



*St. Anne's National School*  
*Scoil Áine Naofa*

# **Critical Incidents Policy**

**A policy outlining procedures regarding in St  
Anne's School 17674B**

20

# **Critical Incident Policy for St Anne's School, Ardclough- Sept 20**

## **Introduction:**

In St Anne's School we aim to protect the well being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and well catered for environment as outlined in our school philosophy statement.

The BoM through the Principal, the Staff and the Parents Support Group has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP). They have established a Critical Incidents Management Team to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

## **Aim of the Plan:**

The aim of the CIMP is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident and that clear steps and responsibilities are outlined to facilitate this. It aims, most importantly, to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff to help them cope with the demands of such situations, at the time and going forward.

## **What is a Critical Incident?**

'A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school'.

## **Examples:**

- Death, major illness/outbreak of disease
- Criminal incidents
- Intruders
- Major accidents, serious injury
- Suicide
- Civil unrest, war
- Fire, natural and technological disaster
- Disappearance of student from home or school
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.
- World events that may affect the student body and/or staff.
- Death of a public figure

In drawing up this plan and in its implementation the following resources are taken into consideration:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)
- School Policies (eg Health and safety; SPHE Curriculum Plan etc)
- Responding to Critical Incidents during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions during COvid

## **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, as outlined below

### **(a) Physical safety**

In St Anne's a Health and Safety Plan is drawn up which includes reference to the following

- Revised entry and exit procedures to support distancing
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard- team of teachers and SNAs
- ~~School doors locked during class time~~
- Rules of the playground and classroom – See Code of Behaviour

### **(b) Psychological safety**

The management and staff of St Anne'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 and decision making Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision
- Teachers are made aware of any issues for children or anxieties during Covid restrictions as forwarded by parents
- Any children who are high-risk and remaining at home will be supported by the class teacher and SET
- 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 developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, Primary Care Teams, CAMHS, local clergy etc
- 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
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves (Dignity at Work Policy)

See appendices- documents to support bereaved child

### **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.

### **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. These will be collected/stored by the Team Leader/Principal

### **Confidentiality and good name considerations**

Management and staff of St Anne'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.

### **Actions/Response Incident**

In the event of an incident, the Principal/CIMT will review the incident and assess the response level required (NEPS Guildelines)

#### **STEP 1**

What type of response is needed?

- **Response Level 1:** the death of a student or staff member who was terminally ill; the death of parent/sibling; a fire in school not resulting in serious injury; serious damage to school property.
- **Response Level 2:** the sudden death of a student or staff member.
- **Response Level 3:** an accident/event involving a number of students; a violent death; an incident with a high media profile or involving a number of schools.

A plan of action will be developed in line with Response Level (as above). This will deal with

- Communication
- Support
- Structures

See Appendix 1 for suggested actions- subject to nature of incident.

### Critical Incident Management Team: updated Sept 2020

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
<b>Team leader:</b>	<i>Mary Manley (Principal)</i>	
<b>Communication Role</b> - <b>Media</b> - <b>Garda</b> - <b>Community</b>	<i>Mary Manley (Principal)</i>  <i>Aoife O Connor (Deputy Principal)</i> <i>Barry O Leary Acting 20/21</i>	
<b>Staff liaison</b>	<i>Adele Owens</i>	
<b>Student liaison</b>	<i>Class teachers</i>	
<b>Parent liaison</b> <b>PSG rep</b>	<i>Chair of PSG (changes annually)</i>	
<b>BOM rep/Contact</b>	<i>John Buckley, Chairperson</i>	
<i>OTHER</i>		

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes (*subject to change depending on use of room and context of incident*)

Critical Incident Rooms	
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Staffroom</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Classroom or Room 2</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Room 2</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Office</i>	Meetings with media
<i>SEN room</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Office/Room 2</i>	Meetings with other visitors

\*\* setting up a quiet room for reflection will be explored at the time and subject to organisation/allocation of classrooms in any given year

**Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

All staff were consulted 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 as part of their induction  
The plan will be updated annually

**APPENDIX 1: Outline of possible required actions – subject to individual incident/contexts**

**Short term actions – Day 1**

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	

<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	<b>All staff</b>
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	
<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	Class teacher and SEN team
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	
<b>Inform parents</b>	
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	

### 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	
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	
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
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM



## Appendix 2: POLICY REVIEW

### My school's story ....

Take a moment now to share a time when your school had to deal with a critical incident.

- How was it managed?
- Who were the main members of your team?
- What did you do well as a school ?
- What could you have done better?

## Checklist for Reviewing / planning your policy and plan

- Has serious consideration been given to the school's approach to prevention?
- Has the school defined a critical incident and explored clear examples?
- Have key roles been clearly identified and the tasks clearly outlined?
- Are the personnel suitable? What is their availability?
- Has each member compiled their emergency pack? Have you provided support and time here?
- Has contact been made with external agencies?
- Is the Emergency Contact list up to date and complete?
- Are letters and press releases readily available? On headed paper? Ready for adaptation?
- Has all staff been consulted about the policy / plan
- Set the date for review?
- Where will copies of the plan be kept – so that is easy to access ?

### APPENDIX 3: EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	01-6667800
Hospital	045-849500
Fire Brigade	Telephone 045 454800 Out of Hours 1890 500 333
Local GPs	01-6288044
TUSLA	<a href="tel:017718500">(01) 771 8500</a>
Community Care Team- Celbridge Primary Care	01-5130100
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	<b>HSE</b> <b>Callsave: <a href="tel:1850241850">1850 24 1850</a></b> <b>Phone: <a href="tel:0416850300">041 6850300</a></b>
School Inspector Stephanie Fitzpatrick	<a href="mailto:Stephanie_fitpatrick@education.gov.ie">Stephanie_fitpatrick@education.gov.ie</a>
NEPS Psychologist	Critical Incident- 076-1108620 Ailsa Seoighe-087-4553932
DES	<b>Phone:</b> (01) 889 6400 Dublin <b>Phone:</b> (090) 648 3600 Athlone
INTO	+353 1 804 7700 LoCall: 1850 708 708
Clergy	Fr Matt: 086-8276442 Office: 045-877880
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
Other agencies- supporting schools & families Rainbows	01-4734175

- **Contacts List to be on display in office and as part of CIMT pack**

- See also Directory of Service ICBN in CIMT pack

#### **APPENDIX 4- References; Useful documents; Website; Support Resources**

*Folder contains letters/templates that may be used for notifications and record keeping.*

#### **References:**

- Standards for supporting Bereaved Children & Young People A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT DEVELOPED BY THE IRISH CHILDHOOD BEREAVEMENT NETWORK
- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)
  
- **Websites :**
  - <http://www.childhoodbereavement.ie/>
  - [www.rainbowsireland.ie/](http://www.rainbowsireland.ie/)

#### **Children's Books**

- 'The Resolving Bereavement Grief with Your Child book'- Mc Auslan & Nicholson
- 'Death' Janine Amos

Resources on order:

- A Sky of Diamonds
- I Miss You
- 'Grief in Children- A Handbook for Adults-

#### **Documents for Use at time of Critical Incident:**

- Sample letters- parents, notices
- Supporting a Child at Time of Bereavement- fact sheet
- Going back to School – fact sheet