



Presentation Primary
School Bandon



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Critical Incident Policy

Introduction:

In Presentation Primary School we aim to protect the well-being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The Board of Management, through the principal and staff, has drawn up a critical incident management plan. They have established a Critical Incident Management Team (C.I.M.T) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

The roles designated to the C.I.M.T members are important and they must be respected. The C.I.M.T members will follow the protocols set out below and it is expected all staff will do likewise. A calm, measured reaction alongside clear communication is vital in the event of any critical incident.

Definition of a Critical Incident:

As per Dept. of Education Guidelines Presentation Primary School recognises that "A critical incident is an incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school" (Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2008). Critical incidents may involve pupils, staff, and other members of the school or local community.

Types of incidents may include:

- A serious accident or tragedy in the school community.
- Serious damage to the school through fire, flooding, vandalism etc.
- A physical assault on a pupil or staff member.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, suicide or illness.

- Intrusion into the school.
- Unexpected evacuation of the school. (e.g., bomb threat)
- Unauthorized removal of pupil from school or home.
- Closure of the school because of infectious diseases
- World events that may affect the student body and/or staff.

Aims:

Recognising that the key to managing critical incidents is planning, Presentation Primary School has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying Plan. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.

The Board of Management places no obligation on any staff member to intervene in a critical incident situation if by so doing he/she is placing him/herself or others at risk.

The Board of Management will have a Health and Safety Statement in place, which will be reviewed regularly. Measures are in place to address both the physical and psychological safety of the pupils and staff. Among the measures to ensure physical safety include:

- Health and safety statement for the school.
- Regular fire drills and evacuation procedures.
- Regular checking of fire exits and extinguishers.
- Exit doors kept closed during school time.
- School yard rules and Code of Behaviour in place and regularly discussed with children.
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard.
- Sign-out procedures for pupils (Aladdin).
- Updated contact details for staff, and in case of emergency numbers (in secretary's computer folder)
- Updated contact details for parents/guardians. (Folders in secretary's office and saved on Aladdin)
- Record of pupils who may have specific medical needs.

- First Aid Boxes maintained in the building.

A number of policies and strategies also support the psychological safety of the pupils and staff.

- The Child Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
- Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, addressing areas such as grief and loss, communication skills, conflict management, substance misuse etc. Particularly Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Weaving Well-being etc.
- Access to resources and support e.g., Employee Assistance Service, NEPS: 'When Tragedy Strikes', Online Resources etc.
- Links with outside agencies e.g., National Anti-Bullying Centre, DCU, NEPS, Primary Care Psychology.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy.
- The Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy.
- NEPS 'School Refusal' guidance
- The School Code of Discipline.
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy

External Resources:

In the event of a critical incident the school may contact NEPS, Barnardo's, the Irish National Teachers Organisation, the Catholic Primary School Management Association and other support agencies/organisations as necessary to access support.

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 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 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. Remote access is also possible and the primary team members will be given administrative access to the Aladdin Schools system which enables contact to be made with all staff and families in the school. All staff members will be given an email copy of the plan. Contact Details of all staff and pupils are available in school, through the office folders. The Aladdin online administration system allows for 24-hour remote access to all staff and pupil contact details from within and outside of the school.

Team Leader: Jill Kelly, Principal/ Bernadette Ryan Deputy Principal,

Garda Liaison: Jill Kelly

Staff Liaison: Eithne O' Mahony

Student Liaison: Denise Lucey

Parent Liaison: Jill Kelly/ Bernadette Ryan

Community Liaison/ Pastoral Care: Teresa Manning

Media Liaison: Bernadette Ryan

Administrator: Cliona Wilson (School Secretary).

BOM Rep: Paddy Duggan

The members of the team are listed and published in the school.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Team:

Team Leader/ School Principal: Jill Kelly

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
 - Confirms the event.
- Activate the Critical Incident response team.
- Liaise with the Gardaí/Emergency services as appropriate.
- Liaise with the Board of Management, with the Department of Education and Skills and with any outside agencies involved as appropriate.
- Co- ordinate involvement of such agencies.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.

Garda Liaison: Jill Kelly

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

Staff Liaison: Eithne O' Mahony

- 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. (1800 411 057).

Parent Liaison: Jill Kelly/ Bernadette Ryan

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy

Community Liaison/ Pastoral Care: Teresa Manning

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
- Is alert to the need to 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

Pupil Liaison: Denise Lucey

- Gathering information from class teacher/SET regarding the needs of the class or particular students as a result of the incident.
- Gathering information from class-teacher regarding child's friends, absentees and anyone who may need to be contacted.
- Alerting teachers other than class teachers to vulnerable students as appropriate.
- Provide materials for staff (from critical incident folder and 'Ready to Go Pack').
- Disseminate appropriate information to pupils as necessary (See 'Ready to go Pack').
- Organise an assembly/ prayer service or Mass for the school community to congregate.
- Keep records of pupils seen by external agency staff. (e.g., NEPS).
- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable students.
- Monitor class most affected.

Media Liaison: Bernadette Ryan

- 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 relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement (R4), give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator: Clíona Wilson

Maintenance of up-to-date telephone numbers of - Parents or guardians - Teachers - Emergency services (regularly update the list).

- 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
 - Use of Aladdin to make contact with the Parent body.

Record Keeping:

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep detailed records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Letter to Parents

The principal will prepare a brief, written statement to include:

The sympathy of the school community for the affected/bereaved family.

Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured person(s).

The facts of the incident.

What has been done.

What is going to be done.

Confidentiality and good name considerations:

Management and staff of Presentation Primary School 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. Members of 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 Room:

In the event of a critical incident, the Staff Room will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

In the event of a need to accommodate a second group, the large shared resource room will be used.

In the event of needing to cater for a larger group, the hall will be used.

Development and communication of this policy and plan:

Our school's final policy and procedures in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff. Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the principal.

CIMT Action Plan

Action Plan

Short-term Actions - Day 1

| Task | Name |
|--|--|
| Gather accurate information | Jill Kelly |
| Who, what, when, where? | Staff (who will attend school a half hour earlier than usual), Chairperson, NEPS (if school community is not coping) |
| Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly | Eithne O' Mahony |
| Contact external agencies | Jill Kelly/ Clfona Wilson (emergency services, medical services, the Board of Management, NEPS, HSE-Children's Services, Teacher Unions) |
| Arrange supervision for students | Denise Lucey: SEN teachers will be available to help with supervision. |
| Hold staff meeting | All staff |
| Agree schedule for the day | Keep to normal routine as much as possible. |
| Inform students (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately) | Denise Lucey |
| Compile a list of vulnerable students | Denise Lucey |

Medium-term Actions- Day 2 and Subsequent Days

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1 | Jill Kelly / Bernadette Ryan |
| Meet external agencies | Jill Kelly |
| Meet whole staff | All Staff in Staff Room |
| Arrange support for students, staff, parents | Cliona Wilson if deemed necessary. |
| Visit the injured | Teresa Manning |
| Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements | Teresa Manning/ Jill Kelly |
| Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service | Jill Kelly/ Bernadette Ryan |
| Make decisions about school closures | B.O.M./ Jill Kelly |

Follow-up-beyond 72 hours

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Monitor students for signs of continuing distress | Denise Lucey/ Class teachers |
| Liaise with agencies regarding referrals | Jill Kelly/ Cliona Wilson |
| Inform New Staff and Pupils | <u>Jill Kelly</u> |

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Formalise plan for the future | Jill Kelly |
| Decide on memorials and an appropriate way to mark anniversaries | Jill Kelly and Bernadette Ryan |

Critical Incident Management Team/Role

| Role | Name | Telephone Number (home and mobile) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Team Leader | Jill Kelly Bernadette Ryan | (086) 3317184 (086) 8830124 |
| Garda Liaison | Jill Kelly | (086) 3317184 |
| Staff Liaison | Eithne O' Mahony | (087) 6167044 |
| Student Liaison | Denise Lucey | (086) 0817545 |
| Parent Liaison | Jill Kelly Bernadette Ryan | (086) 3317184 (086) 8830124 |
| Community Liaison/ Pastoral Care | Teresa Manning | (086) 3984259 |
| Media Liaison | Bernadette Ryan | (086) 8830124 |
| Administrator | Cliona Wilson (School Secretary) | (086) 8930893 |
| Board Of Management Rep | Paddy Duggan | (086) 1006083 |

Emergency Contact List

| Agency | Contact Numbers |
|---|---|
| Garda | (023) 8852200 |
| Hospital CUH Emergency Department Mercy South Infirmary Bons Secours HSE Health Doctor | (021) 4546400 (021) 4271971 (021) 4926100 (021) 4542807 (021) 4927601 |
| Fire Brigade/ Ambulance | 999/112 |
| Local GPS Millbrook Medical Centre Ballymodan Surgery Bandon Medical Clinic Weir Family Health Clinic | (023) 8841132 (023) 8844577 (023) 8842253 (023) 8852918 |
| Tusla | (021) 4923493 (028) 40447 |
| Bandon Family Resource Centre | Louise Hackett (086) 0253705 |
| NEPS Psychologist | Cait Fair (087) 2281528 |
| Department of Education | (090) 6483600 |

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| INTO/ASTI/TUI | (01) 8047700 |
| Parish Priest/Clergy | (023) 8841666 (087) 6472406 |
| Chairperson Paddy Duggan | (086) 1006083 |
| Parents Association Rep Aishling Drake | (086) 3920009 |
| Employee Assistance Service | 1800 411 057 |
| ESB | 1850 37 39 99 |
| Dessi (David) Electrician | (087) 6469466 |
| Billy (Caretaker) | (086) 3183281 |
| GAS Emergency Number | 1850 20 50 50 |
| Water Services | (023) 8841181 (021) 4971411 (out of hours). |

Ratification and Review:

This policy was reviewed in May 2023 and will be reviewed annually by the Critical Incident Management Team and brought to the Board of Management.

The policy will be disseminated annually to staff and will be available to all staff in the case of a critical incident.

The policy will be available for viewing on the school's website.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: _____

Signed: _____

(Chairman)

Signed: _____

(Principal)