Clocha Rince NS

Critical Incident Policy

Introduction
This policy was developed by staff during the 2012 school year. The Chairperson of the Parent Association was consulted to arrange for the nomination of a member of the Parents Association to the Critical Incident Management Team.
The policy was further developed at a Board of Management meeting on Thursday 6th December 2012 and subsequently ratified.

Rationale
The policy was formulated in response to Guidelines by the National Educational Psychological Service which were issued to schools in 2008.

Aims
It is hoped by having a Critical Incident Plan this school can outline the school's role in
- Promote Mental Health
- Creating Effective Care Systems
- Being proactive in preparing for Critical Incidents
- Responding to Critical Incidents

What is a Critical Incident?
"A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school"

Examples:
- Death, Major Illness/Outbreak of Disease
- Criminal incidents
- Major accidents, serious injury
- Suicide of a pupil or staff member
- Civil unrest, War
- Fire, Natural and Technological Disaster
- Disappearance of student from home or school
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.

Prevention
"Schools can attend to prevention by having systems in place which help to promote emotional health and well-being and which build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events" (pg.13, Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools, NEPS 2008)

SPHE is a key element of our school's prevention work. Our SPHE curriculum supports the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development and well-being of all members of the school community through the Strands and Strand Units which deal with;
- Self-Identity
- Taking Care of My Body
- Growing and Changing
- Physical Health
- Emotional Health
- Safety & Protection
- Relating to Others - Friendships

- Relationships and Sexuality
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use
- Media Education
- Citizenship

Our school recognises SPHE as a 'universal' intervention which targets all the pupils and thus enhances the health of the whole school population.

Our school recognises that the following elements contribute to creating a healthy and safe school;

- **Creation of a physically safe environment,** including good SPHE provision. Our Special Educational Support Plan outlines clear procedures which a teacher should use if they identify a vulnerable child which may lead to the services and resources of our SENCO and Special Educational Support Team being utilised. The services of the school facilitators of the Rainbows programme may also be utilised if appropriate.
- **Integration of the SPHE programme** in a broad based way addressing issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management; resilience; conflict management; problem solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision making and use and misuse of alcohol and other drugs.
- **Clear procedures for responding to a pupil that is mentally distressed or troubled.**

  ### Warning Signs
  Below is a list of factors which indicate that a pupil is troubled or distressed. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other signs which those familiar with a pupil may notice. There may be an increased risk of suicide or suicidal behaviour if a number of signs are present.

  - An unexpected reduction in academic performance
  - Talking about suicide
  - Ideas and themes of depression, death and suicide in their work
  - Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness
  - Change in mood and marked emotional instability
  - Significant grief or stress
  - Withdrawal from relationships
  - Break-up of an important relationship
  - Discipline problems in school
  - Withdrawal from extra-curricular activities
  - Giving personal belongings away
  - Loss of interest in things one cares about
  - Neglect of physical appearance
  - Physical symptoms with emotional cause
  - High risk behaviours
  - Alcohol or Drug Abuse
  - Bullying or Victimisation
  - History of Suicidal Behaviour or deliberate self-harm
  - Family history of suicide/attempted suicide

Steps to take when concerns arise

"Concerns about suicidal behaviour should never be dismissed on the grounds that the student is merely seeking attention and will not make a suicide attempt" Pg, 35 Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools'

Procedure
- Concern is reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- A formal meeting takes place with the Principal, Deputy-Principal, SENCO, child's class teacher and the reporting staff member.
- A judgement is made on the validity of the concern
- A person nominated by the CI Team may meet with the pupil to further inform.
- Following gathering of all the facts the Parents will be informed of concerns.
- If the parents and school team form the opinion that the situation is not serious and that they cannot confirm the concern, a plan will be drawn up to monitor the pupil.
- If the school team confirm a concern, the SENCO will seek a consultation with NEPS or with the local Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- The Principal will immediately inform the parents/guardians and update them on progress of the management of the concern.
- A Management plan appropriate to the level of risk is put in place, including onward referral to the family GP.

School Administration
The school will ensure that insofar as practical
- Family Contact Details will be kept updated
- Critical Incident Management Team and Contact Information will be kept updated
- Health & Safety Plan will be fully implemented
- Medi-Alert Posters will be kept updated and posted on the staffroom Medi Alert Board.
- Class Teacher will possess a family contact list, First Aid Box and any applicable medication for pupils on trips outside the school.

Responding to a Critical Incident
It is school policy to consult the document 'Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools' by the National Educational Psychological Service when responding to a Critical Incident.

It will be the overriding policy of the school during its response to a critical incident to maintain the normal routine of the school if at all possible.

Resources
The school will refer to the 'Resource Materials for Schools' document by NEPS when responding to a critical incident.
The services of the Garda Síochána, HSE agencies and NEPS may also be employed if appropriate.
The School's Rainbow Programme and SEST team and school staff will be utilised in the most appropriate and effective way.

Critical Incidents Management Team:

Leadership Role:	1. Principal
	2. Chairperson of the Board of Management
Communication Role:	1. Chairperson of BOM
	2. Principal
Student Liaison/ Counselling Role:	Principal & Staff & Rainbows Facilitators
Chaplaincy Role:	Balyna P.P.
Family Liaison Role:	Principal or Chairperson
Parents Association Rep:	Michelle Nugent
Staff Liaison -Member of Staff:	Patricia Roche
N.E.P.S:	The Maudins, Naas, Co. Kildare 045 848504

The first-named person has the responsibility as defined.
The second-named person assists and only assumes responsibility on the absence of the first-named.

Roles and Responsibilities
Leadership Role:
Intervention
- Confirm the event
- Activate the C.I. response team
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Make contact with other relevant agencies e.g. Garda
- Chair CI Meeting and formulate response

Follow Up
- Ensure provision of ongoing support to staff and students
- Facilitate any appropriate memorial events
- Monitor Effective Implementation of Plan formulated by CI Team in response to Event
- Review Plan

Communication Role:
Intervention
- Prepare a agree a public statement with CI Team
- Organise designated room to address media promptly
- Ensure infrastructure exists for effective communication
- Liaison with relevant outside support agencies

Follow Up
- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

Student Liaison/ Counselling Role:
Intervention
- Outline specific services available in school
- Implement referral procedures
- Address immediate needs of staff/students
- Information
- Counselling

Follow Up
- Ongoing support to vulnerable students
- Monitor class most affected
- Refer on, as appropriate
- Review and evaluate Plan

Chaplaincy Role:
Intervention
- Visit with victim/s of Critical Incident, if appropriate
- Assist with prayer services
- Be available as personal and spiritual support to staff

Family Liaison Role:
Intervention
- Coordinate contact with families following consultation with CI team
- Consult with family around involvement of school in a specific event, e.g. Funeral service
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents/guardians of any student directly affected by a critical incident.
- Liaise with Chaplain to assist where required

Follow Up
- Provide ongoing support to bereaved family
- Involve family, as appropriate in school liturgies/memorial services.
- Offer to link family with community support groups
- Review and evaluate plan.

Implementation and Review
This policy was ratified on Thursday 6th December 2012 at a Board of Management meeting following the consultation process.

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Critical Incident Management Team

DLP:	**Mr. Colm Byrne**
Deputy DLP:	**Muiríosa Mc Carthy**
Leadership Role:	**1. Colm Byrne** **2. Kathleen Lynch**
Communications Role:	**1. Kathleen Lynch** **2. Colm Byrne**
Family Liaison:	**1. Colm Byrne** **2. Kathleen Lynch**
Staff Liaison	**Patricia Roche**
Chaplain:	**Very Rev. Gerard Breen**
Parent Representative	**Michelle Nugent**
Counselling - NEPS:	**The Maudlins, Naas, Co. Kildare**

<mark>Useful Contact Numbers</mark>

Emergency 999 / 112

Fr. Gerard Breen	**046 9551203** **086 6001050**
National Educational Psychological Service	**045 848504**
Leixlip Garda Station	**01 6667800**
Carbury Garda Station	**046 9553002**
Parent Rep – Michelle Nugent	**086 0557509**
Employee Assistance Service	**1800 411 057**