- To enable school personnel to respond to a critical incident in an informed manner. An informed and prepared school community is more likely to respond effectively to a critical incident.
- To encourage positive and appropriate interventions in a normal, familiar environment which can allow the school to be a supportive community in which a critical incident can be managed.
- To enable the school to cope more effectively in the event of a critical incident and help to maintain a sense of control.
- To recognise which incidents are critical for the school community.
- To act as a school policy for dealing with emergencies.
- To establish positive working relationships with outside agencies thus enabling full and effective collaboration in the event of a critical incident.

Physical Safety

Regular fire drills occur

Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked

Supervision in the school yard

School doors locked during class time

Rules of the playground

Psychological safety

The staff and management of Bunscoil Chríost Rí 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 Safeguarding Statement, Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available • Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, TUSLA, DES • 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 Circular 0022/2010 (Primary)
- The school has a clear policy on anti-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 document published in 2007 for primary schools. This document is available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. support teacher), 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.

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: Eoin Fitzpatrick

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;
- Liaises with the bereaved family
- Liaises with the Gardaí
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared
- 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(Employee Assistance Scheme) and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison: Dan O'Connell/Ken Crewe

Role

- 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: Eoin Fitzpatrick/Ivan O Mahony

Role

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents & Friends Association
 - 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: Len McCarthy/Catrina Horgan/Ivan O Mahony

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 Eoin Fitzpatrick/Arlene Wiseman/Kevin O Donoghue

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 PDST, CPSMA & relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Record keeping: Michelle O'Shea, Imelda O'Callaghan, Mary O'Donoghue, Yvonne Kelly

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. Michelle O'Shea, Imelda O'Callaghan, Mary O'Donoghue will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Preparation for a Critical Incident

This section presents the various processes that the school undergoes to prepare for potential crises. Critical Incident Management Team – present team consists of Mr. Fitzpatrick, Mr O'Connell, Mr McCarthy, Mrs Horgan, Mr Crewe, Mrs Wiseman, Mr O'Mahony, Mr O'Donoghue, Ms Kelly, [Mary O'Donoghue](#) [Michelle O'Shea](#) and [Imelda O'Callaghan](#).

- Maintaining an up to date list of contacts
- Compiling emergency information for school trips
- External liaison with agencies such as emergency services, DES, NEPS, Health Board etc
- Parents, distressed visitors, and the media
- Internal care of staff and students
- Maintain administration
- Telephone available for incoming and outgoing calls
- Rooms made available for debriefing, parents, quiet room, counselling, etc.
- Log of events, letters to parents, and telephone calls
- Dealing with normal school business
- Contact information for all staff, including substitute teachers, and pupils
- Consider emergency supplies required
- Make a copy of the plan of the school marking doors, escape doors, toilets etc.
- These can be put up in view of the school
- Drill /Evacuation procedures

- Creating a curriculum for coping within the school – empowering the children by providing them with means of coping through classroom activities suggested in the SPHE curriculum, such as circle time, cooperative games, discussions and language activities, creative writing, quiet time, drama activities, puppets, art, music, poetry etc.

Dealing with the Aftermath of a Tragic Death

Introduction

When a person dies of a tragic death, those who know the person experience a deep sense of shock. The unexpectedness of the death and the taboo associated with it can leave a school community feeling unsure of how to proceed. Again, the key to this is planning.

The following is a guide to how the bereaved family, school staff and students can be supported: Family

- A staff member should contact the family to acknowledge their grief and loss.
- Organise a home visit by two staff members
- Consult with the family regarding the appropriate support from the school e.g. at the funeral service.

Staff

- Convene a staff meeting to brief staff on the details. It may be necessary to do this in two shifts therefore ensuring staff are available for support to students and for cover at all times. Remember to include auxiliary and ancillary staff.
- Students need to be with people they know and trust. If possible, it is better if the teachers provide support for the students. The external “expert” visitors should therefore be primarily used to brief teachers.
- Help teachers to prepare for breaking the news to students. Close friends and relatives of the deceased in the school need to be told first. This needs to be done in a private location.
- Outline possible reactions.
- Give them information from the school's pack on dealing with students in the classroom and on the reactions to grief.
- Identify high risk students and what supports are available.
- Remind them of the school's CIMP.
- Decide on a strategy to deal with queries from parents/ guardians. Prepare a letter setting out the facts, how the school is dealing with the events and how the parents or guardians can support their child.
- Ensure a quiet place can be made available for students/staff.
- Hold further staff briefing during the day to update information, to offer support and to further identify high risk students.

Students

- Give the facts as they are known
- Create a safe and supportive space for students where they can share their reactions and feelings.
- Advise them on their possible reactions over the next few days.
- Avoid glorifying the victim and sensationalising a tragic death
- Advise the students of the support that is available to them.
- Take any talk of tragic death and provide support or refer immediately.
- Students may wish to confide in and seek support from each other rather than adults. Facilitate this if appropriate and if it is possible. However, information should be provided about how to get further help if they, or their friends, should need it.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident (See Chart below)

Team Meeting Agenda: Team meetings should be held every morning in the days following an incident.

- 1 - Share full details of the event.
- 2- Discuss what agencies are already involved and what agencies need to be involved.
- 3 - Phone lines: What line will be open etc.
- 4 - Media: Discuss wording and agree statements/Look at what media outlets will be involved.
- 5 - Communication with the wider school body. Details needed to be given etc.
- 6 - Plan procedures for day 1.
- 7 - Staff meeting: How will it be facilitated?
- 8 - Delegation of responsibilities - Review of roles and responsibilities.
- 9 - Telephone scripts will be written.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Staff and Management of Bunscoil Chriost Rí 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. Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden 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:
Staff Room	Main room for meeting staff
Nano N Hall	Meetings with students
Principal's Office, Board Room	Meetings with parents
Board Room	Meetings with media
Board Room	Individual sessions with students
Principal's Office	Meetings with other visitors

Ready to go packs:

Kept in Principal's office - CIMP Folder

- 1 - Aladdin will be used for all contact details of staff, students and parents.
- 2 - Contact numbers for all emergency numbers will be in the packs.
- 3 - Log of actions sheet will be in the pack.
- 4 - Telephone scripts will be decided upon at first CIMP meeting
- 5 - Basic plan of action procedures will be in the pack

Critical Incident Management Team	
Role	Name Phone
Team leader:	Eoin Fitzpatrick
Garda liaison	Eoin Fitzpatrick/Ivan O'Mahony- Anglesea Street 999 or 021 4552000
Staff liaison	Dan O'Connell/Ken Crewe
Student liaison	Len McCarthy Ken Crewe Kevin O'Donoghue

Community liaison	Eoin Fitzpatrick/Dan O Connell
Parent liaison	Len McCarthy/Catrina Horgan/Ivan O'Mahony
Media liaison	Eoin Fitzpatrick/Arlene Wiseman/Yvonne Kelly
Administrators	Michelle O'Shea/Imelda O'Callaghan/Mary O'Donoghue

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Eoin
Who, what, when, where?	Dan/Len/Ivan
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Dan
Contact external agencies	Eoin/Catrina/Kevin

Arrange supervision for students	Ken/Arlene/Yvonne
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Eoin/Dan
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Ken/Len
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Ken/Len/Catrina/Yvonne
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Eoin/Kevin
Inform parents Hold end of day staff briefing	Dan/Catrina/Michelle/Ivan Eoin/Dan

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 Staff Room
Arrange support for students, staff, parents
Visit the injured
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements

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 South Lee
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family
Decide on memorials and anniversaries BOM/Staff, parents and students

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda - Anglesea Street	999 or 021 - 4522000
Hospital Cork University Hospital	021 -492000
Fire Brigade	999 or 112
Local GPs Dr. Eilis Murphy HSE South Lee Social Services, North Lee Social Services	021- 4317226 021-4923001 021 - 4927000
Community Care Team Child and Family Centre Tusla (Duty Social Worker) Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	021 - 4923001 021- 4226501

NEPS Psychologist Gearoidin Farrell	021-4536383 087- 9129186
DES	057-9324461
School Inspector - Kay Foley	kay_foley@education.gov.ie 087-6832657
INTO	01-8047700

Clergy Fr. Noel O' Sullivan	086-3595745
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Short Term Actions:

a) Convene

- Establish accurate facts.
- Refer to the school's Critical incident Management Policy and to Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools' document.
- Convene Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) meeting virtually. • Conduct an initial assessment of the incident, decide what level of response is required (guidelines pgs. 20–21) and agree an Action Plan. • Contact appropriate agencies, e.g. Board of Management etc. (R21). • Decide who needs to be contacted directly:- staff/students/parents/others and by what means:- phone/email/text/letter/website notice. See R2/3 for sample notices. • Identify vulnerable students (see risk factors pg. 25) and consider how to connect with them:- phone call to parents and/or speaking to students directly.
- Consider how to communicate with the bereaved family whilst physical distancing measures are in place:- phone calls, writing a card or letter.

b) Notify staff and parents

- Agree and test available technologies as a means of communication, • Agree a telephone tree for contacting staff and advise staff of the initial Action Plan.
- Notify parents using agreed means.
- Remember to respect family privacy and avoid references to the cause of death.
- Bear in mind that it is not usual practice for a school to inform the school community of the death of a parent.
- Manage social media as per guidelines (R22). Draft a media statement if necessary (R4).
- Distribute resource page from this document as appropriate, 'For parents sharing sad news with their child'.

c) Connecting with staff

- Agree on a telephone tree for contacting staff.
- Make separate contact with staff who may be vulnerable. • Remind staff of the availability of the Inspire Service (ph. 1800 411057). • Agree a time for a follow-up staff meeting for updates and reflection on shared experiences. • Draw teachers attention to Teacher Wellbeing and Self Care during the Covid-19 school closure
- Share with staff any resources being forwarded to parents. * Section 4: Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

d) Connecting with students

- In accordance with school policy, some staff may decide to link directly with students via telephone, video link or email. Post Primary staff should refer to DES document on 'Continuity of Guidance Counselling-Guidelines for schools providing online support for students' .
- Remind students that maintaining communication is important for wellbeing, and encourage them to keep in touch with close family and friends, whilst observing HSE guidelines. Remind students and staff that others are available to provide support.
- Reassure students of their resilience and ability to cope. Encourage them to think of times and ways that they have coped in the past and to identify attributes that have helped them during difficult times.

e) Bereavement rituals: Funeral restrictions and alternative goodbyes

- Designated CIMT member(s) should liaise with the bereaved family regarding the funeral service and, when appropriate, a memorial service. Remind students that they are not alone in their grief and that everyone shares the loss of not being able to participate in our usual rituals and togetherness; i.e. visiting the family, attending funerals, etc.
 - Reassure students that the bereaved family understands the need to comply with current Public Health restrictions and that a commemorative service may take place at a later date.
 - Invite students to think of alternative ways to express sympathy, e.g. sending a card to family (see Winston's Wish for alternative goodbyes). Remind students to be considerate and sensitive when posting messages on any social media platforms. RIP.ie has a message condolence facility.
 - School leaders may consider facilitating a school platform for compiling messages of condolences/wishes to share with family, monitored for sensitivity by school personnel.
 - Encourage students to participate individually, but collectively, in any bereavement ritual being organised, e.g. a streamed funeral service, lighting a candle at a particular time during the ceremony, playing music, etc.
- * Section 4: Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

Day 2 and beyond:

Action Plan for Critical Incident Management Team
Medium Term and Follow Up Actions

f) Review

- Convene a further Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) meeting virtually to review what has been done and to identify new tasks needed.
- Update staff virtually on any new information.

g) Continue to provide support

- Continue to link in with students, especially more vulnerable students.
- Remind students that others are available to provide support, e.g. teachers, guidance counsellors, close family, friends and/or online support.
- Advise students to use practical approaches to manage anxiety. Share DES resources and advice for young people during COVID-19:- using breathing techniques, relaxation techniques, coping statements, practising yoga, doing exercise, etc.
- Support students to create action plans and to break down problems into small, realistic and manageable steps.
- Encourage students to try to spot any unhelpful thoughts and to 'reframe' them to more helpful thoughts (e.g. - 'That car was unsafe, but not all cars are unsafe').
- Encourage them to identify positive, self-soothing strategies with prompts such as 'What will help?' or 'What can I do now?' For further resources, see www.yourmentalhealth.ie.
- Advise parents and students against making big life changes or hasty decisions at this challenging time.
- Advise parents to make a referral to their GP should their child show signs of severe emotional distress (R14).

h) Follow Up Actions: (See Guidelines Section 6, Pg. 30)

- Discuss and review the status of any student referrals made to outside agencies.
- Prepare for how your school might support all students and staff when schools reopen, in particular those who have been bereaved.
- Evaluate your school's response to the critical incident and amend your Critical Incident Management Policy, as appropriate.

* Section 5&6 : Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

Resources

Below is a sample of online resources to support young people who have experienced loss and grief. These resources are intended to complement NEPS' existing publication 'Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS

Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools'

a) Coronavirus and Bereavement

The Irish Hospice Foundation have developed practical and easily accessible materials for the Irish context, and include resources and supports available from organisations such as the HSE, DES and websites such as RIP.ie. There are also topic specific resources addressing issues such as 'Planning a funeral in exceptional times', 'Grieving in exceptional times' and 'Helping children grieve during COVID-19 restrictions' Winston's Wish is a British childhood bereavement charity with a very comprehensive website. Their COVID-19 page has useful resources, such as 'How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible', 'Telling a child someone has died from coronavirus' and 'Managing grief in isolation'

b) General Bereavement

Rainbows is a free, voluntary service that supports children and young people with separation and bereavement. Support programmes for children and young people at both primary and post-primary level are available for students three months (minimum) after the experience of a loss. Further information and resources are available at their website.

Barnardos provide wide-ranging services to families, including support around bereavement. There is a downloadable e-book and links to various services available on their website.

The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network is a member organisation where families, professionals and schools can obtain information, guidance and support from various professionals. In addition to resources and supports, courses are available for professionals to develop their skillset in supporting bereavement.

c) Suicide and Bereavement

The National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) is the body responsible for co-ordination and implementation of the national strategy for suicide prevention. As well as general information and resources, the site includes details on regional contacts for Suicide Resource Officers/Samaritans etc., details of various training programmes, and how professionals can access 'Urgent Help' at times of crisis.

Headspace is an Australian organisation for youth mental health. Their website has very practical materials for supporting those who have lost a loved one through suicide.

d) SEN and Bereavement

Mencap have materials for explain loss and death to people with learning disabilities and includes literature for specific aspects such as 'What can I do to feel better' and 'Going to a funeral'

6 Resources: For parents sharing sad news with their child

The following NEPS resources may be helpful for parents:

Children's Understanding and Reaction to Death (R6)

Stages of Grief (R7)

How to cope when something terrible happens (R8)

Reactions to a Critical Incident

Ways To Help Your Child Through This Difficult Time (R12).

Other Recommended Resources

Barnardos provide a wide-ranging service to families including support around bereavement. Downloadable e-books both parents and children are available on their website as well as links to various services. Barnardos also provide a children's bereavement helpline service, for members of the public seeking information and support in relation to bereavement. Telephone 01 473 2110 (from 10am to 12pm, Monday to Thursday)

The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network is a member organisation where families, professionals and schools can obtain information, guidance and support from various professionals. In addition to resources and supports, courses are available for professionals to develop their skillset in supporting bereavement.

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'Going to a funeral'

Supports for younger people

Childline (ISPCC) is Ireland's 24-hour national listening service for young people

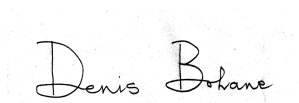
up to the age of 18. Freephone 1800 666 666 (any time, day or night). Text 50101 (from 10am to 4pm every day). Chat online at www.childline.ie (from 10am to 4pm every day).

The YourMentalHealth.ie website has information on all mental health supports and services available nationally & locally from the HSE and its funded partners. You can also call the freephone YourMentalHealth Information Line to find supports and services: 1800 111 888 (any time, day or night).

Ratified by Board of Management on: January 30th 2024 .

Review Date: January 2025.

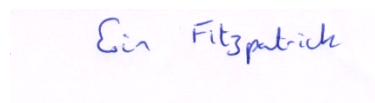
Signed:



Chairperson:

Date: 30th January 2024

Signed:



Principal