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Critical Incident Policy

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

Mission Statement

Glasnevin Educate Together National School is an inclusive school. We strive, every day, to have a friendly, happy and safe school for all of our children and adults. By cherishing difference, respecting ourselves and others and living the ethos of Educate Together, we support each other to become the best we can be in school and in life.

This inclusive school meets the 9 grounds as listed in the Equal Status Act 2000. Discrimination, as stated in the Act, is prohibited on the following grounds:

Gender
Marital status/civil status
Family status
Religion
Age
Disability
Race
Traveller community

There are four pillars to the ethos of our school. We are:

- (1) Child-centred
- (2) Multi-denominational
- (3) Democratic
- (4) Co-educational

The education we provide for the children will lead to their physical, emotional, social, psychological, aesthetic, cultural, moral, spiritual, academic and personal development. This holistic development of the child will be at the core of our child centred approach to education in the school.

Introduction

In keeping with our Mission Statement, Glasnevin Educate Together NS is committed to providing a happy, caring and secure learning environment in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential. In times of crisis, we work with the children to enable them to deal with and come to terms with whatever may happen. We also support them and teach them to support others. In particular we look out for those who may be less vocal than others.

1 Critical Incident Management Response and After Care Guidelines

Critical Incident Management Guidelines are essential in school life today. This document has been compiled to offer a summary guide to our approach, should the need arise. Our main reference materials are *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools* and *Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools* (Published by Department of Education & Skills (DES) and National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), 2016).

A critical incident is defined as an incident or sequence of events which overwhelm the normal coping mechanism of the school (NEPS).

Examples of such critical incidents within the school community are:

- Death of a member(s) of the school community, i.e. pupil or staff member
- Death of a member of the wider school community
- Disappearance of a member of the school community
- A Child Protection issue
- An accident involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.

The Board of Management, through Principal Roisin Conlon and the ISM team, 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)
- *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018–2023 Revised* (October 2019)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of Glasnevin Educate Together N.S. 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:

- Death of a member(s) of the school community, i.e. pupil or staff member
- Death of a member of the wider school community
- Disappearance of a member of the school community
- A Child Protection issue
- An accident involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.

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 affect 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 (see Fire Safety Policy Statement and evacuation plans)
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Front gate locked during school hours
- School doors locked during class time, visitors check in at the office
- Policy for Community Events and Visitors to the School sets out guidance for visitors to school
- Rules of the playground – gentle play at all times, act respectfully towards all, no climbing on fences or benches, no one group should dominate an area, ask permission to use the toilet, one at a time, be an upstander, tell if you get hurt. See Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Supervision policy including supervision indoors on a wet day

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Glasnevin Educate Together National 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 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
- 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 – PDST - Wellbeing sustained support, Barnardos, TUSLA, Rainbows, NEPS (Incredible Years training). Another useful resource, where relevant, is the Irish Childhood Bereavement Network.
- 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 in 2007 for 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. support teacher, ISM team member), 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. (**Edit*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.

Team leader: *Roisin Conlon, Principal*

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 family, where relevant, e.g. bereavement.

Staff liaison *Sorcha Brennan (Team leader in event that Principal is unavailable; supported by ISM and BoM)*

Role

- Ensures that information is checked out for accuracy before being shared e.g. about deaths or other developments
- 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 *Lisa Madden*

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 *Áine Mooney (Team leader in absence of Principal and Deputy Principal; supported by ISM and BoM)*

Role

- Liaises with the Gardaí
- 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 *Colm Campbell*

Role

- Visits the family with the team leader, where appropriate, e.g. bereavement
- 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: BoM

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 *Nicky Callaghan*

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 school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

Record keeping *Nicky Callaghan*

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.

Nicky Callaghan 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 Glasnevin Educate Together 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.

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>Library</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Róisín’s Office or GP Hall</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Róisín’s Office</i>	Meetings with media
<i>SEN rooms</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. 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 Deputy Principal, Sorcha Brennan.

The plan will be updated annually in term two.

Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Roisín Conlon</i>	0861381823
Garda liaison	<i>Áine Mooney</i>	0861381823
Staff liaison	<i>Sorcha Brennan</i>	Known to Team Lead
Student liaison	<i>Lisa Madden</i>	Known to Team Lead
Community liaison	<i>Áine Mooney</i>	Known to Team Lead
Parent liaison	<i>Colm Campbell</i>	Known to Team Lead
Media liaison	<i>BoM</i>	Known to Team Lead
Administrator	<i>Nicky Callaghan</i>	Known to Team Lead

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Sorcha
Who, what, when, where?	Róisín
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Róisín
Contact external agencies - contact list is attached to CI plan	Nicky
Arrange supervision for students	Sorcha
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Róisín and Sorcha
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Róisín and Áine
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Lisa and Áine
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	BoM
Inform parents	Róisín
Hold end of day staff briefing - Script for Principal pages 24-26	Róisín

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader Róisín
Meet external agencies	Áine/Róisín
Meet whole staff	Róisín and Whole Staff
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Sorcha/Áine
Visit the injured	Róisín/Sorcha
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Róisín/Colm
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Róisín
Make decisions about school closure	BOM and Róisín

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Áine
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Sorcha/Lisa and Class Teachers
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Colm/Lisa
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	Juvenile Liaison Officer, Santry Garda Station 01-6664000/ 6664415
Hospital	Temple Street Hospital 01-8748763
Fire Brigade	Phibsboro Fire Station 01 8306133
Local GPs	Cremore Clinic (01) 834 4611 Dr Mary Behan 01-5079500
TUSLA Area Manager	Joy McGlynn 01 8467129 joy.mcglynn@tusla.ie Ballymun Healthcare Facility
Community Care Team	01-7718500
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	HSE Healthcare Facility Ballymun 01 8467219 opening hours 9am-1pm and 2pm-5pm
School Inspector	John Fitzgerald johnfitzgerald@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist	Dermot Bergin
DES	(01)8896400
INTO	(01) 804 7700
Clergy	Catholic: Our Lady of Dolores Parish Glasnevin Fr Paul 015582697 Anglican: Glasnevin/Santry/Finglas: Rector: Canon David Oxley 018341015 0868816486
Social Workers	1850 241850 01-8772300 – Mountjoy Square (Breda Griffen, Duty Team) 01-8467236 – Ballymun 8567704 – Wellmount Finglas (D7,11)

	8566856 – Parkview (D9, D3) 01-8825000 – Cabra
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Ratified by Board of Management

Signed: 
Principal

Signed: 
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 7th April 2022

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