

Critical Incident Policy for Scoil Aonghusa CNS

Scoil Aonghusa Community National School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Our mission is to provide a new model of primary education that reflects Ireland in the 21st Century. Scoil Aonghusa CNS provides a welcome to each child in the community we serve and create learning opportunities in a setting of diversity and inclusion. Our school caters for the physical, academic, social, emotional and spiritual needs of children within the school day in a supportive and caring environment.

The Board of Management, through Aine O Connor, School Principal, 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 2016)
- 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 2015)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of Scoil Aonghusa CNS 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 - 1 each term
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked by Masterfire
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard from 8.50am
- Front School doors on keypad opening
- Health and Safety Statement
- Pupils leaving early will only be released by a member of staff when an authorised adult arrives to accompany the child from the premises via the school office. Such departures are recorded in the 'Sign Out' book.
- Pupils are not released into the care of persons unknown to school staff without checking with a parent/ guardian.
- Pupils are reminded of playground rules by staff at regular intervals in the context of our School Code of Behaviour.
- Pupils are adequately supervised at all times especially during physical activity and recess. Two members of the teaching staff supervise the children during recess.
- First Aid box maintained and kept in:
 - a) Secretary's office b) By the fire door out to the yard
- Updated contact details for parents/guardians kept on Aladdin
- Updated contact details for staff, and in case of emergency numbers kept on Aladdin
- Record of pupils who may have specific medical needs kept in a Medical Procedures Folder in the secretary's office.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Scoil Aonghusa CNS 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
- 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 – list these 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)
- 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 in 2007 for primary schools.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

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. Employee Assistance Service, NEPS: 'When Tragedy Strikes', Online Resources etc.
- Links with outside agencies e.g. National Anti-Bullying Centre, DCU, NEPS, Primary Care Psychology.

- The Anti-Bullying Policy.
- NEPS 'School Refusal' guidance
- The School Code of Discipline.

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: Aine O Connor

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: Aine O Connor

Role

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

Staff liaison: Kealan Buckley and Aine O Connor

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 (See Critical Incident Folder on Drive)
- 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: Kealan Buckley and Class Teachers

Role

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (See Critical Incident Folder on Drive)
- Maintains student contact records (R1 - See Google Drive).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison: Aine O Connor

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: Aine O Connor and Julie McNamara

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: Clare Creedon, Sarah Flynn, Suzanne Mullins

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: Aine O Connor and School Secretary

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

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

Management and staff of Scoil Aonghusa CNS 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
Classrooms	Meetings with students
Principal’s Office and SEN rooms	Meetings with parents
School Hall	Meetings with media
SEN Room	Individual sessions with students
Principal’s Office	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 Aine O Connor. The plan will be updated annually.

Signed: _____
 Chairperson of BOM

Date: 04.10.22

Signed: _____
 School Principal

Date: 04.10.22

Signed hardcopy available in the school office.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Aine O Connor	(022) 55314
Garda liaison	Aine O Connor	(022) 55314
Staff liaison	Kealan Buckley	(022) 55314
Student liaison	Kealan Buckley and Class Teachers	(022) 55314
Community liaison	Aine O Connor	(022) 55314
Parent liaison	Julie McNamara and Aine O Connor	(022) 55314
Media liaison	Clare Creedon Sarah Flynn Suzanne Mullins	Clare - 086 381 6662 Sarah - 086 4183518 Suzanne - 086 3509467
Administrator	Aine O Connor and School Secretary	(022) 55314

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Aine O Connor
Who, what, when, where?	Aine O Connor
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Aine O Connor
Contact external agencies	Aine O Connor
Arrange supervision for students	Kealan Buckley and Class Teachers

Hold staff meeting	Kealan Buckley and Aine O Connor
Agree schedule for the day	Aine O Connor
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Kealan Buckley and Class Teachers
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Kealan Buckley and Class Teachers
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Clare Creedon
Inform parents	Aine O Connor and Julie McNamara
Hold end of day staff briefing	Aine O Connor

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Aine O Connor
Meet external agencies	Aine O Connor
Meet whole staff	Kealan Buckley and Aine O Connor
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Aine O Connor and Kealan Buckley
Visit the injured	Aine O Connor and Kealan Buckley
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Aine O Connor and Julie McNamara
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Aine O Connor

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	Aine O Connor and Kealan Buckley
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Aine O Connor and Kealan Buckley
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Aine O Connor
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM and Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff and BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

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

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	(022) 31450
Hospital Mallow Local Injury Unit CUH Emergency Dept	(022) 30300 (Mallow) 021 - 4920200 (Cork)
Ambulance	112/ 999
Fire Brigade	(022) 52700 (Mallow) 112/ 999 (Emergency)
Local GPs Details of children's GPs stored on Aladdin	(022)20134 Dr. Eibhlis Brosnan (Laurels Clinic in Castlepark) MPHC The Cork Road Clinic 022-21579 The Medical Centre 022-21551 The Red House Family Practice 022-21478
South Doc	0818 355 999
HSE	022-58700
Tusla	022 54100
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Mallow, Child & Adolescent Mental Health (022) 44970



School Inspector (Una Kingston)	087 4076963
NEPS Psychologist (Eloise Daly)	087 6859977
DES	(01) 889 6400
INTO	(01) 804 7700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
IPPN	021 482 40 70
Director of Schools (Pat McKelvey)	087 9967279