



## CBS Roscommon – Mean Scoil Na Braíthre

### CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN POLICY

**2017**

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 both staff and students during the normal course of the school day. Such policies that are specifically relevant to students include:

#### THIS POLICY LINKS WITH:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection Procedures
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Guidance and Counselling Plan Policy
- Religious Education Policy
- Special Needs Education Policy
- S.P.H.E Programme
- Internet and ICT User Policy
- Substance Use Policy

Date of Latest Update	March 2017
Review Date	March 2018
Policy Agreed by Board of Management	March 23rd, 2017
Policy Available for Staff at:	Staff Room; School Website
Policy Available for Parents at:	School Website

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN**

**CBS Roscommon January 2017**

---

**Draft policy drawn up by Senior Management; Junior and Senior Care Teams and Guidance Counsellor.**

### **CONTENTS**

**Definition of Critical incident**

**Critical Incident Response Team Membership**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**- Principal**

**- Deputy Principal**

**- Guidance Counsellor**

**- Administrators**

**School Tours**

**Confidentiality and Reputational Consideration**

**Appendices: Sample Letters, Text & Media Statement**

**Extract on the Grieving Process**

This Policy has been reviewed by Senior Management; Year heads and the Care teams; Parents' council.

### **Definition of a Critical Incident**

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which has the potential to overwhelm the normal coping mechanisms of the school.

CBS Roscommon has devised a Critical Incident Response Plan and has identified *some* potential critical incidents as follows:

- A death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, injury, terminal illness or suspected suicide.
- 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 disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An incident affecting the wider community/nation, for example a terrorist attack.

The trauma caused by a critical incident challenges individuals mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Although it is not possible to predict when or where a critical incident may occur the development of a response plan will enable our school community to act promptly. The plan is designed to be flexible enough to cope with a wide range of possible incidents which may occur whether on or off site.

### **Critical Incident Response Team Membership**

Central to the plan has been the creation of a Critical Incident Response Team. The following staff have agreed to be members of this team.

#### **Team Members**

- **Principal**
- **Deputy Principal**
- **Guidance Counsellor**
- **Care team(s)**
- **Technical support**
- **If relevant: Head of SEN Dept.**

### **ACTION PLAN SHORT TERM ACTIONS 0 – 24 HOURS**

#### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Principal will:

##### **1 Establish the facts**

Obtain accurate information from the appropriate agencies and or parents about the incident – otherwise rumours may take over and add to the distress of those involved.

A list of contact details is available in the Appendices.

Facts to be established:

- What** has happened
- When** it happened
- Whether relevant family/ies know** what has happened
- How** it happened; the number and **names** of students and staff involved
- Whether** any other schools involved

**-What is the extent of the injuries**

**-Where** the incident took place/ exact **location** of those injured, etc.

This information will form the basis of the information given to parents and be useful in preparing a media statement.

**Note:** If a member of staff or student(s) has died in the incident, relatives and close friends of the deceased person will be told first.

## **2. Convene the Critical Incident Response Team (C.I.R.T.).**

- It will meet in the Principal's office. An evening meeting and/or an early meeting (7:45 am) of the team has been suggested if the incident happens outside school hours. This is to ensure the team is well prepared and has a plan in place for the school day ahead.
- Have a strict embargo on information until this meeting has been held. The Team will agree a statement of facts for staff, students, parents and media. If the incident occurs outside of school time the Principal and Deputy Principal will notify all staff members. If the school is inaccessible the team will convene at X time.
- The NEPS psychologist will be invited to attend the meeting.

### **Decide:**

- How to break the news to relatives and close friends (they must always be told first & separately)
- How to break the news to staff
- How to break news to rest of students
- How to identify vulnerable students
- Whether to take down the school website
- Issues relating to school routine - recommended the school day runs as normal, this will provide a sense of safety and structure which is comforting to students. Teachers should give students (who have been affected) an opportunity to talk and shelve academic activities for a time before resuming normal routines as soon as possible.

- Decide on a quiet room (prayer room) / post briefing room (Principal office)/ recovery room (GP hall) and assign staff to be present with students and encourage return to routine when appropriate.
- Room for external agencies, if relevant.
- In the event of the death of a fellow student or staff member a book of condolences will be made available (possibly in the Prayer room) to allow students and staff to offer their condolence to the bereaved family.

**3. The Principal, with the assistance of the Deputy Principal, will contact the Parents of those involved, or in the case of staff, will contact the relatives of those nominated by staff.**

- Express sympathy and support
- Offer any practical help needed
- Enquire if parent is alone or has someone to offer support
- Carefully review with parent that the information given has been fully understood
- Alerting parents to a trauma will help them when they subsequently make contact with their child

**4. The Principal will:**

- Contact the National Educational Psychological Service (**NEPS**)
- **Inform all staff** - relay the facts to staff and to plan for the day
- Inform the **Chairperson** of the Board of Management – decide whether an emergency meeting of Board is necessary
- Contact **Parents Association**
- If the bereaved family welcome his involvement, may **liaise** with the different hospitals dealing with the incident.

**5. The Deputy Principal will**

- Organise the school time-table for the day and subsequent days (if necessary).
- Provide a quiet room that students who are closely associated with those affected by the incident can go to, so that they can talk and be together. The

oratory or study hall may suit this purpose, if accessible and if considered suitable by the affected students and staff members. It is generally recommended this is used for one week following the incident and then its use reviewed.

- Liaise with the ancillary staff to ensure food & refreshments are available for all concerned.
- Liaise with technical staff re website.

#### **6. Two members of the C.I.R.T. will manage a room for parents /guardians.**

The breakfast room would suit this purpose, if accessible. Simple accurate information, as determined by the CIRT, will be given to parents and the necessity of trying to maintain a routine will be emphasised. Young people feel safe and encouraged when they observe that significant adults in their lives are coping and in control.

#### **7. Guidance Counsellor**

The Guidance Counsellor will have responsibility for managing the range of support services required during times of trauma. The three areas of responsibility i.e. Prevention, Intervention and Post-vention need to be addressed.

#### **8. Students**

Students will be monitored over a period of time by staff. Where there are signs of distress and/ or untypical behaviour the student will be seen by a Guidance Counsellor. The Guidance team will consult with NEPS and advice about the necessity for onward referral to appropriate agencies will be sought.

##### **Prevention**

- Assist in the development of programmes dealing with bereavement and suicide prevention
- Support and resource teachers involved in the delivery of SPHE
- Support the in-service of staff on loss, crisis management and suicide.

##### **Intervention**

- Clarify the role as coordinators of counselling services to be offered throughout the school community
- Outline specific services in terms of what, where and when
- Put in place a clear referral procedure to staff in dealing with students in distress

- Address immediate needs of staff.

### **Post-vention**

- On-going support to vulnerable students
- Effective identification and referral strategy
- Monitoring of bereaved class group/ friends.

### **Areas to be attended to:**

- Assist class teachers in informing students of the incident
- Provide staff with information on grief, identifying vulnerable students
- Meet vulnerable students
- Be available to meet distressed parents
- Debrief affected staff.

### **8. SEN/ Resource Staff: When the incident relates to a student associated with one of the resource rooms:**

- Students will be brought from classes to Resource room.
- They will be told the news as per direction above.
- The students will be allowed to remain in the Resource room with the staff for an appropriate period of time. The room will be closed to other staff apart from Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Resource Teachers and the students' SNAs.
- Parents will be contacted by Resource Teachers during the day and / or a letter (as per letter guidelines in this policy) will be sent home with each child.

### **Administrators/ Admin Office Staff.**

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of Parents/Guardians/Staff/ Emergency Services
- Take telephone calls and note those who need to be responded to
- Ensure the templates are on the school system in advance and ready for adaption
- Prepare and send out letters emails faxes
- Photocopy materials needed

- Maintain records

### **Media**

- Press will not be granted access to the premises
- The Principal/Chairperson will draft a media statement – it will not be delivered live (See Appendices for guidance)
- It will be brief, carefully considered and accurate/ shall advise staff that only they will deal with the media.
- The school website will be shut down.
- When appropriate a notice may be posted on a modified version of the website stating that a letter will issue outlining the school's schedule for the coming days.
- Parents will be advised not to allow their children to be interviewed as they do not have the maturity and judgement needed to handle it. It can sometimes lead to regret at a later stage or may increase distress for various parties.

### **SCHOOL TOURS**

**In the case of School Tours**, the Tour Leader will compile an information pack to include:

- Name of the Tour Leader
- A list of all participating teachers and pupils
- A list of mobile phone numbers for all participating teachers and pupils
- Passport details and (in the case of tours outside the country)
- Photographs of participating pupils
- Home contact numbers and mobiles of all involved
- Relevant medical information on pupils and permission forms from Parents in case of a medical emergency
- Insurance details
- Copy of itinerary
- A copy of this file should be left with the Principal prior to departure. School mobile phones will be made available to staff for outings, trips etc.



### **Confidentiality and Reputational Consideration**

The management and staff of CBS Roscommon recognise they have responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements and will seek to ensure that students do so also.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, and following implementation in the event of a critical incident.

### **Appendix:**

#### **PRINCIPAL'S CHECKLIST/ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The following is a checklist of the things to consider on the morning of a tragedy. They are not written in order of what must come first etc. It is important for a Principal to take time to plan what he/she must do and what is appropriate to say to all concerned.

- Take time to let the news sink in
- Call a meeting of the Care Teams; include Year Head of deceased student.
- Put together as much factual information as possible
- Inform staff what has happened.
- Discuss school routine for the first day with the staff.
- Identify particular students who may need to be told individually, e.g. close friends, relatives etc.
- Inform the pupils that a student has tragically died and explain that this is something everyone will find difficult to cope with. Explain school routine for the day and support and back-up for the students.
- Contact local NEPS.
- Make contact with the family of the deceased.
- Meet with key staff that can offer student support and decide on the format for this.
- Decide on any other arrangements which need to be made on the first day e.g. prayers for the student and his/her family.
- Check in with staff in the staff room during the day and keep abreast of what is happening in the school.
- Be aware of any particular teachers who may be particularly distressed, e.g. teachers who are recently bereaved themselves or who have had prior experience of suicide in their family.

- Encourage staff to come to you during the day and let you know how things are going.
- Find out details of the funeral etc. And communicate this to staff and students
- Make contact with the bereaved family.
- At the end of the first day review events with staff and make plans for the following day.
- Make staff aware of students who are particularly vulnerable and what supports will be available to them.
- If there is a likelihood of interest from the media discuss a strategy to deal with any such requests.

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting**

**held on : March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

**Implemented March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

**Review Date: May 2018**

## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOL PLAN

### CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Role	Name and email address	Telephone number
Team Leader	Principal/Deputy Principal	
Garda Liaison	Community Garda	
Staff Liaison	Principal	
Student Liaison	Seamus O'Doherty	
Parent Liaison	Principal/Deputy Principal	
Community Liaison	NEPS	
Media Liaison	Principal/Chairperson	
Administrator	Principal	

### SHORT TERM ACTIONS - DAY 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Senior Management Team (SMT)
Who, what, when, where?	SMT
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	SMT
Contact external agencies	SMT
Arrange supervision for students	SMT

Hold staff meeting	Principal/DP
Agree schedule for the day	Principal/DP
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Principal/DP/Learning Support/Guidance
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Year Heads
Contact/visit the bereaved family	SMT
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with the media	Principal and Chairperson
Inform parents/guardians	Principal/Deputy Principal
Hold end of day staff briefing	Principal and Deputy Principal

### **MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS – (DAY 2 AND FOLLOWING DAYS)**

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader Principal and Deputy Principal
Meet external agencies	Guidance Counsellor

Meet whole staff	Principal
Arrange support for students, staff, parents/guardians	Principal/Guidance Counsellor
Visit the injured	Principal/DP
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal/Deputy Principal
Agree an attendance and participation at funeral service	Senior Management Team
Make decisions about school closure	Board of Management

### **FOLLOW UP BEYOND 72 HOURS**

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Guidance Counsellor
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Principal and Guidance Counsellor/Year Head
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Religion Dept.
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

## EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

(To be displayed in staff-room, school office and Principal's office etc.)

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
GARDA	
HOSPITAL	
FIRE BRIGADE	
LOCAL GPs	
HSE/Primary Care Team/Primary Care Centre/CAMHS/ Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention	
SCHOOL INSPECTOR	
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	
DES/ETB	
INTO/ASTI/TUI	
PARISH PRIEST /CLERGY	
STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION	
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800411057