



**Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Fheargus,
An Gleann,
Co. Luimnigh.**

**St.Fergus' National School,
Glin,
Co. Limerick.
Tel:(068) 34344
E-Mail : glencorbry.ias@eircom.net**

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PLAN

Introductory Statement:

The Key to managing a critical incident is planning. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) strongly advises schools to develop a policy in relation to critical incident response. NEPS also encourages schools to develop a Critical Incident Management Plan, outlining who will do what in the event of a tragedy.

Defining a Critical Incident:

The Board of Management and staff of St. Fergus' National School recognize 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.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

St. Fergus' National School is a co-educational, Catholic primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the spiritual, intellectual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are fostered.

Our school aims to protect the well being of our students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

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.
- Pupil supervision at break times.
- Safe dismissal plan at 3.00 p.m.
- Clearly stated playground rules.

Psychological Safety:

The Board of Management of St. Fergus' 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.

For example:

- 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.
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Staff are mindful of children who might be at risk. Parents are invited to discuss teacher concerns and where appropriate a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves. The Staff Liaison person will provide details on how to contact the Employee Assistance Service (EAS).

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.

Roles:

- Team Leader/Garda Liaison/Media Liaison: Deirdre Kennelly.
- Staff Liaison/Student Liaison/Parent Liaison: Mary Adams.
- Administrator/Community or Agency Liaison: Geraldine O Donovan

Team Leader:

- 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.

Garda Liaison:

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

Media Liaison:

- 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, i.e. INTO and CPSMA or local Diocesan Office.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management).

Staff Liaison:

- 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:

- Coordinates information about students they may be concerned about.
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately).
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder).
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

Parent Liaison:

- 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.
- 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:

- 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/sample letters are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation.
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes.
- Photocopies materials needed.
- Maintains records.

Community/agency Liaison:

- 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.

In the absence of the team leader, Deirdre Kennelly , the role of team leader will fall to Mary Adams.

Record Keeping:

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.

The School Secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations:

The Board of Management and staff of St. Fergus' National School have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, 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 Room:

In the event of a critical incident, the office/LSRT room will be used to meet staff, students, parents and media. The staff room will be used for individual sessions with students or to receive other visitors.

Consultation & Communication regarding the plan:

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent 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, Deirdre Kennelly .

The plan will be updated annually in October.

The policy and plan was ratified by the Board of Management on the 14th December, 2011.

Signed:

JACK DUNNE,
Chairperson, Board of Management.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS – DAY 1

TASK	NAME
Gather accurate information	Deirdre Kennelly
Who, what, when, where?	Deirdre Kennelly
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Deirdre Kennelly
Contact external agencies	Deirdre Kennelly
Arrange supervision for students	Caroline Gee
Hold staff meeting	All Staff
Agree schedule for the day	Caroline Gee
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Caroline Gee
Compile a list of vulnerable students	
Contact/visit the bereaved family	Caroline Gee
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Deirdre Kennelly
Inform parents	Caroline Gee
Hold end of day staff briefing	Caroline Gee

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS – (Day 2 and following days)

Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team Leader
Meet external agencies	Deirdre Kennelly
Meet whole staff	All Staff

Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Caroline Gee
Visit the injured	Caroline Gee
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Caroline Gee
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Deirdre Kennelly
Make decisions about school closure	Board of Management

FOLLOW UP – beyond 72 hours

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class Teacher
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Deirdre Kennelly
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Deirdre Kennelly
Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family	Caroline Gee
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	Board of Management/Staff, Parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Board of Management/Staff.

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST:

(To be displayed in staff-room, school office and Principal’s room).

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
GARDA	068-34101
HOSPITAL – Limerick Regional	061-301111

- Tralee General	061-482120 (A&E) 066-7126222
FIRE BRIGADE	999 or 112
LOCAL GPS:- Dr. Cassidy Dr. Lehane, Tarbert Dr. Murphy, Athea	068- 068-36433 068-42271
HSE, Foynes HSE, Limerick Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services	069-65542 061-483718/483337 061-483388
SCHOOL INSPECTOR	061-430004
NEPS	069-78403
NCSE	01-8892700
DES:- DUBLIN OFFICE CORNAMADDY OFFICE	01-8896400 09064-83600
INTO	1850708708
PARISH PRIEST – Fr. Crawford	068-26897/087-2218078
DIOCESAN OFFICE	061-315856
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057

STUDENT CONTACT RECORD:

This form can be used by school staff or external agency staff to record the details of students seen following a critical incident. This information should be collated centrally.

Name of staff member: _____ .

			OUTCOME
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