

# CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

**St. Brendan's N.S.  
Clonfert**

**St. Brendan's N.S. Clonfert** 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 *(Mr. Niall Kelly)*, 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](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie) including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- 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 201 5)

## Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of St. Brendan's N.S. Clonfert, 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
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the playground – Designated areas for safe play. Permission sought to leave playground and older pupils to accompany younger pupils to school door and await their return.

### **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of St. Brendan's N.S. Clonfert 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
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS TUSLA
- 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. These documents are available on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)
- 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.

**Team leader: Mr. Niall Kelly/Ms. Annmarie Hyland**

**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 Mr. Niall Kelly/Ms. Annmarie Hyland**

**Role**

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

**Staff liaison Mr. Niall Kelly/Ms. Annmarie Hyland**

**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 Mr. Niall Kelly**

**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 Mr. Niall Kelly/Ms. Annmarie Hyland**

**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 Mr. Niall Kelly/Mr. Annmarie Hyland**

**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. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland**

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

**Administrator     Mrs. Catherine Burke**

**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     Mrs. Catherine Burke**

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.

**Ms. Jacinta Downey** 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 St. Brendan's N.S. Clonfert 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

<b>Room Name:</b>	<b>Designated Purpose:</b>
<i>GP room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>GP room</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Office</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Office</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Vacant classroom</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>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. 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. Niall Kelly. The plan will be updated annually.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

### **Signed:**

Fr. D. McInerney      **Date:** 21/03/2018  
 Chairperson, Board of Management

### **Signed:**

N. Kelly                      **Date:** 21/03/2018  
 (Principal)

### Critical Incident Management Team

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Team leader:</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>	
<b>Garda liaison</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>	
<b>Staff liaison</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>	
<b>Student liaison</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>	
<b>Community liaison</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>	
<b>Parent liaison</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>	
<b>Media liaison</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>	
<b>Administrator</b>	<i>Mrs. Catherine Burke</i>	

## Short term actions – Day 1

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Gather accurate information</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	<b>All staff</b>
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Inform parents</b>	<i>Mr. Niall Kelly/Mrs. Annmarie Hyland</i>
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	

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

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	
Visit the injured	
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	
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	
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	
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
Garda	090 9675122 (Eyrecourt) 091 841222 (Loughrea)
Hospital	090 9648200 (Portiuncula) 090 580580 (UHG)
Fire Brigade	090 9642465 (Ballinasloe)
Local GPs	090 9675101 (Dr. Niall McGauran)
HSE	090 6630350 (HSE WEST) 090 6630352
Community Care Team	090 9646211/200 (Ballinasloe Health Centre) 090 9675255 (Eyrecourt Health Centre)
Child and Family Centre	090 9646211/200 (Ballinasloe Health Centre)
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	091 548922
School Inspector	087 1128660
NEPS Psychologist	087 6501968
DES	090 6483600 (Athlone) 01 8896400 (Dublin)
INTO	01 8047700 1850 708708
Clergy	087 2386450 Fr. Mc Inerney 090 9675113 090 9632867
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057