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Scoil Nano Nagle, Critical Incident Policy & Plan

Critical Incident Policy

At all times, Scoil Nano Nagle 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 Board of Management, through the Principal, has drawn up the following Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

The aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

This policy was considered by the Board of Management at a meeting on 25/11/25, and was duly ratified.

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) 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 pupils and staff". Having a good plan will also help ensure that the effects on the pupils and staff will be limited. It will enable the school to return to normality as soon as possible.

Definition of Critical Incident

The staff and management of Scoil Nano Nagle 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, their family members or members of the local community e.g.

- 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.

Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School

Scoil Nano Nagle has put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students through our SPHE programmes, 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

In the area of physical safety, the school has put in place the following:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur

- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school on days of inclement weather e.g. heavy frost, rain, snow
- Secure doors accessed by bell only during school hours
- General school rules under the school's behaviour policy to ensure all pupils have a safe environment.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Scoil Nano Nagle also 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)

- It is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by including 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
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. HSE/CAMHS/Community Care/NEPS
- **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**
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy – **Bí Cineálta**
- There is a care system in place in the school (i.e. Care Team meets **weekly**)
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (Principal or deputy principal). Concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided.
- Staff are informed about how to access personal support for themselves (e.g. Staff Room Posters, Staff Memos).

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 access to the schools Critical Incident Management Folder which include all of the following:

- A copy of the Critical Incident Management Team/and the Key Roles
- An emergency contact list/school staff contact list
- A copy of the duties of each team member
- A copy of the Board of Management members & contacts
- An Action Plan Template.

Key Roles and Responsibilities of the CIMT

- Team Leader: Sandra Byrne (Principal)
- Garda liaison: **Andrea Neary** (Deputy Principal)
- Staff liaison: **Andrea Neary**
- Parent/Community liaison: Edel Fassnidge (Home-School Community Liaison)

- Agency liaison: Edel Fassnidge and Sandra Byrne
- Media liaison: Sandra Byrne
- Administrator: Suzanne Coffey (School Secretary)

The Following are the Key Responsibilities of Each Role

Team Leader

- Alert the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Co-ordinate the tasks of the team
- Liaise with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS;
- Ensure that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation

The Deputy Principal will assure this role in the absence of the team leader.

Garda Liaison

- Liaise with the Gardaí
- Ensure that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

Staff Liaison

- Assist the team leader in preparing for briefing meetings for staff that will: confirm verified facts, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings, ask questions, and, outline the routine for the day
- Advise staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provide materials for staff (from the Critical Incident Folder)
- Look after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Agency liaison

- Liaise with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Co-ordinate the involvement of these agencies
- Update team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent/Community Liaison

- Liaise with, and visit the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arrange meetings with individual/small groups of parents if required
- Meet with individual/small groups of parents as required
- Maintain a record of parents seen
- Provide appropriate materials for parents (from their Critical Incident Folder)

Media Liaison

- In the event of an incident, liaise where necessary with relevant teacher unions and other supporting service providers
- Consult with the chairperson of the Board of Management and other members of the CIMT to agree on an appropriate media strategy
- Draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator

- Maintenance up to date telephone numbers of:
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services and other external agencies
- Take telephone calls and note those that need to be responded to
- Ensure that templates are accessible the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepare and send out letters, emails as approved by the CIMT

- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintain records as required by the CIMT

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. The school 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 Scoil Nano Nagle 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.

Cultural Sensitivity

Scoil Nano Nagle has a diverse pupil and parent population. Due consideration will be given to any cultural sensitivities when formulating and enacting a school response to a critical incident. The school will consult and seek guidance on such issues when required.

Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident:

- The Staff Room will be the main room used to meet the staff
- The Assembly Hall for meetings with pupils, if required
- An available Learning Support Room for parents; room 9 is the default location. Larger groups can be facilitated in the Parents Room
- The principal's office for media
- Available Learning Support Rooms will be used for additional external visitors

Consultation and Communication Regarding the Plan

Staff were consulted and regard was given to their views in the preparation of this policy and plan. Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments. Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff, and a digital copy is available on the school's shared server and online via our *website*. Each member of the critical incident team has access to a personal copy of the plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the CIMT leader.

This policy (and subsequent plan) will be reviewed annually at the beginning of the school year, when possible.

The most recent review was held in **September 2025**

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on the 25/1/25

Martha Lymel
(chairperson)

Critical Incident Management Plan

Short term actions – Day 1

- Consult sections 4, 4.4.1, 4.8, 7 and resources 1, 2, 3, 5, 13, 15, 21 and 22 of NEPS Guidelines

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Team Leader in consultation with CIMT
Who, what, when, where?	Team Leader in consultation with CIMT
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Team Leader
Contact external agencies	Community Liaison, Agency Liaison and Garda Liaison
Arrange supervision for students	Team Leader in consultation with CIMT
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Team
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Class Teachers where possible
Compile a list of vulnerable students	CIMT and Class Teachers
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	CIMT and Media Liaison
Inform parents	CIMT will choose from written, electronic and face-to-face options
Hold end of day staff briefing	Team Leader with input from CIMT as required

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

- Consult section 5 of NEPS Guidelines

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team Leader
Meet external agencies	CIMT
Meet whole staff	Team Leader with input from CIMT as required
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Community Liaison, Agency Liaison with support from CIMT
Visit the injured	Team Leader and Community Liaison
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Team Leader and Community Liaison
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	CIMT (with input individual from individual staff)
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

- Consult section 5 of NEPS Guidelines

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class Teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Agency Liaison
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	CIMT and Class Teacher(s)
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	CIMT and Class Teacher(s)
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	CIMT/Staff, Parents and Students
Review response to incident and amend plan	CIMT/Staff/BOM

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Emergency Services	999/112
Clondalkin Gardaí	01 4574866
Local Doctors	01 4573335 (Dr. Wilson) 01 4593325 (Dr. Ramiah)
N.E.P.S. (Clara Nevin)	01 8892700
CAMHS:	01 795 6500
Primary Care Deansrath (HSE):	01 4675221
Primary Care Boot Road:	01 7787800
Local Child & family Centre:	01 4574069
TUSLA (Cherry Orchard)	01 6400650
Employee Assistance Helpline:	01 5180356
B.O.M. Chairperson (Martha Lynch)	01 4571226
Chaplaincy (Fr. Brian)	01 4519810
D.E.S./Inspector (Eileen O'Sullivan)	01 8896553
I.N.T.O.	01 8047700

USEFUL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- *Responding to Critical Incidents*: NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (N.E.P.S. 2016)
- *Well-Being In primary Schools – Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion* (DES, DoH, HSE, 2015)
- *Responding to Critical Incidents*: Guidelines for Schools (N.E.P.S. 2008)
- *Responding to Critical Incidents*: Resource Materials for Schools (N.E.P.S. 2008)
- *When Tragedy Strikes*: Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in schools (I.N.T.O. 2000)