



***Scoil Phádraic Cailíní  
National School***

***CRITICAL INCIDENT  
MANAGEMENT PLAN***

***2023/2024***

## Critical Incident Management Team

1. Team Leader: Ciara Greene
2. Deputy Team Leader: Michelle Barry.
3. Communication with Gardaí:  
Ciara Greene & Michelle Barry.
4. Administration Tasks: Catherine McGee & Anne Bermingham
5. Supervision: Karena O'Sullivan & Clodagh Manning
6. Media Liaison: Ciara Greene & Michelle Barry.
7. Parent Liaison: Ciara Greene & Michelle Barry.
8. Agency/Community Liaison: Emer Flood & Una Walsh
9. Student Liaison: Roslyn McDonald & Ann Horan.
10. Staff Liaison: Sinead Freeney & Hannah Martin.

# Emergency Contact List

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

Outside Agency	Contact Numbers
Gardaí Swords	01 6664700
Hospitals	Temple Street 01 8784200 Beaumont 01 8093000
Fire Brigade	01 8401222
Local GPs	Dr Shanahan 01 8435557 Donabate Clinic 01 8436661
HSE Community Care Team Child & Family Centre	01 8436079
CAMHS Inspectorate	
NEPS Psychologist Dermot Bergin	01 8892780 087 947 2718
DES Communications	01 8734000
INTO	01 8722753 01 8722533
Parish Priest	Fr ~Reilly 01 8436011 086 8860260 Parish Office 01 8434574
Employee Assistance Service	1 800 411 057

## Useful Contact Numbers

Barnardos	01 450355
The Samaritans	1850 609090
Childline	1800 666666
Parentline	1890 927277
Aware	1890 303302
National Suicide Bereavement Support	024 95561
Rainbows	01 4734175
The Bereavement Counselling Service	01 8391766
Bereavement Counselling	01 6767727

## **Critical Incident Policy**

At all times, Scoil Phadraic Cailini aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment as defined in our Mission Statement. The Board of Management, through the Principal, has drawn up the following Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

The aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

### **Aim**

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) is "to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable them to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff". Having a good plan will also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It will enable the school to return to normality as soon as possible.

### **Definition of Critical Incident**

The staff and management of Scoil Phadraic Cailini recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events" that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school".

### **Examples:**

- Death, major illness/outbreak of disease (Foot & Mouth)
- Criminal incidents (e.g. Dunblane shooting, Shooting at first communion in Ballymun.)
- Major accidents, serious injury (e.g. 'Navan bus crash')
- Suicide
- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing in Cork)
- Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g. Midleton incident in Cork)
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.
- World events that may affect the student body and/or staff. May be a need for provision of discussion and involvement in ceremonies e.g. 9/11, tsunami

### **Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School**

Scoil Phadraic Cailini has put systems in place to help to build resilience in students through our SPHE/RSE programmes, 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**

In the area of physical safety the school has put in place the following:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school on days of inclement weather e.g. frost, rain, snow
- Secure doors accessed by bell only during school hours
- General school rules under the school's behaviour policy to ensure all pupils have a safe environment.

### **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of Scoil Phadraic Cailini also 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.

## **The Following are the Key Responsibilities of Each Role**

### **Team Leader**

- Alert the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Co-ordinate the tasks of the team
- Liaise with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC
- Liaise with the bereaved family.

The Deputy Principal will assume this role in the absence of the Principal.

### **Garda Liaison**

- Liaise with the Gardaí
- Ensure that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

### **Staff Liaison**

- Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known
- Gives staff members an opportunity to express feelings
- Outlines routine for the day
- Advises staff on identification of vulnerable students
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the number

### **Student Liaison**

- Liaises with other team members to keep them up-to-date with information and progress
- Alerts staff to vulnerable students
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed
- Communicates with Parent liaison person regarding letter consenting to involvement of outside professionals where necessary

### **Community/Agency liaison**

- Maintain up to date lists of contact numbers - members of the Parents Council, emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaise with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Check credentials of individuals offering support
- Co-ordinate the involvement of these agencies
- Remind agency staff to wear name badges
- Update team members on the involvement of external agencies

### **Parent Liaison**

- Visit the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arrange parent meetings if held - Facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Set up room for meetings with parents
- Meet with individual parents
- Maintain a record of parents seen
- Manage the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensure that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Provide appropriate materials for parents (from their Critical Incident Folder)

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

## **Administrator**

- Maintenance up to date telephone numbers of:
  - Parents or guardians
  - Teachers
  - Emergency services
- Take telephone calls and note those that need to be responded to
- Ensure that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepare and send out letters, emails and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

## **Record Keeping**

In the event of incident each member of the team will keep detailed records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, materials used etc.

The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying etc.

## **Letter to Parents**

Ciara Greene will prepare a brief written statement to include:

- The sympathy of the school community for the family
- Positive information or comments about the person/s
- The facts of the incident
- What has been done
- What is going to be done

## **Confidentiality & Good Name Considerations**

The school has a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and must be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that the pupils do also e.g. the phrases 'tragic' or 'sudden' death to be used rather than suicide.

## **Critical Incident Rooms**

In the event of a critical incident:

Staff Room – main room used to meet staff  
Hall – main room for meeting with students  
No. 7 main room for parents  
Principal’s office – media  
No. 11 – for individual sessions with students  
Office – for other visitors

The staff and B.O.M. were consulted 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 the staff. Each member of the critical incident team has access to the plan on the school’s drive. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Ciara Greene.

The plan will be updated annually in September.

Signed,  
Chairperson of Board of Management  
Date:

Signed,  
Principal  
Date:



## Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

The school has experienced (the sudden death, accidental injury) of one of our students. We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events.

(Brief details of the incident, and in the event of a death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost).

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. (Elaborate).

It is possible that your child may have some feelings that he/she may like to discuss with you. You can help your child by taking time to listen and encouraging them to express their feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to their age.

If you would like advice you may contact the following people at the school. (Details).

Principal

# Sample Letter Requesting Consent for Involvement of Outside Professionals

Dear Parents,

Following the recent (tragedy, death of x) we have arranged professional support for students in school who need particular help (x...) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to children, either in small groups or on a one to one basis and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with the x..... If you would like your child to receive this support please sign the attached permission slip and return to the school by .....

If you would like further information on the above or to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip or telephone the school.

Principal

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I consent to having my daughter met by .....

I understand that my daughter may meet ....X..... in an individual or group session depending on the arrangements which are thought to be most appropriate.

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like my daughter.....to avail of the support being offered by .....X.....

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

# Short Term Actions and Roles Assigned

## 1<sup>st</sup> Day

<b>TASK</b>	<b>NAME (KEY &amp; SUPPORT)</b>
Gather Accurate Information	Relevant staff and Witnesses (accidents)
Contact Appropriate Agencies	Principal/Community Liaison
Convene a meeting with Key Staff	Principal
Arrange supervision of Students	Student Liaison
Hold Staff Meeting	All Staff
Organise Timetable for the day	Principal
Inform Parents	Principal
Inform Students	Principal
Make Contact with the Bereaved Family	Principal
Dealing with the Media	Media Liaison

# Medium Term Actions and Roles Assigned

## 24 - 72 Hours

<b>TASK</b>	<b>NAME/GROUP</b>
Review the Events of the first 24 hours	Staff
Arrange support for Individual/Groups	Principal
Plan the Reintegration of Students and Staff	Principal/Staff Liaison/Student Liaison
Plan Visits to the Injured	Principal
Liaise with Family re Funeral Arrangements	Principal
Attendance/Participation at Funeral Service etc.	Staff
School Closure	BOM

# Longer Term Actions and Roles Assigned

## Beyond 72 Hours

TASK	NAME/GROUP
<p><b>Monitor Students for Signs of Continuing Stress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncharacteristic behaviour</li> <li>• Deterioration in academic performance</li> <li>• Physical symptoms — e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness</li> <li>• Inappropriate emotional reactions</li> <li>• Increased absenteeism</li> </ul>	<p>Class Teachers</p>
<p><b>Evaluate Response to Incident and Amend CI Plan appropriately</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What went well?</li> <li>• Where were the gaps?</li> <li>• What was most/least helpful?</li> <li>• Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?</li> <li>• Is there any unfinished business?</li> </ul>	<p>Staff/BOM</p>
<p><b>Formalise Plan for Future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with NEPS Psychologist</li> <li>• Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate</li> <li>• Ensure that new staffs are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area</li> <li>• Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way</li> <li>• When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, the Principal should brief the Principal of the new school</li> </ul>	<p>Staff/BOM</p>
<p><b>Inform new Staff/Pupils</b></p>	<p>Principal/Staff</p>

## Decide on appropriate ways to deal with Anniversaries

- Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time
- Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
- Need to be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day
  - Plan a school memorial service
  - Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
  - Update and amend school records

## BOM & Parents