



Scoil Mhuire National School, Rosslare, Co. Wexford

Principal: Bobby Kenny

Board of Management Chairperson: Fr. James Murphy

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Acceptance, Appreciation and Achievement for All

Critical Incident Policy

Introduction:

Scoil Mhuire, Rosslare aims to protect the well-being of students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Our mission statement: *Scoil Mhuire is a Catholic school which nurtures acceptance, appreciation and achievement for all* expresses this caring ethos. The Board of Management, along with the Principal, Mr Bobby Kenny, has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans. Our aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team to steer the implementation of the plan.

Definition:

A critical incident is any accident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school. Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of the local community. Such 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 involving violence against staff personnel and/or members of the student body.
- An accident/tragedy 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.

Aim:

The aim of the C.I.M.P. (Critical Incident Management Plan) 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.

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:

- A Health and Safety statement was formulated and ratified by the Board of Management on the 22/10/2019
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular Fire Drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Fire Alarm system is serviced at appropriate times
- Before and after school supervision
- Exit doors locked/under code during school time
- Playground is supervised at break times by teachers and SNAs
- Playground divided into areas for different age-groups (Covid restrictions require that all classes play as one bubble)

Psychological Safety:

The management and staff of Scoil Mhuire, Rosslare 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.

The following programmes are in use: -

- SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) supports the physical, mental, social and spiritual development and wellbeing of all members of the school community. Where well implemented, it has a significant role to play in the creation of healthy, nurturing and safe environments. It is a “universal” intervention, targeting all pupils, and thus enhancing the health of the whole school population. It should be integrated with the academic, social, emotional, recreational and artistic life of the school. It is critical to the whole school strategy that encourages students to develop their values and attitudes and helps provide the life skills they need to live healthy lives in the wider community. Programmes used include R.S.E., Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, Weaving Wellbeing, Friends for Life, Time to Talk, Zones of Regulation and the Religious Education programme, Grow In Love.
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE.
- Deputy Principal duties encompass SPHE and RSE as part of the duties
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with concerns or disclosures.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy, the school’s Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy which complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post - Primary Schools 2013.
- Restorative Practice is used at our school.
- NEPS Continuum of Support may be used as part of a care system for students who are identified as in need of support. Such students are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. support teachers, Deputy Principal 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.
- If staff have immediate concerns about a pupil under the Critical Incident definition, the pupil/s will be referred to the C.I.M.T (Critical Incident Management Team) who will seek assistance and support for them. Parents/Guardians are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to the appropriate agency.
- Other school policies which may have relevance to this policy include:
 - Substance Use Policy
 - Acceptable Use Policy
 - Attendance Policy

NOTE: *The DES and NEPS Document: Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016)* is the primary resource on which this policy is based. This resource is available online and a copy is available in the school.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A C.I.M.T. 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 life of the current Board of Management. The members of the team will meet once during the life of the board 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.

Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)

Roles:

Team Leader, Garda, Family and agency Liaison: Principal

- Alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates tasks.
- Liaises with the Gardaí and the relevant family.
- Liaises with BOM, DES, NEPS, CWEC (Co. Wexford Education Centre), HSE, TUSLA, legal professionals etc.
- Ensures that any information is checked out for accuracy before being shared.
- Visits family with member of In School Management/BOM as appropriate

Student and staff Liaison: Deputy Principal

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students appropriately
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of students seen by external agencies
- Looks after setting up and supervision of “quiet” room where agreed
- Visits family concerned with the team leader, as appropriate
- 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
- Leads briefings for staff on facts as known, gives staff opportunities to ask questions, outlines routine for the day
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members, contacts them individually
- Provides material for staff (from Critical Incident Folder)
- Advises staff of availability of Employee Assistance Service provided by Spectrum.Life
The EAS is accessible through the dedicated **Free-phone Confidential Helpline** at **1800 411 057** and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Alternatively, text ‘Hi’ to 087 369 0010 to avail of EAS support on SMS & WhatsApp.

Parent Liaison: All AP II Post Holders

- Arranges parent meetings, if held and may facilitate such meetings and manages “questions and answers”
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)
- Assist with other tasks as deemed necessary

Community/Agency Liaison: Fr. James and Mary O’Connor

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers
 - key parents such as members of the Parent’s Council
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral and co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Is alert to the need to check the credentials of individuals offering support
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Media Liaison: Principal

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 CWEC, relevant teacher unions etc.,
- Will draw up a press statement, organise media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator: Georgina Peare

- 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
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records
- Provides resources – DES, INTO etc.,

Record Keeping

An emergency pack containing a number of key documents will be available for members of the CIMT in the event of an emergency, e.g. emergency contact lists, checklists, etc. Each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, persons met, meetings held, interventions used etc.

Confidentiality and Good Name considerations

The management and staff of Scoil Mhuire 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.

Critical incident room

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms will be used:

- The staff room will be used to meet with staff
- The G.P. or classroom for meetings with student body
- The Principal's Office for meetings with parents, the media, relevant others
- Special Education Teaching Rooms as quiet rooms which can be used by the students
- The office lobby to be used for other visitors, as a waiting area

Consultation and Communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Parents representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments. A copy of our school's final policy and plan has been presented to all staff and is available in the school office for all interested parties to view. Each member of the C.I.M.T. has a personal copy of the CIM plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal, Team Leader.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed as deemed necessary or in 2024.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M. at a meeting held on _____

Signed _____

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Principal and Deputy Principal
Who, what, when, where?	CIMT agree on duties
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Principal
Contact external agencies	Principal
Arrange supervision for students	Deputy Principal
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	CIMT
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Principal/Deputy
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Deputy Principal and SET
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Media Liaison
Inform parents	Assistant Principal II Personnel
Hold end of day staff briefing	Deputy Principal

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Principal
Meet external agencies	Principal
Meet whole staff	Principal/Chair BOM
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Deputy Principal
Visit the injured	Principal/Deputy/Chairperson BOM
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal/Deputy

Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	CIMT
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

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)	SET, Deputy Principal
Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family	AP II Personnel

Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

Emergency Contact List

Garda Rosslare	9132103
Garda Wexford	9122333
Hospital	9142233
Fire Brigade	9122618
Local GP	9132800
School Inspector – Mary O Regan	01 889 6400
NEPS Psychologist – Teresa Tierney – Psychologist	01 889 2700
DES	Dublin – 018896400 Tullamore – 0579324300 Athlone - 0906483600
INTO	018047700 / 1850708708
Priest – Fr James (Community/Agency Liaison)	0878152637 / 9132118
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
Area Medical Officer (Grogan’s Rd)	9123522
CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health) (Grogan’s Rd)	9123522
Social Workers HSE (Ely House)	9123433
HSE Community Care Services (Grogan’s Rd)	9147718
Co Wexford Education Centre	0539239100

Critical Incident Management Team

Name
Bobby Kenny - Principal
Annette Moroney – AP II Post Holder
Anne Marie Carthy - AP II Post Holder
Fr James Murphy
Mary O Connor
Eilis Kavanagh – Deputy Principal
Georgina Peare

Board of Management

Bobby Kenny
Fr James Murphy
Mary O Connor
Caroline Lacey
Grainne Gorman
Tressan Scott
Anita Power (Parent Nominee)
Stephen Ainsworth (Parent Nominee)

Other significant numbers:

St Vincent de Paul (Rosslare)	Contact Mary O'Connor
Rosslare Community Centre	0539132202

Aladdin

Sign in details for administration of Aladdin are available from:

Bobby Kenny

Eilis Kavanagh

Georgina Peare

TEMPLATES FOR LETTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Templates for use during Critical Incident

1. Parental Consent for child to meet NEPS psychologist (group or individual)

This letter can be used as a template for schools when they are seeking parental consent for a child to be seen in a group or individually by a NEPS psychologist.

Dear parents/guardians,

You may already know that our teachers and staff have been providing support to our students following (specific reference to incident)

Additional support is also being provided to our school by psychologist/s from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

The psychologist will be available, where necessary, to meet with individuals or with groups of students to help them during this difficult time.

The aim of such sessions will be to:

- (a) Provide information about dealing with grief and loss in a healthy way
- (b) Allow students the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings in a safe environment
- (c) Allow students time to comfort and support each other, under the guidance of experienced staff from
- (d) Help students resume their normal routines as soon as possible.

If you would like for your son/daughter to participate in such a session and any follow-up meetings that might be scheduled, please give your consent by signing below.

You should return it to the school immediately:

If you have any questions, please contact (**Name and phone number of contact person**).

I give my consent for _____ to participate in a Group/Individual Session
Student Name

Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

Sincerely

School Principal

Templates for use during Critical Incident

2. Inform parents of a tragedy

This letter can be used as a template for schools when they are informing parents of a tragedy, offering some advice and outlining what the school's response involves.

Dear parents/guardians,

The school has experienced (the sudden death, an accidental injury, etc.) of (Name of student(s)). We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events.

(Brief details of the incident, and in the event of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost)

Our thoughts are with (family name)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. (Elaborate).

It is possible that your child may have some feelings and questions that he/she may like to discuss with you. It is important to give factual information that is appropriate to their age.

You can help your child by taking time to listen and by encouraging them to express their feelings. All children are different and will express their feelings in different ways. It is not uncommon for children to have difficulty concentrating or to be fearful, anxious, or irritable. They may become withdrawn, cry, complain of physical aches and pains, have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares. Some may not want to eat. These are generally short term reactions. Over the course of the days to come, please keep an eye on your child and allow him/her to express their feelings without criticism.

Although classes will continue as usual, I anticipate that the next few days will be difficult for everyone.

(Optional) An information night for parents is planned for (date, time and place). At that time, further information about how to help children in grief will be given.

We have enclosed some information, which you may find useful in helping your child through this difficult time.

If you would like advice you may contact the following people at the school (details)

School Principal

Templates for use during Critical Incident

3. Inform parents of a violent death

This letter may be used as a template for schools when they are informing parents of a violent death, offering some advice and outlining what the school response involves.

Dear Parents

I need to inform you about a very sad event that has happened.

(Give accurate information about the incident, but avoid using the word murder as this will not be established until the court case is completed).

A child/young person from the neighbourhood, who is the brother of _____. A student here at school, was killed as a result of (a violent attack, violent incident in the street etc.,) earlier this week. We are profoundly saddened by his death.

We have shared this information and have had discussions with all of our students so that they know what has happened. School staff members have been available for students on an on-going basis today. Other support personnel (including psychologists etc., according to the actual arrangements) are available to advise staff and, where necessary, to talk to students. This support will continue to be available for (if appropriate insert how long).

The death of any young person is tragic, but a violent death is even more difficult. It is hard to have to teach our children about the violence in our world and to accept that sometimes we do not have the power to prevent it.

This death may cause a variety of reactions in your child. Some children/young people may be afraid for their own life and for the lives of those they love. Take time to listen to their fears and reassure them that what has happened is rare.

We have enclosed some additional information that may be useful during this time.

The media are in the vicinity of the school and may approach you or your children. You need not respond to their questions if you are approached. We will not allow the media to interview your child at school and our general advice is that you should not let your children be interviewed. They are not mature enough to judge what to say and may say something they will regret later.

(If planned) a support meeting for parents is planned for (date, time and place). At that time, we can talk further about how to help ourselves and our children.

Our thoughts are with (family name) and with each of you.

Sincerely

School Principal

Templates for use during Critical Incident

4. Sample announcement to the media

This can be used as a template by schools to be emailed, faxed, or given to the media. It may help to decrease the number of media calls and callers to the school.

In some instances, it is not appropriate to provide names or information that might identify individuals.

This announcement will need to be changed based upon confidentiality issues, the wishes of the victim's family and the nature of the incident.

My name is _____ and I am the Principal of (name school). We learned this morning of the death of (one of our students or Name of student). This is a terrible tragedy for _____ family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with (Name) family and friends.

Name of student/students was a (5th year boy) and will be greatly missed by all those who knew him.

We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists for the National Education Psychological Services (NEPS) and (insert other information if relevant) have been with us all day supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time.

The teachers have been helping students to deal with the tragic event.

The school is open to parents, to support them and to offer them advice and guidance.

We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.