



CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN

Review 2025

Signed: Suzanne Earls
(Co-ordinators) Suzanne Earls

Signed: Wendy Nolan (Chairperson B.O.M.)

Date of last review: 2023

Critical Incident Policy for Scoil Na Coróine Mhuire

Introduction:

In Scoil Na Coróine Mhuire, we aim to protect the well-being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment as outlined in our school mission statement.

The BoM through the Principal, the Staff and the Parents Association 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 Scoil na Coróine Mhuire recognise a critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running 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:

- Death, major illness/outbreak of disease (Foot & Mouth, Covid 19)
- Criminal incidents (e.g., Shootings)
- Major accidents, serious injury (e.g., Creeslagh Explosion)
- Suicide
- Civil unrest, war (experience of Ukrainian pupils and others fleeing war)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g., school ceiling collapsing in Cork)
- Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g., Midleton incident in Cork)
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.
- World events that may affect the student body and/or staff. May be a need for provision of discussion and involvement in ceremonies (e.g., 9/11, tsunami)

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident policy 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 policy and plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school.

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 school has a documented health and safety statement. Additionally, the following measures have been put in place:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the schoolyard by the principal and deputy principal from 9.10am Monday-Friday.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Scoil na Coróine Mhuire 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; bullying and decision making through the RSE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes.
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff have access to *Responding to Critical Incidents Resource Materials for Schools*
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Procedures and are aware that Ms Earls is the designated liaison person and Ms Claire Rusell.

- 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 as stated in DES Circular 0022/2010.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy

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.

Key Roles

Team Leader/ Garda Liaison: Sue Earls

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

Media liaison: Sally Ann McNerney

- 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)

Staff liaison (Claire Russell)

- 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.

Student liaison (Sasha Boyce)

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Parent liaison (Eileen Whelan)

- 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)
-

Community liaison (Lisa O Riordain)

- 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

Administrator – Secretary- Mairead O Reilly

- 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 schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

Chaplain: Fr. Eamonn Crossan

Parent Representative: Denise Nolan

BOM Parent Representative: Nick Fitzpatrick

Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. Ms. Jenny Farrell/ 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 na Coróine Mhuire 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.

Critical incident rooms

In the event of a critical incident:

- The staff room will be the main room used to meet the staff
- Top prefab for parents
- Learning support rooms opposite staffroom for NEPS (entry through black gate)
- Rooms 1 and 2 for individual sessions with students (through church gate)
- Other visitors will be directed to the principal's office
- Media in library

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed 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. 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.