

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY 2019

Rathcoffey NS aims to protect the well being of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

Rathcoffey NS has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident.

What is a Critical Incident?

Rathcoffey NS recognises a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school”.

Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Types of incidents might include:

The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide

An intrusion into the school

An accident/tragedy in the wider school community

Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc

The disappearance of a member of the school community

An accident involving members of the school community

Aim

Recognising that the key of managing critical incidents is planning, Rathcoffey NS 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.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have put systems in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of an incident. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of both

staff and students.

Physical safety:

Evacuation plan formulated

Regular fire drills occur

Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked

Pre-opening morning time supervision in the school yard

Staff - Yard Supervision

Front gate locked during school hours

Security system installed

Rules of the playground

Psychological safety

Rathcoffey NS aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for same.

SPHE programmes are included in the curriculum to address issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking, decision making, and alcohol and drug prevention.

Our Discipline Policy includes an approach to bullying.

Staff are informed of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs.

Staff have access to books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school child.

The school has developed links with outside agencies, which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students.

Critical Incident Management Team

Rathcoffey NS has set up a CI Management Team in line with best practice and will maintain this team in future. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year.

Roles

Key roles have been identified and assigned as follows:

Team Leader	<i>Principal</i>
Staff Liaison	<i>Deputy Principal</i>
Student Liaison	<i>Class Teachers</i>
Parent Liaison	<i>Chairperson – Parents' Association</i>
Community Liaison	<i>Chairperson – Board of Management</i>
Media Liaison	<i>Principal</i>

In the event of a critical incident the responsibilities of each role-holder will be as follows.

Team Leader: Principal

Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.

Coordinates the tasks of the team.

Liaises with the Board of Management and Department of Education and Science.

Liaises with the bereaved family.

Staff Liaison: Deputy Principal

Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and outlines the routine for the day.

Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable students.

Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.

Student Liaison: Class Teacher

Liaises with other team members to keep them up-dated with information and progress.

Alerts staff to vulnerable students.

Provide materials for students from the Ready-to-Go-Pack.

Community Liaison: Chairperson – Board of Management

Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.

Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

Coordinates the involvement of these agencies.

Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of

Key parents, such as members of the parents council

Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.

Parent Liaison: Chairperson – Parents' Association

Facilitates 'questions and answers' meetings.

Meets with individual parents.

Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.

Media Liaison: Principal

In preparing for the role, s/he will consider issues that may arise during an incident 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 Communications Section in the DES.

Administrative Tasks: School Secretary

Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers of

Parents or guardians

Teachers

Emergency support services

Telephone calls need to be responded to, letters sent and materials photocopied.

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 persons(s)

The facts of the incident

What has been done

What is going to be done

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The school has a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will to 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 pupils do so also. [For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used without the consent of the family involved or until it has been established categorically that the person's death was a result of suicide. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead.]

Critical Incident Room

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

Development and communication of this policy and plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of the draft plan. Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments. 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 Eugene Riordan.

Review & Ratification

This policy was reviewed in April 2019.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2021.

CRITICAL INCIDENT
MANAGEMENT
PLAN

APRIL 2019

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Principal
Deputy Principal
Chairperson – Board of Management
Chairperson – Parents' Association
Class Teachers

Key Roles Assigned

TASK	NAME
OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF RESPONSE	Principal
COMMUNICATION	Principal
ADMINISTRATION TASKS	School Secretary
SUPERVISION	Class Teachers
MEDIA LIAISON	Principal
PARENT LIAISON	Chairperson – Parents’ Association
COMMUNITY LIAISON	Chairperson – Board of Management
STUDENT LIAISON	Class Teachers
STAFF LIAISON	Deputy Principal

Emergency Contact List

(to be displayed in staff-room, Principal's office etc)

OUTSIDE AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
GARDA	Clane: 045-868262 Naas: 045-884300 Maynooth: 01-6292380
HOSPITAL	Naas: 045-897221
FIRE BRIGADE	999
LOCAL GPS	Dr. Cowhey: 01-6289044 Dr. X Flanagan: 045-868433 Woods Centre: 045-868305 Dr. O'Rourke: 01-6285210
HEALTH BOARD/FAMILY CENTRE	Clane: 045-868625 Kilcock: 01-6287139

INSPECTORATE

Karina Holton:

email:

HYPERLINK "mailto:karina_holton@education.gov.ie" karina_holton@education.gov.ie	
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	Brenda Hughes: - 045-848508
DES COMMUNICATIONS	Dept. of Education: 0906-483673
INTO	I.N.T.O. Head Office: 01-8047700 Branch Director: Gerry O'Donoghue: 087-2642887
PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY	Fr. Paul O'Boyle: 045-868249

PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES

CURRICULUM

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

BEHAVIOUR POLICY

CIRCLE TIME

WALK TALL/STAY SAFE PROGRAMME

SPHE POLICY

STAFF ALERT TO STUDENTS WITH DIFFICULTIES (e.g. bereaved students, self harming, eating difficulties etc)

SUPPORT

NEPS

PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES etc

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

FIRE DRILL – EVACUATION OF PUPILS

MAINTAIN FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

STAFF ABLE TO USE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION

SHORT TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

1ST DAY (In School)

TASK	NAME (KEY & SUPPORT)
GATHER ACCURATE INFORMATION	Relevant Staff and Witnesses (accidents)
CONTACT APPROPRIATE AGENCIES	Principal or Class Teacher
CONVENE A MEETING WITH KEY STAFF	Principal
ARRANGE SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS	Principal/Parents' Representative
HOLD STAFF MEETING	All Staff
ORGANISE TIMETABLE FOR THE DAY	Class Teacher
INFORM PARENTS	Principal via Text or Phone depending on the incident
INFORM STUDENTS	Class Teacher

MAKE CONTACT WITH THE BEREAVED FAMILY	Principal
DEALING WITH MEDIA	Principal

SHORT TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

1ST DAY (Outside School)

TASK	NAME (KEY & SUPPORT)
GATHER ACCURATE INFORMATION	Relevant Staff and Witnesses (accidents)
CONTACT APPROPRIATE AGENCIES	Principal
CONVENE A MEETING WITH KEY STAFF	Principal
ARRANGE SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS	Staff
HOLD STAFF MEETING	All Staff
ORGANISE TIMETABLE FOR THE DAY	Staff
INFORM PARENTS	Principal via Phone/Text-a-Parent
INFORM STUDENTS	Staff
MAKE CONTACT WITH THE BEREAVED FAMILY	Principal & Chairperson – Parents' Association

DEALING WITH MEDIA	Principal
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MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

24 -72 HOURS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
REVIEW THE EVENTS OF THE FIRST 24 HOURS	Staff
ARRANGE SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL/GROUPS OF STUDENTS, PARENTS ETC.	1.Post of Responsibility Teacher 2. Post of Responsibility Teacher
PLAN THE REINTEGRATION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF	Principal
PLAN VISITS TO INJURED	Principal
LIAISE WITH FAMILY RE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS/ MEMORIAL SERVICE	Principal Post of Responsibility Teacher
ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION AT FUNERAL SERVICE ETC	Staff
SCHOOL CLOSURE	BOM

LONGER TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

BEYOND 72 HOURS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
MONITOR STUDENTS FOR SIGNS OF CONTINUING STRESS	CLASS TEACHERS
EVALUATE RESPONSE TO INCIDENT AND AMEND CI PLAN APPROPRIATELY	STAFF/BOM
FORMALISE PLAN FOR FUTURE	STAFF/BOM
INFORM NEW STAFF/PUPILS	CLASS TEACHERS
DECIDE ON APPROPRIATE WAYS TO DEAL WITH ANNIVERSARIES	BOM AND PARENTS

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

BARNARDOS	01-4530355
THE SAMARITANS	1850-609090
CHILDLINE	1800-666666
PARENTLINE	1890-927277
AWARE	01-6766166 1890-303302
NATIONAL SUICIDE BEAREAVEMENT SUPPORT	024-95561
RAINBOWS	01-4734175
THE BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING SERVICE	01-8391766
BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING	01-6767727

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents,

The school has experienced (the sudden death, accidental injury) of one of our students. We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events.

(Brief details of the incident, and in the event of a death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy.

It is possible that your child may have some feelings that he/she may like to discuss with you. You can help your child by taking time to listen and encouraging them to express their feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to their age.

If you would like advice you may contact the following people at the school:
(Principal)

Principal.

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING CONSENT FOR INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS

Dear Parents,

Following the recent (tragedy, death of x) we have arranged professional support or students in school who need particular help. (x...) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to children, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your son/daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with the x..... If you would like your child to receive this support please sign the attached permission slip and return to the school by

If you would like further information on the above or to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip or telephone the school.

Principal

.....
I consent to having our daughter/son met by

I understand that my daughter/son may meet x..... in a individual or group session depending on the arrangements which are thought to be most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____

I would like my daughter/sonto avail of the support being offered by x.....

Signed: _____

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St. Mochuo's School

Rathcoffey, Donadea, Naas,

Co. Kildare

Tel/Fax 045 868721

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