

**Timahoe NS, Timahoe, Co. Laois.**

**057 8627051**

Critical Incident management

Policy & plan

*Scoil Mhuire Fatima* 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 Principal Ann Bergin*,* has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) as one element of the school’s policies and plans.

**Review and Research**

The Critical Incident Management Team (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)
* 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 Mhuire Fatima* 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**

* Fire Evacuation plan formulated
* Regular fire drills occur
* Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
* Pre-opening supervision in the school yard
* School doors locked during class time
* Keypad lock system at front door
* Rules of the playground – as per Code of Positive Behaviour
* Fob access to ASD Early Intervention Classes
* Action plan formulated by all staff – red triangle help notice on display in all classrooms and response staff trained accordingly
* Panic button in special classes, toilet and bathroom areas
* Yellow triangle action plan in the Junior Infant room. Class and appropriate response staff trained accordingly
* Front reception hatch and panic button to local Garda station
* Fire extinguishers regularly checked and sign off on
* Sign-in and sign-out folder for students arriving or departing outside of normal arrival and dismissal times.
* The rules for the playground emphasise positive behaviour and are communicated to the pupils clearly and frequently.
* Each class must play safely and fairly in their designated area and follow the directions of the supervising teacher and SNAs assisting with supervision.
* The pupils will only use the games and equipment that has been designated for lunchtime use.
* Access to the upper pitch is for classes 3rd-6th and will be weather permitting.
* Pupils will remain in their classes on wet days, engaging in assigned activities or games and be supervised by three staff one on the corridor.
* Pupils are supervised to and collected from the playground by staff on duty and/class teacher.

**Psychological safety**

The management and staff of *Scoil Mhuire Fatima* 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
* Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students
* The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – list these agencies

-NEPS

-NCSE / SENO

-PDST

-HSE

-TUSLA (Social Worker on duty)

-EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICES (Education Welfare Officer)

-CAMHS

-AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

–JUVENILLE LIAISON OFFICER

* 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 on 2007 for primary schools.
* Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (SEN Coordinator - Aoife Buckley), 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 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:** *(Ann Bergin)*

**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** *(Ann Bergin)*

**Role**

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

**Staff liaison** *(Aoife Buckley)*

**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** *(Anne Matthews)*

**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** *(Orla Mulhare)*

**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** *(Michael Mc Evoy)*

**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** *(Michael McEvoy)*

**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** *(Michael Mc Evoy & Anne Kelly)*

**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 school’s system in advance and ready for adaptation
* Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
* Photocopies materials needed
* Maintains records

**Record keeping** *(Sarah Culliton & Anne 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.

*(Sarah Culliton & Anne Kelly)* 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 Mhuire Fatima* 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.

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| **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 |
| *GP Hall (big group) / Resource room 1 (small group)* | Meetings with students |
| *GP Hall (big group) / Resource room 1 (small group)* | Meetings with parents |
| *Principal’s Meeting Room* | Meetings with media |
| *Resource Room 1* | **I**ndividual sessions with students |
| *Principal’s Meeting Room* | 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.

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 Michael Mc Evoy.

This plan will be updated and reviewed annually across the school community every November.

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| **Critical Incident Management Team** | | |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Phone** |
| **Team leader:** | *Ann Bergin* | 087-6903458 |
| **Garda liaison** | *Ann Bergin* | 087-6903458 |
| **Staff liaison** | *Aoife Booth* | 087-0943111 |
| **Student liaison** | *Anne Matthews* | 087-2979094 |
| **Community liaison** | *Orla Mulhare* | 087-6280539 |
| **Parent liaison** | *Michael Mc Evoy* | 087-9235496 |
| **Media liaison** | *Michael Mc Evoy* | 087-9235496 |
| **Administrator** | *Michael Mc Evoy & Anne Kelly* | 086-3811409 |

**Short term actions – Day 1**

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| **Task** | **Name** |
| **Gather accurate information** | Ann Bergin |
| **Who, what, when, where?** | Ann Bergin |
| **Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly** | Ann Bergin |
| **Contact external agencies** | Orla Mulhare |
| **Arrange supervision for students** | Anne Matthews |
| **Hold staff meeting** | **All staff** |
| **Agree schedule for the day** | Ann Bergin |
| **Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)** | Anne Matthews |
| **Compile a list of vulnerable students** | Anne Matthews |
| **Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media** | Michael Mc Evoy |
| **Inform parents** | Michael Mc Evoy |
| **Hold end of day staff briefing** | Aoife Buckley |

**Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)**

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| Task | Name |
| Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1 | Ann Bergin |
| Meet external agencies | Orla Mulhare |
| Meet whole staff | Aoife Buckley |
| Arrange support for students, staff, parents | Aoife Buckley |
| Visit the injured | Ann Bergin & Michael Mc Evoy |
| Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements | Ann Bergin |
| Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service | Ann Bergin |
| Make decisions about school closure | BOM |

**Follow-up – beyond 72 hours**

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| **Task** | **Name** |
| Monitor students for signs of continuing distress | Class teachers |
| Liaise with agencies regarding referrals | Orla Mulhare |
| Plan for return of bereaved student(s) | Ann Bergin |
| Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family | Michael Mc Evoy |
| Decide on memorials and anniversaries | BOM/Staff, parents and students |
| Review response to incident and amend plan | Staff/BOM |

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| EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST | |
| **AGENCY** | **CONTACT NUMBERS** |
| Garda | 057 8674100 |
| Hospital | 057 8621364 |
| Fire Brigade | 999 |
| Local GPs | [1850 302 702](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1JZAP_enIE882IE882&tbm=lcl&sxsrf=ALeKk00S8Yo4_JrEvOGOlVRT0fCAqvgktQ%3A1585050435776&ei=Q_N5XrOAL_Oi1fAP3daquAw&q=GP+stradbally+co+laois&oq=GP+stradbally+co+laois&gs_l=psy-ab.3..33i22i29i30k1l7.26344.28601.0.28924.9.9.0.0.0.0.99.675.9.9.0....0...1c.1.64.psy-ab..0.9.675...0j0i22i30k1j33i160k1.0.hFCw_MSE8gw) (Midoc) |
| HSE (Portlaoise Health Centre) | (057) 862 1135 |
| Child and Family Centre | (057) 869 2567 |
| Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS) | (057) 869 6152 |
| School Inspector | 087-1495316 |
| NEPS Psychologist (Dr Eilís Wallace Chisholm) | 087 439 5249 / 076 110 8887 |
| DES | (057) 932 4300 |
| INTO | [(01) 804 7700](https://www.google.ie/search?sxsrf=ALeKk02dBETEoBNZIW4014v3-C3ZyCIASA%3A1585052373118&source=hp&ei=1fp5XtCEBZm0gAbA66DgAg&q=INTO+&oq=INTO+&gs_l=psy-ab.3..35i39j0i273j0i20i263j0l2j0i131j0l2j0i131j0.1220.3178..3400...1.0..0.69.271.5......0....1..gws-wiz.......0i131i273j0i131i67j0i67.qULil92s9qE&ved=0ahUKEwiQw5edjLPoAhUZGsAKHcA1CCwQ4dUDCAY&uact=5) |
| Clergy | 057-8625132 |
| Employee Assistance Service | 1800 411 057 |