Critical Incident Policy

At all times, St. Patrick's N.S. aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment as defined in our Mission statement. The Board of Management, through the Principal, has drawn up the following Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Aim

The aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CITM) is "to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable them to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff". Having a good plan will also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It will enable the school to return to normality as soon as possible.

Definition of Critical Incident

The staff and management of St. Patrick's 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, their family members or members of the local community e.g.

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school
- An accident involving members of the school community on or off the school premises
- 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

St. Patrick's N.S. has put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students through our SPHE/RSE programmes, 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 extinguishers are regularly checked
- Morning and evening supervision
- Pre-opening supervision in the school on days of inclement weather e.g. frost, rain, snow
- General school rules under the school's behavior policy to ensure all pupils have a safe environment

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of St. Patrick's N.S. also 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)

- It is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by including 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
- The Weaving Well Being Programme has been introduced for pupils in 2nd to 6th class.
- Staffs 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
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. HSE/NEPS
- Inputs on students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about students' 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
- Staff are informed about how to access support themselves

Emergency Information for School Trips

- List of all pupils/staff involved and teacher in charge
- List of mobile phone numbers for accompanying teacher(s)
- Up to date medical information on pupils with allergies, epilepsy, etc.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CITM 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 access to the schools Critical Incident Management Folder which include all of the following:

- A copy of the Critical Incident Management Team/ and the Key Roles
- An emergency contact list/school staff contact list
- A copy of the duties of each team member
- A copy of the Board of Management members and contacts
- An Action Plan Template

Key Roles and Responsibilities of the CIMT

- Team Leader-Ger Kelleher
- Garda liaison – Ger Kelleher
- Staff liaison – Catherine Hynes
- Student liaison- Jean Hannon
- Parent liaison – Ger Kelleher
- Community liaison – Catherine Hynes
- Media liaison – Jean Hannon
- Administrator – Jean Hannon

The Following are the Key Responsibilities of Each Role

Team Leader

- Alert the team members to the crises and convenes a meeting
- Co-ordinate the task of the team
- Liaise with the Board of Management: DES: NEPS:
- Liaise with the bereaved family

The Deputy Principal will assume this role in the absence of the team leader.

Garda Liaison

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

Staff Liaison

- 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

Community/ Agency liaison

- Maintain up to date lists of contact numbers – members of the Parents Council, emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaise with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Check credentials of individuals offering support
- Co-ordinate the involvement of these agencies
- Remind agency staff to wear name badges
- Update team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent Liaison

- Visit the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arrange parent meetings if held - Facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Set up room for meetings with parents
- Meet with individual parents
- Maintain a record of parents
- Manage the consent issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensure that sample letters are typed up, on the school's systems and ready for adaptation
- Provide appropriate materials for parents (from the Critical Incident Folder)

Media Liaison

- 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

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers
- Parents or guardians
- Emergency services
- Take telephone calls and note those that need to be responded to
- Ensure that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepare to send out letters, emails and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records
- Ensure that the school has up to date medical information on pupils.
- Ensures Emergency contact details are displayed in the staff room and office

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, materials used etc. The administrator will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The management and staff of St. Patrick's have 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 statement. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, 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:

- Staff room used to meet the staff
- Hall for meetings with students
- 2nd class/Hall for parents
- Staff Room for media
- 1st class classroom for other visitors

Consultation and Communication Regarding the Plan

All staff were consulted and regard was given to their views in the preparation of this policy and plan. 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 access to a personal copy of the plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the school principal.

Date of Review:

_____

Chairperson's Signature

_____

Principal's Signature

_____

Date of Next Review:_____

_____

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE FOR SCHOOL PLAN

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

ROLE	NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER (HOME AND MOBILE)
Team Leader	Ger Kelleher	087 9022135
Garda Liaison	Ger Kelleher	087 9022135
Staff Liaison	Catherine Hynes	087 4190839
Student Liaison	Jean Hannon	086 8506181
Parent Liaison	Ger Kelleher	087 9022135
Community Liaison	Catherine Hynes	087 4190839
Media Liaison	Jean Hannon	086 8506181
Administrator	Jean Hannon	087 9022135

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Ger Kelleher
Who, what, when, where?	Ger Kelleher
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place	Catherine Hynes
Contact external agencies	Ger Kelleher
Arrange supervision for students	Jean Hannon
Hold Staff meeting	All Staff
Agree schedule for the day	Ger Kelleher
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Ger Kelleher
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Ger Kelleher
Contact/visit the bereaved family	Ger Kelleher/Catherine Hynes
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Ger Kelleher/ Jean Hannon
Inform Parents	Ger Kelleher /Catherine Hynes
Hold end of day staff briefing	Catherine Hynes

Medium Term actions – (Day 2 and followings days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team Leader
Meet external agencies	Ger Kelleher
Meet whole staff	Ger Kelleher
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Ger Kelleher
Visit the injured	Catherine Hynes
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Catherine Hynes
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	All Staff
Make decisions about school closure	B.O.M.

Follow-up- beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class Teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Principal
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	
Review response to incident and review plan	Staff/BOM

Emergency Contact List

AGENCY	
GARDA	Bruff Garda Station
HOSPITAL	Regional Limerick 061 301111
FIRE BRIGADE	Kilmallock 061 556859
LOCAL GPS	Blossom Gate Health Centre 063 98484
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	Christine Sheehan
DES	090 6483600
INTO/ASTE/TUI	01 8047700 or Lo call 1850708708
PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY	Canon Shire 087 6924563
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800411057
CAMHS	061 483388
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT CHAIRPERSON	Síle De Cléir