

Critical Incident Policy

Scoil Náisiunta Cill Richill
Kilrickle N.S.
Roll No: 16293H



Introductory Statement

Kilrickle National School aims to protect the well-being of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

Our purpose is to guide and support each child in all aspects of his/her educational development. This includes promoting academic success as well as self-esteem, confidence and personal responsibility. It is our intention that every child in our school is shown dignity and respect by all school staff at all times. We hope to create and maintain a learning environment that is welcoming, happy, safe and respectful of all students, staff and visitors to our school.

Kilrickle National School has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident.

What is a Critical Incident?

Kilrickle National School recognises a critical incident to be **“an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school”**.¹ Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Types of incidents might include:

- *The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide*
- *An accident/tragedy in the wider school community*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*
- *An accident involving members of the school community*

School's Aim Regarding Critical Incidents

Recognising that the key of managing critical incidents is planning, Kilrickle National School has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying Plan. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us **to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible** and ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have put systems in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of an incident. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.

¹ Source: Responding to Critical Incidents in Schools – National Educational Psychological Services NEPS.

Physical safety: Please refer to Kilrickle National School's:

- *Health, Welfare & Safety Policy*
- *Safety Statement*

Psychological safety:

Kilrickle National School aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for same.

- *SPHE programmes are included in the curriculum to address issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking, decision making, and alcohol and drug prevention.*
- *Our Discipline Policy includes an approach to bullying.*
- *Staff are informed of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs.*
- *Staff have access to online resources on difficulties affecting the primary school child.*
- *The school has developed links with outside agencies, which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students e.g. Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Community Psychological Services.*

Critical Incident Management Team

Kilrickle National School has set up a CI Management Team in line with best practice² and will maintain this team in future. 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 once a year to review and update the plan. Each member of the team will have access to a **Ready-to-Go Pack** with relevant materials to be used in the event of an incident i.e.

- *Responding to Critical Incidents (Guidelines for Schools)*
- *Responding to Critical Incidents (Resource Materials for Schools)*

Critical Incident Management (C.I.M.) Team Roles

Key roles have been identified and assigned as follows:

- Team / Staff Liaison *Colm Gibbons*
- Student Liaison *Class Teacher*
- Parent / Local Community Liaison *Gwyneth Lusted*
- Media / Community Liaison *Colm Gibbons*
- Administrative Tasks..... *School Secretary and/or distributed between the CIM Team*

² A critical incident team “is a group of individuals from the staff of the school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs” (Mary Schoenfeldt).

In the event of a critical incident the responsibilities of each role-holder will be as follows:

Team Leader

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Coordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the Board of Management and DES, NEPS.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.
- Liaises with Gardaí, ensuring information about critical incidents and other developments are checked for accuracy before being shared.
- The Deputy Principal will take the lead in the absence of the team leader.

Staff Liaison

- Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and outlines the routine for the day.
- Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable students.
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.
- Provides materials to staff from the Ready to Go Pack.

Student Liaison

- Liaises with other team members to keep them up-dated with information and progress.
- Alerts staff to vulnerable students.
- Provide materials for students from the Ready-to-Go-Pack.

Community Liaison

- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies .
- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - o Key parents, such as members of the parents council
 - o Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.

Parent Liaison

- Facilitates 'questions and answers' meetings.
- Meets with individual parents.
- Provides materials for parents from the Ready to Go Pack.
- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.

Media Liaison

- In preparing for the role, s/he will consider issues that may arise during an incident and how they might be responded to. Students should not be allowed talk to media or have their photos taken.
- Answer no questions but have a short prepared statement which extends sympathies to the family involved includes a positive remark about individual. Priority is the interest of children in school.
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the Communications Section in the DES & NEPS.

Administrative Tasks

- Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers of:
 - ❑ Parents or guardians
 - ❑ Teachers
 - ❑ Emergency support services (Staffroom Notice Board)
- Telephone calls need to be responded to, letters sent and materials photocopied.

Record Keeping

In the event of an 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, material used etc. A rota will be set up in the case of a critical incident to ensure no one person will have sole responsibility for answering telephone calls.

Communication with Parents

The C.I.M team will decide if written communicate with parents regarding a critical incident is deemed appropriate.

The Parent Liaison, in consultation with all members of the C.I.M. team will prepare a brief, written statement that may include:

- The sympathy of the school community for the affected/bereaved family
- Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured persons(s)
- The facts of the incident
- What has been done
- What is going to be done

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The school has a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that pupils do so also.

For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used without the consent of the family involved or until it has been established categorically that the person's death was a result of suicide. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead.

Critical Incident Room:

In the event of a critical incident the **staffroom** will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

Development and communication of this policy and plan:

- All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of the draft plan.
- Parent representatives and members of our school's Board of Management were also consulted and asked for their comments.
- Our school's final policy and procedures in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.
- Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy.


- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the school principal; Colm Gibbons.

Ratification of Policy

This policy will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, by School Staff and the Board of Management once in every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 02/09/2021


Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management


Signed: _____
Principal

Date: 2nd September 2021

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Critical Incident Management Plan

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CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (C.I.M.) TEAM

- Seán Kelly
- Gwyneth Lusted
- Colm Gibbons
- Sarah Gallagher

Key Roles Assigned

TASK	NAME
OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF RESPONSE	Colm Gibbons
COMMUNICATION	Colm Gibbons
ADMINISTRATION TASKS	C.I.M. Team and/or School Secretary
SUPERVISION OF PUPILS	Class Teacher
MEDIA LIASION	Colm Gibbons
PARENT LIASION	Gwyneth Lusted
COMMUNITY LIASION	Gwyneth Lusted
STUDENT LIASION	Class Teacher
STAFF LIASION	Seán Kelly

Emergency Contact List

(To be displayed in staff-room)

Kilrickle National School Postcode: H62 KC82

OUTSIDE AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS	OUTSIDE AGENCY	CONTACT SERVICES	OUTSIDE AGENCY	CONTACT SERVICES
GARDA	Loughrea Garda Station Barrack Street, Loughrea, Co. Galway, H62 V275. Tel: 091 842870. Loughrea District HQ Tel: 091 842877	CHILD & FAMILY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAMHS)	Mr. Paul Griffin HSE, St. Brendans, Lake Road, Loughrea, Co. Galway. Tel: 091 847820	IRISH NATIONAL TEACHER'S ORGANISATION (INTO)	35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. Tel: 01 8047700 LoCall: 1850 708 708
HOSPITAL	Portiuncula Hospital Dunlo, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, H53 T971 Tel: 090 9648200 University Hospital Galway Newcastle Rd, Galway. H91 YR71 Tel: 091 524222	INSPECTORATE	Ms. Martin Whyte Divisional Inspector Department of Education Custom House Druid Lane Galway martin_whyte@education.gov.ie 00353876501016	PARISH PRIEST / CLERGY	Bishop. John Kirby Cappataggle Parochial House Tel: 091 843017

<p>FIRE BRIGADE</p>	<p>Loughrea Fire Station Barrack Street, Loughrea, Co. Galway. Tel: 091 841199</p>	<p>NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST</p>	<p><i>Claire Brennan Educational Psychologist/Siceolaí Oideachais National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)/An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais</i></p> <p><i>An Roinn Oideachais Department of Education</i></p> <p><i>1 Victoria Place, Eyre Square, Galway, H91 FD72 T: + 353 (0) 076 110 8831</i></p>	<p>DES COMMUNICATIONS</p> <p>Press Office</p>	<p>Marlborough Street, Dublin 1. D01 RC96 Tel: (01) 889 6400</p>
<p>LOCAL GPS</p>	<p>Main Street Clinic Loughrea, Co. Galway. Tel: 091 842144</p> <p>Lakeshore Medical Centre Barrack St, Loughrea, Co. Galway. Tel: 091 841509</p>	<p>CAMHS; Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service</p>	<p>Inpatient Unit, Merlin Park, Galway Tel: (091) 731 401</p>		

PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES

● CURRICULUM

- **ANTI BULLYING POLICY**
- **BEHAVIOUR POLICY**
- **CIRCLE TIME**
- **WALK TALL/STAY SAFE PROGRAMME**
- **SPHE POLICY**
- **STAFF ALERT TO STUDENTS WITH DIFFICULTIES**
(e.g. bereaved students, self harming, eating difficulties etc...)

● SUPPORT

- **NEPS**
- **PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY**
- **CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**
- **COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGIST**

● PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- **FIRE DRILL – EVACUATION OF PUPILS**
- **MAINTAIN FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**
- **STAFF ABLE TO USE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**
- **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**
- **PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION**

SHORT TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

1ST DAY

TASK	NAME (KEY & SUPPORT)
GATHER <u>ACCURATE</u> (<i>SHORT & SIMPLE</i>) INFORMATION	Relevant Staff and Witnesses (accidents)
CONTACT APPROPRIATE AGENCIES	
CONVENE A MEETING WITH KEY STAFF	
ARRANGE SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS	
HOLD STAFF MEETING	ALL STAFF
ORGANISE TIMETABLE FOR THE DAY	
INFORM PARENTS	
INFORM STUDENTS	
MAKE CONTACT WITH THE BEREAVED FAMILY	
DEALING WITH MEDIA	

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

24 -72 HOURS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
REVIEW THE EVENTS OF THE FIRST 24 HOURS	STAFF
ARRANGE SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL/GROUPS OF STUDENTS, PARENTS ETC.	
PLAN THE REINTEGRATION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF	
PLAN VISITS TO INJURED	
LIAISE WITH FAMILY RE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS/MEMORIAL SERVICE	
ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION AT FUNERAL SERVICE ETC	STAFF
SCHOOL CLOSURE	BOM

LONGER TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

BEYOND 72 HOURS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
MONITOR STUDENTS FOR SIGNS OF CONTINUING STRESS	CLASS TEACHERS
EVALUATE RESPONSE TO INCIDENT AND AMEND CI PLAN APPROPRIATELY	STAFF/BOM
FORMALISE PLAN FOR FUTURE	STAFF/BOM
INFORM NEW STAFF/PUPILS	
DECIDE ON APPROPRIATE WAYS TO DEAL WITH ANNIVERSARIES	BOM AND PARENTS

USEFUL CHILD PROTECTION & CRITICAL INCIDENT CONTACT NUMBERS

BARNARDOS	01 450355
THE SAMARITANS	1850 609090
CHILDLINE	1800 666666
PARENTLINE	1890 927277
AWARE	01 6766166 1890 303302
NATIONAL SUICIDE BEAREAVEMENT SUPPORT	024 95561
RAINBOWS	01 4734175
THE BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING SERVICE	01 8391766
BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING	01 6767727
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057

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 son/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

.....
I consent to having our daughter/son met by

I understand that my daughter/son may meet x..... in a 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/sonto avail of the support being offered by x.....

Signed: _____