

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Killeen N.S. 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 *Bríd Grady*, 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 and 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 Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *Killeen N.S.* 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 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 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

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Play areas are zoned for safety reasons
- Main school entrance door locks automatically and a buzzer system is in place
- A code is required for entry and exit to our special class, Sunbeams

- A supervision rota is in place for break times and school dismissal
- Staff receive regular first aid training
- Lone workers inform Bríd Grady or Laura Kilcoyne
- Pupils leaving early only released by a member of staff when authorized adult arrives.
- Pupils are not released into the care of person unknown to school staff without checking with a parent
- First Aid box maintained and kept in cubby inside main entrance
- Pupil emergency plans are on display in staffroom. Medication available in relevant classroom, staffroom & cupboard (under lock and key if required)
- All staff are garda vetted. Teacher remains in the room with an external provider providing a service

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Killeen N.S.* 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
- RSE, Stay Safe, Friends for Life & Weaving Well-Being programmes are taught in line with the curricular guidelines
- 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
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary pupil are available to staff
- 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 Psychologist, School Inspector, Parish Priest (Fr. Mattie), CAMHS, Family, Community & Resource Centre (Westport).
- 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
- 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. These documents are available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or 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: *Brid Grady (Laura Kilcoyne in absence of team leader)*

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 *Brid Grady*

Role

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

Staff liaison *Laura Kilcoyne*

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 *Barbara O'Grady*

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

Role Sonya Maher

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents 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

Role *Ciara Bourke*

- 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 *Mairéad Staunton*

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

Administrator *Louise Jennings*

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 *Louise Jennings*

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.

Louise Jennings 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 *Killeen N.S.* 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:
Staffroom	Main room for meeting staff
Relevant classroom	Meetings with students
SET Room	Meetings with parents
The Office	Meetings with media
SET Room	Individual sessions with students
The Office	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff and available on request. 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 Laura Kilcoyne. The plan will be updated annually in September.

Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Bríd Grady	087 2639452
Garda liaison	Bríd Grady	087 2639452
Staff liaison	Laura Kilcoyne	087 9353741
Student liaison	Barbara O'Grady	087 2820671
Community liaison	Sonya Maher	087 9953225
Parent liaison	Ciara Bourke	0871691354
Media liaison	Mairéad Staunton	087 2328460
Administrator	Louise Jennings	086 1659718

Emergency Contact List

Agency	Contact Numbers
Garda	098 66055
Hospital	094 9021733
Fire Brigade	999
Local GPs	098 66681
Eircode	F28 X2D6
HSE CAMHS Family, Community & Resources Centre Westport Community Mental Health Centre	094 9022333 094 904 2656 098 24419 098 50142
School Inspector	Niamh Ní Fhoighil 087 9705716
NEPS Psychologist	Marie Solan 01 8893530765
DES	090 6483600
INTO	01 8047700
Parish Priest (Fr. Mattie)	087 2501835
Chairperson (Mairéad Staunton)	087 2328460
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Killeen N.S. CIMT Action Plan

Short-term Actions - Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Bríd Grady
Who, what, when, where?	Bríd Grady
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Bríd Grady
Contact external agencies	Sonya Maher
Arrange supervision for students	Barbara O' Grady
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)	Barbara O' Grady
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Laura Kilcoyne
Contact/visit the bereaved family	Bríd Grady Ciara Bourke
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Mairéad Staunton
Inform parents	Ciara Bourke
Hold end of day staff briefing	Laura Kilcoyne

Medium-term Actions- Day 2 and Subsequent Days

Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Bríd Grady
Meet external agencies	Sonya Maher
Meet whole staff	Laura Kilcoyne
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Laura Kilcoyne Barbara O'Grady Ciara Bourke
Visit the injured	Bríd Grady Ciara Bourke
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Bríd Grady
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	All staff
Make decisions about school closures	BOM

Follow-up-beyond 72 hours

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Bríd Grady
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Barbara O'Grady
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Relevant class teacher
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

Mairéad Staunton

9-10-23