Ard Rí Community National School

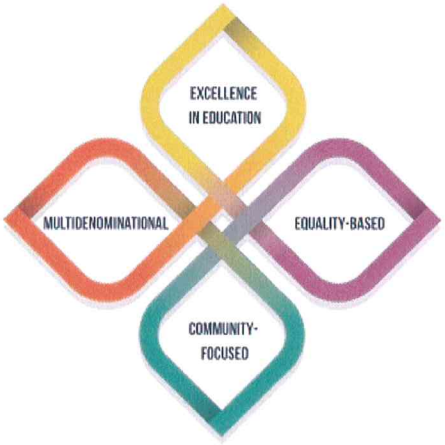
Balreask Old,
Navan,
Co. Meath

Roll No. 20352T

Critical Incident Policy

November 2017

Introduction:
In Ard Rí Community NS we aim to protect the wellbeing of our pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. As a Community National School our ethos is underpinned by four cornerstones.



The Board of Management, through the Principal, the Staff and the Parent Association has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans. They have established a Critical Incident Management Team to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

What is a Critical Incident?

The staff and management of Ard Rí Community National School recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school". Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community.

Examples:

- 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
- An accident involving members of the school community
- A major accident tragedy in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- Death, major illness/outbreak of disease
- Criminal incidents

Critical Incidents Management Plan

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

Creation of a 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: Ard Rí Community National School has a Health and Safety Policy in place. We strive to ensure the physical safety of our community by having in place:

- Evacuation plan
- Regular Fire Drills occur
- Up to date Health and Safety Statement
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision is in place in the school yard
- Front gate is kept closed during school hours
- School doors are closed during class time
- Garda vetting legislation is complied with
- 11 members of staff trained in Paediatric First Aid; NB Training Services 18.11.2017

Psychological Safety: The management and staff of Ard Rí Community National School aim to use available programs and resources to address the personal and social development of pupils, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion. Examples of such are as follows:

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. Issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; resilience; personal safety; substance abuse; bullying are addressed as part of the SPHE curriculum.
- Staff have access to training in skills which promote pupil well-being e.g. Playworks
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Procedures and the name of the Designated Liaison Person
- Workshops are available to parents to promote psychological well-being in their children e.g. Cyber-safety, Anti-Bullying, Supporting Your Child's Mental Health and Well-Being
- Staff are available to parents to discuss parental concerns in relation to pupil's well-being

- The school believes a healthy body leads to a healthy mind. We promote regular exercise and healthy eating.
- The school has a clear Anti-Bullying Policy and deals with incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system in place in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2007
- Staff are informed about and encouraged 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 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.

The key roles are as follows:

Team Leader: Darragh Roe- School Principal

Garda Liaison: Darragh Roe

Staff Liaison: Catherine Dooley

Student Liaison/ Counselling Role: Seán Flanagan- NEPS

This role will be supported by the class teacher as follows;

Junior Infants- Maria O'Connor

Junior/ Senior Infants- Catherine Dooley

Senior Infants- Karen Dunne

First Class- Ciara Olwill

First/Second Class- Naomi Keogh

Third Class- Jack Scannell

Fourth Class- Rachel Plummer

Fifth/Sixth Class- Edel Barry

Counsellor Role: Seán Flanagan- NEPS

Family Liaison/Community Liaison Role: Emer Kavanagh- Deputy Principal

This role will be supported by the Chair Person of the Parent Association; Avril Byrne

Chaplaincy Role: The Faith leader from which the parties belong. In the absence of a faith leader the staff will carry out these duties.

Media Liaison: David Cullivan- Chairperson of Board of Management

Roles and Responsibilities

Outlined below are some points on the key responsibilities of each role.

Team Leader:
- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; ETB; Gardaí
- Liaises with the bereaved family

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

Staff Liaison:
- Leads briefing meeting 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 pupils
- 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 to them individually

Student Liaison:
- Communicate information from teachers and SNAs about pupils they are worried about to NEPS/ counsellor/ Faith leader/ family as appropriate
- Alert other staff to vulnerable pupils (as appropriate)
- Provides materials for pupils (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains pupil contact records (R1)
- Looks after setting up and supervision of quiet room or other similar intervention/ facility as agreed

Family/ Community Liaison:
- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of key parents (e.g. members of officers on the Parent Association) and emergency support services
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges

- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies
- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges meetings/conferences, if held
- May facilitate such meetings and manage 'Q&A' sessions
- Manages the sample letters (available in their Critical Incident folder)
- Sets up a room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate support materials for parents (from their 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. preparing people to be interviewed, managing photographers on the premises)
- Will gather accurate information and draw up a press statement (as agreed by Board of Management/ LMETB), give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by Board of Management/ LMETB).
- Designate a spokesperson

Record Keeping: In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters, emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, materials used etc. The school secretary, Debi Marjara, 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 Ard Rí Community National School 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 confirmed information that death was due to suicide, and that the family involved consents to its use. The phrases 'sudden death' or 'tragic death' should be used instead etc

Longer Term Actions

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress:

If over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he/she may need assistance from the Health Board. Constant communication with family is essential. Possible examples of continuing distress could be:

- Uncharacteristic behavior
- Deterioration in academic performance

- Physical symptoms — e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness
- Inappropriate emotional reactions
- Increased absenteeism

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately. Discuss:

- What went well?
- Where were the gaps?
- What was most/least helpful?
- Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any unfinished business?

Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future:

- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
- Ensure that new staff are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area
- Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way
- When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, the Principal should brief the Principal of the new school

Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (Be sensitive to special days and events):

- Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time
- Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
- Need to be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day
- Plan a school memorial service
- Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
- Update and amend school records

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy is subject to annual review and update by the Board of Management

Signed: .....

Date: 21.11.2017.....

Board of Management Policy Consultation Record

Please present this form to your BOM when considering the policy at BOM level for ratification

School:	A20 RT Community NS
Policy:	Critical Incident Policy

Staff Consultation:

Date of Final Consultation:	20.11.2017
Proposed By:	Rachel Plummer *(Staff Member)*
Seconded By:	Naomi Keogh *(Staff Member)*

Student Consultation:

Date of Final Consultation:	
Proposed By:	*(Student)*
Seconded By:	*(Student)*

Parents Consultation:

Date of Final Consultation:	
Proposed By:	*(Parents Association Member)*
Seconded By:	*(Parents Association Member)*

BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for This Policy

BOM Ratification

Date Ratified by the Board of Management:	
Proposed By:	Linda Duffy
Seconded By:	Paul O'Toole
Signed:	*(Chairperson, BOM)*
Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:	

LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board

Date of Resolution of ETB Board	
Signed	*(Chairperson)*