



# CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

## Gaelscoil Thiobraid Arann

### Introduction

Gaelscoil Thiobraid Arann aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times as outlined in the school's mission statement. The Board of Management through the Acting Principal, Mairéad Ni Fhathaigh, in conjunction with the in school management team has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

### Definition of a Critical Incident

The staff and management of Gaelscoil Thiobraid Arann 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, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include:

1. The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unsuspected death.
2. An intrusion into the school.
3. An accident involving members of the school community.
4. An accident/tragedy in the wider community.
5. Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
6. The disappearance of a member of the school community.

### Aim

The aim of the CIMP 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. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

### 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

Here are some examples of the physical safety precautions that have been addressed to date:

1. Evacuation plan formulated.
2. Regular fire drills occur.
3. Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked.
4. Children reminded of playground rules regularly.

## Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Gaelscoil Thiobraid Arann 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. For example:

1. Social, Personal and Health education is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing 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.
2. Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE (CPD)
3. Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures.
4. Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available.
5. Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
6. Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness, if/when necessary
7. The school has developed links with agencies such as Children and Family Services in Tipp South (HSE).
8. The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy.
9. Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the DLP, 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.
10. Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

## Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team will be selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one 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 the role, to be used in the event of an incident.

## Preparation of CIMP

### Roles

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Team Leader            | Nóra Uí Mhurchú                          |
| Substitute Team Leader | Mairéad Ní Fhathaigh                     |
| Gárda Liaison          | Mairéad Ní Fhathaigh                     |
| Staff Liaison          | Mairéad Ní Fhathaigh                     |
| Student Liaison        | Bríde Nic Sheoin                         |
| Parent Liaison         | HSCL+Muinteoir Ranga+Priomhoide          |
| Community Liaison      | Mags Nic Shuibhne +Rúnaí na Scoile       |
| Media Liaison          | Mairéad Ní Fhathaigh +Bord Bainistíochta |
| Administrator          | Shona Ní Riain                           |

### Duties of Roles

#### Team Leader

1. Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
2. Coordinates the tasks of the team
3. Liaises with the BOM and DES
4. Liaises with the bereaved family
5. Liaises with the Gárdai
6. Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared

#### Staff Liaison

1. Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions and outlines the routine for the day
2. Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
3. Provides materials for staff
4. Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
5. Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
6. Advises them of the availability of the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) and gives them the contact number

#### Student Liaison



1. Alerts other staff to vulnerable students
2. Provides materials for students from critical incident folder
3. Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff

### **Community/Agency Liaison**

1. Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of key parents, emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
2. Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
3. Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
4. Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
5. Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
6. Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

### **Parent Liaison**

1. Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
2. Arrange parent meetings if needs be
3. May facilitate such meetings and manage 'questions and answers'
4. Manage the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
5. Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
6. Sets up room for meetings with parents
7. Maintains a record of parents seen
8. Meets with individual parents
9. Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

### **Media Liaison**

1. In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. Students being interviewed, photographer on premises)
2. In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the SEC, relevant teacher unions etc.
3. Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews as agreed by school management

### **Administrator**

1. Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of parents/guardians, teachers, emergency services



2. Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
3. Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
4. Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
5. Photocopies materials needed
6. Maintains records

### **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, material used etc.

### **Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations**

The management and staff of Gaelscoil Thiobraid Arann 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 statements. 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 phrase '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. Classrooms will be used for meeting students. Seomra Caitríona/Leabharlann will be used for meeting parents or the office for smaller meetings. Seomra Mags will be used for individual sessions with students.

### **Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents will be presented to all staff.

Each member of the critical incident team shall have a copy of the plan.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Acting Principal.

The plan will be updated every September.



## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

| Role              | Name  | Telephone Number         |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Team Leader       | Nóra Uí Mhurchú                             | 087 2458927              |
| Gárda Liaison     | Mairead Ní Fhathaigh                        | 087 9280794              |
| Staff Liaison     | Mairead Ní Fhathaigh                        | 087 9280794              |
| Student Liaison   | Bríde Nic Sheoin                            | 087 9311564              |
| Parent Liaison    | HSCL+ Mairead Ni Fhathaigh +Muinteoir Ranga | 0831461963<br>0879280794 |
| Community Liaison | Mags Nic Shuibhne + Shona Ní Riain          | 086 3111761              |
| Media Liaison     | Mairead Ní Fhathaigh + Bord Bainistíochta   | 087 9280794              |
| Administrator     | Shona Ní Riain                              | 087 6529159              |

## SHORT TERM ACTIONS –DAY 1

| Task   | Name   |
|--|--|
| Gather accurate information - Who, what, when, where?  | Foireann Bainistíochta Scoile (FBI)/In-school Management Team – Mairéad/Bríde/Mags |
| Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly  | Bríde  |
| Contact external agencies  | Mairead  |
| Arrange supervision for students   | Máiréad+Bríde+Shona  |
| Hold staff meetings  | Mairead  |
| Agree schedule for the day   | Mairead+Foireann Scoile  |
| Inform students – (Close friends and students with learning disabilities may need to be told separately) | Máiréad + Bríde  |
| Compile a list of vulnerable students  | FBI + HSCL   |
| Contact/visit the bereaved family  | Nóra+Mairead+Bríde   |
| Prepare and agree media statements   | Mairead+Nóra + all members of  |



|                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| and deal with media            | Board of Management |
| Inform parents                 | Mairéad             |
| Hold end of day staff briefing | Mairéad             |

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

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| Convene CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1         | Team Leader             |
| Meet external agencies                                     | Mairéad+Nóra+Bríde      |
| Meet whole staff   | Mairéad+Nóra            |
| Arrange support for students, staff and parents            | FBI                     |
| Visit the injured  | Nóra/Máiread/Bríde/HSCL |
| Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements | Mairéad                 |
| Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service   | Nóra+FBI                |
| Make decisions about school closure                        | BOM                     |

## FOLLOW UP – BEYOND 72 HOURS

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Monitor students for signs of continuing distress  | Class Teachers                  |
| Liaise with agencies regarding referrals           | SET+FBI                         |
| Plan for return of bereaved student(s)             | HSCL+Mairéad                    |
| Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family | HSCL                            |
| Decide on memorials and anniversaries              | BOM/staff, parents and students |
| Review response to incident and amend plan         | Staff/BOM                       |



## EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

| Agency                           | Contact Number          |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gárda                            | 062 80670               |
| Clonmel Hospital                 | 0526177000              |
| Fire Brigade                     | 112                     |
| Local GP                         | 062 87200               |
| Social Worker TUSLA              | 0526177302              |
| School Inspector                 | (01) 889 6553           |
| NEPS Psychologist Evelyn Buckley | (01) 8650799/0876502074 |
| DES                              | 01 889 6400             |
| INTO                             | (01) 804 7700           |
| Parish Priest                    | 087 2352996             |

Sínithe: \_\_\_\_\_

Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bainistíochta

Meitheamh 2023

Sínithe ag an gCathaoirleach ag cruinniú Bhoird 14ú/10/2025