

Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala

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Critical Incident Management Policy/Plan

Introduction

This is a review and up-date of our existing policy/plan and is guided by the guidelines and resource materials as outlined in Responding to Critical Incident 2016 edition and Well-Being in Primary School Guidelines for mental health promotion. At all times Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala aims to protect the well-being of its pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment as defined in our Mission Statement. The school has a number of policies and procedures in place to help to ensure the physical and psychological well-being of staff and pupils both on a day to day basis and in the event of a Critical Incident occurring - **Fire Evacuation Plan, Regular Fire Drill, SPHE Plan, Procedure and Good Practice Guidelines, Code of Behaviour and Etiquette, Supervision Policy/Plan, Health and Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy, RSE Policy and Plan, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance Policy.**

Aim

The aim of this Critical Incident Plan is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable them to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff.

We also hope that it will ensure that the effects on students and staff will be limited and that it will enable the school to return to normality as soon as possible.

As each Critical incident will require the school to respond in an appropriate manner this plan/policy is intended to serve as a general outline of procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident occurring.

Definition of Critical Incident

Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala recognises a Critical Incident to be “any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school” (NEPS 2016).

Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils, or staff members, their family members or members of the local community e.g.:

- The death of a member of the school community through illness, accident, violence, suicide, suspected suicide or other unexpected cause.
- An accident involving members of the school community.
- A major accident/tragedy in the wider community.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An intrusion into the school.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- Major World Events that may affect pupils/staff e.g.: Civil Unrest – war (newcomer children may be traumatised by event that happen in their homeland).

Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School.

Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala has put systems/policies/programmes in place to help build resilience in both staff and pupils, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events or when incidents occur.

These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community:

Physical Safety:

- Evacuation plan formulated.
- Regular fire drills occur.
- Front Gates locked during school hours.
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked and clearly marked.
- General school rules under the School's Code of Behaviour and Etiquette Policy promote positive and safe playtime/interaction.
- Basic First Aid Training has been undertaken by a number of staff members. First Aid Boxes are available in each campus.

School Tours

In the case of school tours teachers will be provided with:

- Parents/Guardians contact details.
- Relevant medical information on pupils.
- Copy of itinerary, expected return time and teacher contact details should be left in school/office/principal's office prior to departure.

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of pupils, to enhance a sense of security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

Social, Personal and Health Education

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. Issues such as grief and loss, communications skills, stress and anger management, resilience, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking, bullying, decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse are addressed in the SPHE curriculum. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision.
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE. Workshops/training in Child Protection and Stay Safe Programme have been delivered by PDST.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Procedures and the name of the Designated Liaison Person.
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies: NEPS, SESS, SENO, CAMHS, HSE, TUSLA, RAINBOW COUNSELLING SERVICES AND VINCENT DE PAUL SERVICES.
- 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 DES Circulars 022/2010 (Primary).
- 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 on 2007 for primary schools. These documents are available on www.education.ie.
- Students are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (SET), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents/guardians are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency (a summary of this support is set out in R23).
- Staff are informed about access to support for themselves (EAS).
- A number of staff have been trained to deliver Friends for Life and Fun Friends Programmes.

Critical Incident Management Team(CIMT)

Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala has established a Critical Incident Team 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.

Key Roles have been assigned as follow:

Team Leader	Mary Culleton – School Principal. Corinne Lyons will assume this role should the Principal be absent.
Staff Liaison	Corinne Lyons – Aodh Rua Campus. Breege McFadden – Nuala Campus.
Student Liaison	Dypmna Currums (SET) Jennifer Prendergast – Aodh Rua Campus. Aoife McGarvey – Aodh Rua Campus.
Community Liaison	Deirdre Dillon. Geraldine Leahy.
Parent Liaison	Deirdre O’ Donnell – Nuala Campus. Jennifer Boyle – Aodh Rua Campus.
Media Liaison	Mary Culleton and Chairperson of the Board of Management.
Administrators	School Secretary and Principal.

Team Leader/Garda Liaison/Media Liaison:

- Confirms the incident.
- 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, INTO, ETC.
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.
- Liaises with Gardaí and Emergency Services.
- Will draw up press statements, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by Board of Management) in collaboration with the Chairperson.

Staff Liaison:

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 no: 1800411057.

Student Liaison:

- Alerts other staff eg. SNA's to vulnerable students (appropriately).
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder).
- Maintains students contact records. (R1 in Responding to Critical Incident 2016 - school database).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

Community/Agency Liaison:

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers for:
 - 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.
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies.
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

Parent/Guardian Liaison

- Sets up room for meeting with parents.
- Arrange Meetings with individual parents/Groups if necessary.
- May facilitate such meeting, and manage 'questions and answers' sessions.
- Maintains a record of parents seen.
- Visits the bereaved family with team leader.
- Arranges meeting, if held.
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folders).
- Ensures that sample letters are prepared and available to school's IT system ready for adaptation.

Administrator

Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of:

- Parents/guardians.
- Teachers.
- Emergency Services.
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response.
- Ensures that templates are available on the schools IT system and ready for adaptation.
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts in collaboration with the Team Leader.
- Photocopies mats as 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, letter emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretary, Rita Walsh, 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 Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala 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, ‘tragic death’ or ‘sudden death’ may be used instead. Similarly, the word ‘murder’ will 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 following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Staff Room both campuses</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>PE Rooms</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Learning Support Rooms</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Meeting room in Parish Centre</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Learning Support Rooms</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Principal's Office</i>	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff and Board of Management were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. A copy was sent to the Parents’ Association.

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 Mary Culleton.

The plan will be updated annually in October.

Action plan

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)

- Board of Management - (Administrator).
- Immediate contact with family/families - (Leader).
- Consult with the family regarding appropriate support from the school, e.g. funeral service. - (Leader).
- Ensure that a quiet place can be made for students/staff - (Students staff liaison person).

Media Briefing (if appropriate)

- Designate a spokesperson - (Leader).
- Gather accurate information - (Leader).
- Prepare a brief statement -(Team).
- Protect the family's privacy.
- It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident
 1. What happened, where and when?
 2. What is the extent of the injuries?
 3. How many are involved and what are their names?
 4. Is there a risk of further injury?
 5. What agencies have been contacted already?
- Contact appropriate agencies
 1. Emergency services - (Leader and Administrator).
 2. Medical services - (Leader and Administrator).
 3. H.S.E. Psychology Departments/Community Care Services. (Community Liaison Person).
 4. NEPS - (Team Leader initially - Student Liaison).
 5. DES/school Inspector- (Administrator).

Board of Management

DES/Schools Inspector

- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team- (Team Leader).
- Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate - (Staff Liaison).
- Ensure any absent staff members are kept informed - (Staff Liaison).
- Organise timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible) - (Team).
- Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted, list of friends etc, or any other relevant information. This is to be given to the Student Liaison person.
- Arrange supervision of students - (Student Liaison).
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service - (Leader).
- The Chaplain/Principal will liaise with the family, to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial service.
- Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate - (Student Liaison person + Class teacher).
- Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS (24-72 HOURS)

- Preparation of students/staff attending funeral - (Student and Staff Liaison.)

- Involvement of students/staff in liturgy if agreed by bereaved family - (Student Liaison).
- Facilitation of students/staffs responses, e.g. Sympathy cards, flowers, Book of Condolences, etc.
- Ritual within the school - (Student Liaison).
- Review the events of the first 24 hours - (Team Leader).
- Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team - (Team Leader).
- Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff - (Parent/Student Liaison).
- Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students - (Student Liaison).
- Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting.
- Establish contact with absent staff and pupils - (Student Liaison).
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary - Student Liaison).
- Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened - (Student Liaison).
- Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out.
- Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission - (Community Liaison).
- Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc)
- Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.
- Plan visits to injured
 - Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital.
 - Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided).
 - Decide this in accordance with parent's wishes, school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends.
- School closure (if appropriate).
- Request a decision on this from school management.

LONGER TERM ACTIONS

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress (Student Liaison plus class teachers).

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.

- Uncharacteristic behaviour.
- 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

- 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 staffs 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.

Synopsis of Action Plan

Short term actions – Day 1

Task
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, (All staff)
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
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)

Task
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1 - Team leader
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
Make decisions about school closure - BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress – All teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family
Decide on memorials and anniversaries - BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan - Staff/BOM

Emergency Contact List	
Garda	074 97 21 021
Donegal Hospital	074 97 21 074
Fire Brigade	999
Local GPs	Dr O' Kennedy 074 97 21 545 Dr. Mannion 074 97 22 234 Dr. Drumgoole 074 97 21 364
HSE	
Social Worker TUSLA	074 97 23 540 - 074 9723503 086 04 90 633
CAMHS	074 97 24 200 - 074 91 20 340
NEPS Psychologist - Michael McMullin	087 66 319 76
Parish Priest - Fr. William Peoples	074 97 21 026
Parish Centre	9740461
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
Department of Education	090 648 3600
INTO	01 804 77 00 1850 708 708
Inspectorate	9522529/9522527

Ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala on _____

Review Date: _____