

Scoil an Chroí Ró Naofa Urlingford NS Roll Number 19930D

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Urlingford N.S. *Board of Management* aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Our mission statement states

In Urlingford N.S we hope to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil,intellectual, physical, cultural , moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people.

The Board of Management, through **Mr. Lonergan (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 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)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *Urlingford NS* 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 (Four fire drills annually – Plan posted up in school staffroom)
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked (Fitz fire)
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard (rota for Principal, Deputy Principal and school staff)
- School Gates closed during school hours.
- Mas lock in place in ASD classroom and playground.
- School entrance doors locked during class time.
- Rules of the playground – designated play areas.
- No glass bottles allowed
- Children have no access to kitchen area

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Urlingford N.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; 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 – Training Provided for Principal and Deputy Principal in 2017
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/post 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
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, CAMHS, HSE and specific links with individual Psychologists and Psychiatrists on an individual basis.
- 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 and 2010 for post primary schools.). These documents are available on www.education.ie

- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. principal or deputy principal), 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. *(a summary of this support is set out in R 23)*
- 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 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.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Mr Lonergan/ Mr Doyle</i>	087-9767899/087-6306108
Garda liaison	<i>Mr Lonergan/ Mr Doyle</i>	087-9767899/087-6306108
Staff liaison	<i>Ms Phelan</i>	087-9427115
Student liaison	<i>School Staff</i>	
Community liaison	<i>Mr Lonergan/ Mr Doyle</i>	087-9767899/087-6306108
Parent liaison	<i>Ms Horan</i>	087-9033059
Media liaison	<i>Mr Lonergan/ Mr Doyle</i>	087-9767899/087-6306108
Administrator	<i>Mary Hennessy (School Secretary)</i>	0876877207

Team leader: *Mr. Lonergan / Mr. Doyle*

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 *Urlingford Garda Station (056-8831133)*

Role

Mr. Lonergan / Mr. Doyle

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

Staff liaison *Ms. Phelan*

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.

Community/agency liaison – *Mr. Lonergan / Mr. Doyle*

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 *Ms. Horan*

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 *Mr. Lonergan /Mr Doyle*

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 *Mary Hennessy (school secretary)*

Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of

- Parents or guardians, teachers, emergency services etc.
- 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 *Mary Hennessy* (school 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.

Mary Hennessy 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 *Urlingford N.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.

In the event of a critical incident, the following protocols are adhered to. In the event of Principal being unavailable, the Deputy Principal automatically assumes his role(s)

Critical Incident Rooms	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Main School Hall</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Main School Hall/Office</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>EAL Room / SET Room</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Principal's Office</i>	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 Mr Lonergan (principal)

The plan will be updated annually.

This plan was revised during Term 2 of 24/25. All staff and parent/guardian representatives were consulted. We were guided by the latest information provided through NEPS *Additional guidance is contained in Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016) R19-21 P.79-90.*

Signed: Chairperson Board of Management Date:	Signed..... Principal Urlingford N.S. Date:
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Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Principal, Secretary, Chairperson BOM
Who, what, when, where?	(see above) Principal is liaison
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Principal and Dep Principal
Contact external agencies	Principal
Arrange supervision for students	Principal and Dep Principal
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Principal, Chairperson and staff
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Principal, class and support teachers- script to be read
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Principal and SEN team
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Principal and Chairperson with guidance from NEPS
Inform parents	Principal

Hold end of day staff briefing	Principal and Dep Principal
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Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader - Principal
Meet external agencies	Principal and class teachers
Meet whole staff	Principal
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Principal, Ms. Phelan and Ms Horan
Visit the injured	Principal
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal and Ms. Horan
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Principal
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	Principal
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Principal and Ms. Phelan
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Principal and Ms. Horan
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
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Garda	Urlingford Garda Station 056-8831133 Kilkenny Garda Station 056-777500
Hospital	St. Luke's Hospital Kilkenny 056-778500
Fire Brigade	Urlingford Fire Station 0567794400
Local GPs	
HSE	0567784600 Kilkenny 051842800 Waterford
Community Care Team	0567784600 Kilkenny The Family Resource Centre 056-8838466
Child and Family Centre	0567784713 Kilkenny
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	0567784754 Kilkenny
School Inspector	Claire Reidy claire_reidy@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist	Ciara De Loughery 087-9677276
DES	0906474621
INTO/ASTI/TUI	Deidre Fleming – District Rep. 087-1303128
Clergy	Fr. Oliver Maher P.P. Urlingford 086-8323010
State Exams Commission	n/a
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
Special Education Needs Office	Liz Dore 01-6033457/ 087-2411456 Elizabeth.Dore@ncse.ie