

# St. Brendan's Boys' N.S.



## Critical Incident Policy

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School Name	St. Brendan's Boys' N.S.

## **Introduction**

St. Brendan's Boys' National School aims to protect the well-being of its pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management 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) are aware of the resource documents available to schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://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 Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

## **What this CIMP means by the term 'critical incident'**

The staff and management of the school 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**

The school's Health & Safety Policy details the safety procedures and practices promoted among the pupils and staff. It includes details about

- Evacuation plan
- Regular fire drills
- Fire exits and extinguishers maintenance
- Supervision in the school yard
- Front door locked during school hours
- General school rules under the school's Behaviour Policy to ensure all pupils have a safe environment.

Other school policies that detail related safety and reporting procedures include

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment
- Internet Acceptable User Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace

## **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of our 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.

- 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 resources and training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Child Safeguarding Statement and related Risk Assessment. Teaching staff are aware of their role as mandated persons and 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 – NEPS, Túsla, CAMHS, HSE, ISPCC, Cancer Care West, Galway Hospice Foundation, Rainbows, Barnardos and local agencies including the Loughrea Family Resource Centre and Foróige.
- 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
- The Special Education team use the NEPS "Continuum of Support" approach to make interventions for pupils with SEN

- Students who are identified as being vulnerable are referred to Sarah Hynes. 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.
- Students who are identified as being *at risk* are referred to the DLP or DDLP in accordance with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- School has a resource library for staff.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

(Spectrum Life Freephone Helpline 1800 411 057 SMS and What's App – Text 'Hi' to 087 3690010 Log in to the Spectrum.Life website)

### **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.

All members of the Critical Incident Management Team will be supplied with a copy of Responding to Critical Incidents. Copies will also be made available to all school staff.

### **CIMT: Roles on the team**

1. Chairperson Board of Management: Monsignor Cathal Geraghty
2. Team Leader: Annette Regan
3. Garda liaison: Annette Regan and Sonya Broderick
4. Staff liaison: Sonya Broderick
5. Student liaison: Bríd Lawless and Sarah Hynes
6. Parent liaison: Annette Regan and Sonya Broderick
7. Community liaison: Annette Regan
8. Media liaison: Annette Regan
9. Administrator: Cathy Davis

### **CIMT: Team Responsibilities**

#### ***Team leader:***

- Confirms the event
- Contacts the Chairperson of the Board of Management
- 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
- Consults with Staff Liaison and lead initial briefing meeting for staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Liaises with the bereaved family
- Ensure provision of on-going support to staff and students
- Facilitate any appropriate memorial events
- Review Plan

The Deputy Principal will take the lead in the absence of the team leader.

#### ***Garda liaison:***

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

#### **Staff liaison:**

- After initial meeting 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
- 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
- Ensures provision of ongoing support for staff

#### **Student liaison:**

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students
- Maintains student contact records
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

#### **Community/agency liaison:**

- 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:**

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if necessary
- 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

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

**Administrator:**

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
  - Parents or guardians
  - Teachers and staff
  - 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: Secretary**

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 the school* 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:
Classroom 3	Main room for meeting staff
Hall	Meetings with students
Hall	Meetings with parents
Principal's office	Meetings with media
SET rooms	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 the Principal.

### Ratification

The plan was ratified by the Board of Management on 21/02/2023.

The plan will be reviewed annually.

Signed:   
Monsignor Cathal Geraghty,  
Chairperson, Board of Management

21/02/2023

## **Critical Incident Management Team**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Chairperson Board of Management</b>	Monsignor Cathal Geraghty	0862416658
<b>Team leader:</b>	Annette Regan	087 2262770
<b>Garda liaison</b>	Annette Regan and Sonya Broderick	087 2262770 087 2037819
<b>Staff liaison</b>	Sonya Broderick	087 2037819
<b>Student liaison</b>	Brid Lawless and Sarah Hynes	086 8321678 087 6091097
<b>Community liaison</b>	Annette Regan	087 2262770
<b>Parent liaison</b>	Annette Regan and Sonya Broderick	087 2262770 087 2037819
<b>Media liaison</b>	Monsignor Cathal Geraghty and Annette Regan	087 2262770
<b>Administrator</b>	Cathy Davis, Secretary	087 4504569



## Short term actions – Day 1

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Gather accurate information Who, what, when, where?</b>	Annette Regan
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	Annette Regan
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	Annette Regan
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	Sonya Broderick
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	All staff
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	CIMT
<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	Annette Regan and Sonya Broderick
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	Brid Lawless and Sarah Hynes
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	Chairperson Board of Management/ Principal
<b>Inform parents</b>	Annette Regan
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	All staff

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

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	CIMT leader
Meet external agencies	Sonya Broderick
Meet whole staff	Annette Regan
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Bríd Lawless
Visit the injured	Annette Regan and class teacher
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Monsignor Cathal Geraghty and Annette Regan
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	CIMT
Make decisions about school closure	Board of Management

## Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers and SET Team
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Principal and SET Team
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Principal, Deputy Principal and class teacher
Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family if appropriate	CIMT and Class teacher
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	Board of Management /Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Board of Management and Staff

## EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
<b>Chairperson Board of Management: Monsignor Cathal Geraghty</b>	<b>0862416658</b>
<b>Garda</b>	<b>091 842 870</b>
<b>Hospital UCHG Portiuncula</b>	<b>091 524 222 090 964 8200</b>
<b>The Presbytery</b>	<b>091 841212</b>
<b>Local GPs</b> Main Street Clinic Lakeshore Medical Centre St. Brendan's Medical Centre	<b>091 842144 091 841 509 091 841017</b>
<b>HSE Children and Family Services</b>	<b>091 552200</b>
<b>Túsla Family Services</b>	<b>091 872724</b>
<b>Loughrea Family Resource Centre</b>	<b>091 871 149</b>
<b>Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)</b>	<b>091 775931</b>
<b>School Inspector Sinéad Ginnane</b>	
<b>NEPS Psychologist Louise Shiels</b>	<b>087 1727465</b>
<b>DES</b>	<b>090643600</b>
<b>Fire Brigade</b>	<b>999 or 112</b>
<b>INTO</b>	<b>01 8047700 1850708708</b>
<b>Employee Assistance Service</b>	<b>1800 411 057</b>