



CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Ballygiblin NS. aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, through the school Principal, David Hyland has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Review and Research

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *Ballygiblin NS* 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

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

- Evacuation plan formulated-See Appendix 1
- A fire drill is arranged by the Principal once a term
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- The main school door is locked during class but can be opened easily from the inside without a key in the event of an emergency
- Appropriate playground rules and adequate supervision is in place

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Ballygiblin NS* 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
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – HSE ,NEPS, SESS & Health Promoting Schools
- 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 0022/2010
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with 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 and 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the school principal, 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.
- 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 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.

Team leader: *David Hyland*

Role

- 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; SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family

(Note – The Deputy Principal will act as Team Leader in the absence of the Principal)

Garda liaison *David Hyland*

Role

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

Staff liaison *Adrienne Ring (Deputy Principal)*

Role

- 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 number.

Community/agency liaison *Emma Murphy (Assistant Principal)*

Role

- 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
- 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

Chaplaincy *Fr Tommy Lane (Parish Priest)*

- Visits home(s) if appropriate
- Assist with prayer service
- Make contact with other clergy
- Be available as personal and spiritual support to staff

Parent liaison *Niamh Ní Fheargail (Assistant Principal)*

Role

- 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 *David Hyland (Principal)*

Role

- 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 SEC; relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator *Katherine Reidy Price (Secretary)*

Role

- 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 texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

Record keeping *Katherine Reidy Price (Secretary)*

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.

Katherine will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of *Ballygiblin N.S.* have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, e.g. 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 following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Staffroom</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Office or LS Room</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Office or LS Room</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Office or LS Room</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Office or LS Room</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Office or LS Room</i>	Meetings with other visitors

Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>David Hyland</i>	Numbers in the policy in school
Garda liaison	<i>David Hyland</i>	
Staff liaison	<i>Adrienne Ring</i>	
Chaplaincy	<i>Fr. Tommy Lane</i>	
Community liaison	<i>Emma Murphy</i>	
Parent liaison	<i>Niamh Ní Fhearghail</i>	
Media liaison	<i>David Hyland</i>	
Administrator	<i>Katherine Reidy Price</i>	

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	David Hyland
Who, what, when, where?	David Hyland
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	David Hyland
Contact external agencies	David Hyland
Arrange supervision for students	Adrienne Ring
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	CIMT
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	David Hyland
Compile a list of vulnerable students	David Hyland & Adrienne Ring
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	David Hyland
Inform parents	David Hyland & Katherine Reidy Price
Hold end of day staff briefing	Adrienne Ring

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	David Hyland
Meet external agencies	David Hyland
Meet whole staff	David Hyland & Adrienne Ring
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	CIMT
Visit the injured	David Hyland & Niamh Ní Fhearghail
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Emma Murphy
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Whole Staff
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	David Hyland & Adrienne Ring
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	David Hyland & Niamh Ní Fhearghail
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	David Hyland ,Adrienne Ring & Katherine Reidy Price
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM


EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda (Mitchelstown)	025 84833
Hospital (CUH)	021 492 2000
Fire Brigade	999 Or 112
Living Health	025 52000
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	071 9113960
School Inspector	01 8896553
NEPS Psychologist: Lorraine O'Sullivan	0874697437
CPSMA	01 6292654
INTO	01 8047700
DES	0906 483600
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

REVIEWING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated after 4 years. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines, legislation and feedback from parents/guardians, students, school staff and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning

Signatures

	
<i>John O'Brien</i>	<i>David Hyland</i>

<i>Chairperson BOM</i>	<i>Principal</i>
<i>Date:</i>	<i>Date:</i>

Appendix 1

Ballygiblin NS Fire Evacuation Instructions

- 1. When the fire alarm is sounded your teacher will tell you to line up quickly and quietly at the door of your classroom.**
- 2. When everyone is lined up each teacher will lead the class out to their assigned assembly point ensuring that all of the class leave the building quickly.**
- 3. Do not run or panic while leaving the building.**
- 4. Each teacher will call the roll and ensure that all children are present at the designated assembly point. It is important to note any people who are missing from the assembly point.**
- 5. Do not go back into the building for any reason.**
- 6. The Principal will check the names and number of all those at each assembly point.**
- 7. If there is anyone missing from an assembly point their names need to be given to their class teacher as soon as possible.**
- 8. Each teacher is in charge of their assembly point. In the event of the teacher being absent, the substitute teacher will be in charge.**
- 9. Stay calm. Stay alert. When you are told it is safe to do so you may re-enter the building.**