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Gurraneasig N.S.

Kilbrittain,

Co.Cork

P72 YP78

Critical Incident Management Policy

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Team (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 will enable us to return to normality as soon as possible.

Definition the Critical Incident

The staff and management of Gurraneasig 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*

Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School

Gurraneasig NS 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

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 yard (access door will be open from 9.15am)
- Front gate closed during school hours
- Secure doors accessed by buzzer during school hours
- Rules of the playground – regularly revised with classes to ensure that all students have a safe environment

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Gurraneasig NS 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)

- 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. The School uses a Two-Year Cycle SPHE Plan.
- 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 including resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie:
 - 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)
- 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, HSE, St.Vincent de Paul, etc.
- 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.
- 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.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. Teacher or 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.
- 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 the duration of the Board of Management. The members of the team will meet as required to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a personal copy of this document and access to 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.

Key Roles and Responsibilities of the CMIT

Role	Name
Team leader:	Mrs. Maeve Tighe/Mrs. Mary O'Driscoll
Garda Liaison	Mrs. Maeve Tighe /Mrs. Mary O'Driscoll
Staff Liaison	Mrs. Maeve Tighe/Mrs. Mary O'Driscoll
Student Liaison	Mrs. Maeve Tighe /Mr. Conor Murray/ Ms. Niamh McGrath
Community Liaison	Mrs. Maeve Tighe /Mrs. Mary O'Driscoll / Fr Jerry Cremin
Parent Liaison	Mrs. Maeve Tighe/ Ms. Lucie Green/Mr. Jeff Cochrane
Media Liaison	Mrs. Maeve Tighe/Mrs. Mary O'Driscoll
Administrator	Mrs. Ursula McCloskey

Please Note: If for any reason the Principal is absent, the role is automatically taken up by the Deputy Principal, Mr. Conor Murray. The BOM reserves the right to co-opt a member of staff to the CIMT depending on the particular incident.

Team Leader Responsibilities:

- 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 Responsibilities:

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

Staff Liaison Responsibilities:

- 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 Employee Assistance Services and gives them the contact number.

Student Liaison Responsibilities:

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Keep records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community Liaison Responsibilities:

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Association
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- 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 Responsibilities:

- May visit the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges & facilitates 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 (Liaise with Administrator)
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media Liaison Responsibilities:

- 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 Responsibilities:

- 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:

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. Mrs. Ursula McCloskey (School Secretary) 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 Gurraneasig NS 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. All 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:
Staff Room	Main room for meeting staff
Classrooms	Meetings with students
Classrooms/Library	Meetings with parents
Library/Principal's Office	Meetings with media
Library/Principal's Office	Individual sessions with students
Library/Principal's Office	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and Communication Regarding the Plan

All staff were consulted and their views contributed to 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 Principal. The plan will be updated as required.

Short term actions – Day 1

- **Gather accurate information (Who, What, When, Where?)**
- **Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly**
- **Contact external agencies e.g. NEPS, DES Inspector**
- **Arrange supervision for students**
- **Hold staff meeting (Ensure that Absent Staff Members are informed)**
- **Agree schedule for the day (Adhering to normal school routine if possible)**
- **Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)**
- **Compile list of vulnerable students**
- **Compile list of absent students that may need to be contacted by Student Liaison**
- **Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media**
 - Designate a spokesperson
 - Gather accurate information
 - Prepare a brief statement (CIMT)
 - Protect the family's privacy
 - It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident
(What happened, where and when?)
(How many were involved and what are their names?)
(Is there a risk of further injury?)
(What agencies have been contacted already?)
- **Inform parents**
- **Hold end of day staff briefing**
- **If appropriate, the Principal will liaise with family to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial services**
- **If appropriate, arrange a home visit by two school representatives within 24hrs. (Student liaison and Class teacher possibly)**

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

- **Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of Day 1 (Discuss possible school closure)**
- **Meet external agencies**
 - Arrange in consultation group meetings/debriefings with students/parents to disseminate information if deemed appropriate
- **Meet whole staff**
- **Arrange support for students, staff and parents (closely monitor vulnerable students)**
- **Visit the injured (decided in consultation with parents' wishes, school management and close school friends as appropriate)**
- **Student Liaison to liaise with absent staff/students on return to school**
- **Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements**
 - Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service
 - Facilitation of student/staff responses e.g. Sympathy Cards, flowers, book of condolences
- **Make decisions about school closures in consultation with BOM**

Longer Term Actions: Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

- **Monitor students for signs of continued distress & Liaise with agencies regarding referrals**
 - Uncharacteristic behaviour
 - Deterioration in academic performance
 - Physical symptoms e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness.
 - Inappropriate emotional reactions
 - Increased absenteeism
- **Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately.**
 - What went well?
 - Where were the gaps?
 - What was most/least helpful?
 - Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
 - Is there any unfinished business?
- **Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future.**
 - Consult with NEPS Psychologist
 - Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate.
 - Ensure that new staff is aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.
 - Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way.
 - When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, it would be useful to brief the Principal of the new school.
- **Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (Be sensitive to special days and events)**
 - Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time.
 - Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
 - Be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day.
- **Plan a school memorial service.**
- **Plan for return of bereaved students**
- **Consult parents on care of deceased person's possessions**
- **Update and amend school records**

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Gardai - Bandon - Kinsale - Kilbrittain	023 8852200 021 4779250 023 8849666 John McCarthy (086 8920089)
Hospital - Bandon Community Hospital - Cork University Hospital , Wilton	023 8841403 021 4922000 / 021 4546400
Fire Brigade – Kinsale/Bandon	112/ 999
Local GPs The Weir Health Clinic, Riverview Shopping Centre, Bandon, Millbrook Medical Centre, Millbrook, Clonakilty Road, Bandon Dr. Bohane, 11 Oliver Plunkett Street, Bandon Kinsale Medical Centre, New Rd, Troopers-Close, Kinsale	023 8852918 023 8841132 023 8842253 021 4772253
HSE	028 40400
Child and Family Centre (Tusla)	01 7718500
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	023 8890370
School Inspector – Sean Ó Briain	01 8896553
NEPS Psychologist - Sheila Cummins	0761 108450
DES	090 6483600
INTO	01 8047700
Clergy - Fr. Jerry Cremin, Kilbrittain	023 8849637 Emergency Tel: 087-785 7712 Email: parish@kilbrittain.net
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Ratification:

Ratified by Board of Management on 14/1/2020.
Date

Signed Mary O'Donnell.
Chairperson, Board of Management

Review:

This policy will be reviewed as necessary.