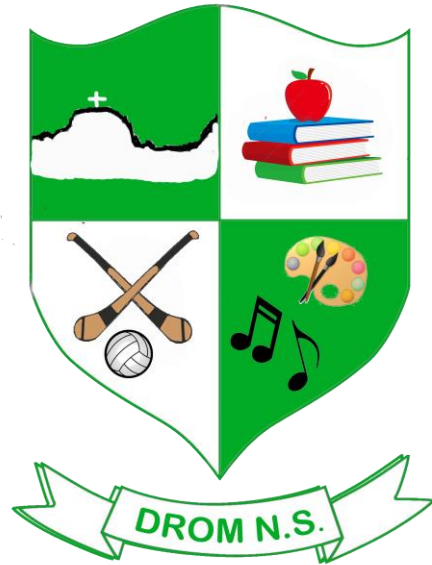


DROM NATIONAL SCHOOL
SCHOOL POLICY PLANNING



CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION:

In Drom National School we aim to protect the well-being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and well catered for environment as outlined in our school ethos statement.

The Board of Management through the Principal and Staff has drawn up a critical incident management plan. They have established a Critical Incidents Management Team to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

The staff and management of Drom National School 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:

- 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
- 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 OF THE CIMP

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

The following systems are currently in place to ensure the physical safety of the staff and students of our school:

Health & Safety

- The school Health & Safety Policy is reviewed annually and action plans are put in place to target identified risks.
- The school Supervision Policy is reviewed annually.
- An evacuation plan had been formulated and a detailed evacuation map is available in each room.
- A fire drill occurs in each term.
- Fire exits and extinguishers are checked annually.
- The school doors locked during class time. Access to the school during this time is through a secure electronic door.

Code of Conduct

- The Code of Conduct is reviewed each term with the students.

Child Protection Policy

- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Drom National School 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.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) 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

- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff 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 in the staff room.
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – National Educational Psychological Service
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers. (See Section 7 of Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools)
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- Where students are identified as being at risk, their parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- 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 were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one term of office of the school Board of Management. The members of the team will meet at the start of the term of office of the school Board of Management 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.

Preparation of CIMP Roles

The key roles which need to be covered are as follows:

- Team Leader
- Garda liaison
- Staff liaison.
- Student liaison
- Parent liaison

- Community liaison
- Media liaison
- Administrator

Team leader: Principal: Ms. Amadean Moore-Walsh

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; Department of Education and Skills (DES) and National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Liaises with the bereaved family

The Deputy Principal will assume the role of Team Leader in the absence of the Principal.

Garda liaison: Principal: Ms. Amadean Moore-Walsh

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

Staff liaison: Principal: Ms. Amadean Moore-Walsh

- 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 Employee Assistance Service (EAS) and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison: Special Education Teacher: Ms. Charlotte Scanlan

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison: Mr. Jerry Kennedy

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of: 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

Parent liaison: Deputy Principal: Ms. Margaret Butler

- 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
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison: Chairperson: Rev. Fr. Martin Murphy

- 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 management agencies and unions
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator: Secretary: Ms. Debbie Hennessy

- 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 and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- 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.

Drom National School's secretary 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 name of 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 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,

- The Staff Room will be the main room used to meet the staff
- The Special Education room will be used for meetings with students
- The Special Education room will be used for meetings with parents
- The Special Education room will be used for media
- The Special Education room will be used for individual sessions with students
- The Special Education room will be used for other visitors

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION REGARDING THE PLAN

- All staff were consulted and their views canvassed 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 a personal copy of the plan.
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal.

RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This Critical Incident Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Drom National School on 21st March 2017. The plan was updated on the 10th November 2020. It was reviewed on the 17th January 2023. It was further reviewed on 16th November 2023.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

SHORT TERM ACTIONS – DAY 1

- Gather accurate information; Who, what, when, where?
- Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly
- Contact external agencies
- Arrange supervision for students
- Hold staff meeting. Ensure all staff are present
- Agree schedule for the day
- Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)
- Compile a list of vulnerable students
- Contact/visit the bereaved family
- Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media
- Inform parents
- Hold end of day staff briefing

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS - DAY 2 AND FOLLOWING DAYS

- Team leader convenes a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1
- Meet external agencies
- Meet whole staff
- Arrange support for students, staff, parents
- Visit the injured
- Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements
- Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service
- The BOM makes a decision about school closure

FOLLOW-UP – BEYOND 72 HOURS

- Class teachers monitor students for signs of continuing distress
- Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
- Plan for return of bereaved student(s)
- Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family
- BOM/Staff, parents and students decide on memorials and anniversaries
- Staff/BOM review response to incident and amend plan

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
EMERGENCY	999 OR 112
GARDA	
Templemore Garda Station	(0504) 32630
Thurles Garda Station	(0504) 25100
HOSPITAL	
Nenagh General Hospital	(067) 31491
Clonmel General Hospital	(052) 6177000
University Hospital Limerick	(061) 301111
FIRE BRIGADE	999 OR 112
LOCAL GPS	
Dr. Kevin Delargy	(0504) 50600
Tipperary Social Work Department	(067) 46660
SCHOOL INSPECTOR: MS. CLAIRE GRIFFIN	(01) 889 6553
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	(0761) 108561
DES	(090) 648 3600
INTO	1850 708 708
PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY: Rev. Fr. Martin Murphy	(086) 3868877
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057

REFERENCES

- Responding to Critical Incidents – NEPS Guidelines for Schools and Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2016
- When Tragedy strikes - Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools, INTO
- CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook, 2016

Websites

DES – NEPS	www.education.ie
Health and Safety Authority	www.hsa.ie/osh
Allianz (<i>Church and General</i>)	www.cg-online.ie
INTO	www.into.ie