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Critical Incident Management Policy

Introduction:

Citywest and Saggart Community National School (CNS) aims to protect the well-being of its pupils by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The school has developed a number of policies in line with its inclusive ethos which aim to ensure the physical and psychological safety of staff and pupils. The school has drawn up a Critical Incident Policy (CIP) and plan to help cope with unexpected events that may affect members of the school community or the whole school community. This policy was drafted by the principal in consultation with the staff and Board of Management (BoM).

What is a critical incident?

Citywest and Saggart CNS recognises a critical incident as **“an incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school”**.

Example: See appendix A for the list of critical incident and level of severity.

Aims

Recognising that the key to managing critical incidents is planning, Citywest & Saggart CNS 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 by doing so ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. The Board of Management places no obligation on any staff member to intervene in a critical incident situation if by so doing he/she is placing him/herself or others at risk.

The Board of Management has a Health and Safety Statement in place, which is reviewed regularly. Measures are in place to address both the physical and psychological safety of the pupils and staff. Among the measures to ensure physical safety include:

- Health and safety statement for the school.
- Regular fire drills and evacuation procedures.
- Regular checking of fire exits and extinguishers.
- Exit doors kept closed during school time.
- Yard gates kept closed during yard times.
- School yard rules and Code of Behaviour in place and regularly discussed with children.
- Sign-out procedures for pupils.
- Updated contact details for staff, and in case of emergency numbers (On Aladdin)
- Updated contact details for parents/guardians.(Aladdin)
- Record of pupils who may have specific medical needs.
- First Aid Boxes maintained in the Junior and Senior Buildings.
- A number of policies and strategies also support the psychological safety of the pupils and staff.
 - The Child Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
 - Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, addressing areas such as grief and loss, communication skills, conflict management, substance misuse etc. Particularly Weaving Wellbeing, Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Friends etc.
 - Anti-bullying Policy
 - NEPS 'School Refusal' guidance
 - Code of Positive Behaviour
- Access to resources and support e.g. Employee Assistance Service, DDLETB Psychological services, NEPS: 'When Tragedy Strikes', Online Resources etc.
- Links with outside agencies e.g. National Anti-Bullying Centre, DCU, NEPS, Primary Care Psychology.

Objectives:

The objectives of the CIP are:

- to help the staff to react quickly and effectively during an unexpected event;
- to aid the school in returning to normality as soon as possible after the event has occurred. It also aims;
- to ensure that the effects of the event on pupils and staff are kept to a minimum.

The Role of NEPS

When a tragedy occurs, the NEPS Response generally involves:

- **Planning** the response alongside the CIMT
- **Provide information and advice** to parents, staff and children
- **Support** staff in facilitating support for parents and students in the aftermath of a Critical Incident
- **Screening** at risk pupils to target support

In the event of a critical incident the school may contact NEPS, Barnardos, the Irish National Teachers Organisation, DDLETB and other support agencies/organisations as necessary to access support.

Critical Incident Management Team:

Citywest and Saggart CNS has established a critical incident management team (CIMT). The members of the CIMT have volunteered to fulfill their duties. The current CIMT will be reviewed in September 2023.

Each member of the team has access to the school's critical incident management folder which includes the following:

- A copy of the CIP
- A list of the CIMT and assigned roles
- An emergency contact list/school staff contact list
- An action plan template

CIMT

Role	Name	Position	2 nd Name	Position	Other
Leadership Role	Mike Byrne	Principal	Orla Doherty	Deputy Principal	Support role for the team
Communications	Rachel McMackin	AP2 SPHE Coordinator	Sarah Swan	AP1	Support role for the team
Staff Liaison	Patrick Mount	Rainbows Coordinator	Eimear Harney	AP2	Support role for the team
Parent/Family Liaison	Rhona Whelan	Class teacher, Rainbows	Claire Broderick	AP2	Support role for the team

The first named person has the responsibility as defined below.

The second named person assists and only assumes responsibility if the first named is unavailable.

Roles and Responsibilities:

<u>Leadership Role:</u>	
Intervention: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm the event• Activate the CIMT• Inform chairperson of board of management and ETB• Express sympathy with the family• Clarify facts surrounding event• Make contact with other relevant agencies, services and companies.	Postvention: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure provision of on-going support to staff and pupils• Facilitate any appropriate memorial service• Review plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on how news will be communicated to different groups with the guidance of the ETB (staff, pupils, school community) 	
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<u>Communication Role:</u>	
<i>Intervention:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a public statement with the CIMT and the Director of schools/relevant ETB official Liaise with PR in the ETB to organise a designated room to address media promptly Ensure telephone line is free for outgoing and important incoming calls Update website, social media and school phone message in the event of closure Liaise with relevant outside support agencies. 	<i>Postvention:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

<u>Staff Liaison</u>	
<i>Intervention:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for a staff briefing after the CIMT meet. Prepare facts Gather resources for teachers for speaking with their class Provide staff with access to relevant supports 	<i>Postvention:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have review meetings with staff

<u>Student/Family Liaison Role</u>	
<i>Intervention:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate contact with family (after initial contact by principal) Consult with family about the school's potential involvement e.g. funeral service Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any pupils affected by the critical incident. 	<i>Postvention:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ongoing support to vulnerable pupils Provide support to bereaved family Monitor class most affected Offer to link family with community support groups Review and evaluate plan

See following page for list of potential critical incidents

Appendix A

*List of potential critical incidents with level of impact
(Level 3 being the worst case in-line with N.E.P.S. level classifications)*

Level of severity of critical incident	
Level 3	School bus tour incident where there was a resulting death of a pupil or teacher with several severe casualties
	Fun event at school resulting in an accident where a pupils <i>is</i> killed
	Trespasser on school grounds committing violent attack on a staff member or pupils resulting in death or serious injury
	Fire in school resulting in death or serious injury to staff or pupil
Level 2	Illness resulting in death of a staff member, pupil or parent of pupil within the school or a "Famillicide" case
	Abduction or disappearance of a staff member or pupil within the school
Level 1	Road accident leading to minor injury of a pupil within the school
	Emergency closure of school (e.g. bomb scare, disease outbreak or weather/heating issue)

Signature of chairperson:

Date:

Date of Review:

Appendix B - CIM Action Plan Checklist

Emergency Contact List

Rathcoole Gardai	016667900
NEPS	
Andrew Kennedy	
DDLETB	014529600
Conor McGuckin (Chairperson)	
Employee assistance service	1800411057

Critical Incident Spaces in the School

Principal's Office & Support Room (ASD)	Meetings with parents, agencies, CIMT
RSG Blue Room	Quiet Space
Library	Withdrawal space for vulnerable students

Checklist in the event of a Critical Incident (Day 1 or 24 hours)

Item	Responsible	Complete?
Confirm the event and gather information from a reliable source. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of people involved What happened Location and extent of injuries 	Team leader	
Inform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Schools (DDLETB) NEPS Psychologist Chairperson of Board of Management 		
Convene a meeting of the CIMT before the start of the next school day or as soon as practically possible.	Team leader	
All team leaders to attend meeting with their Critical Incident Management Folder. The team to be briefed on the incident and the action plan discussed. Delegation of duties. Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of the event (Agree on facts) Discussion on agencies that may need to be contacted What needs to be communicated and when? (Templates) Plan the day ahead (How to maintain a normal routine while also supporting students most affected) Discuss breaking news to families (Where applicable) Discuss how to break the news to class groups (Guidelines attached for teachers) Discuss the use of the Quiet Room Identification of vulnerable students Plan for whole staff briefing (Together or split?) Agree wording of communications to parents (Template) Agree when to meet next 	All members	
Meeting of the staff group (As soon as practically possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the facts as agreed at the CIMT meeting Acknowledge the hurt/upset of staff and allow to say something if needed Importance of Routine and normalising the daily routine Provide the class teachers with 	Staff Liaison/Team leader	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Classroom session guidelines ▪ Stages of grief handout ▪ Supports for staff (psychology) ▪ FAQs for teachers ▪ Teachers helping students in a crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask staff to be cognisant of vulnerable students - Speak specific staff about students identified by the CIMT 		
Letter to parents drafted and checked by the Team leader. Letter sent by email.	Communications	
Consult DoS/ETB about media briefings	Communications	
Team leader contacts the family. Arrange a home visit/hospital visit with two staff representatives (Within 24 hours). Normally the school principal and the class teacher.	Team leader	
Liaise with the family (After initial contact already made) regarding the family's wishes on the school's role in a memorial/funeral (Be aware of cultural sensitivities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Book of condolences - Participation of the school in a service 	Family Liaison	
Ensure vulnerable children are catered for in withdrawal rooms by trusted adults (Arrange cover where needed)	Family liaison	
End of Day staff session	Staff liaison	

Day 2 (24 – 72 hours)

Item	Responsible	Complete?
Preparation of staff and pupils for the funeral/memorial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief class teachers on any preparations - Facilitation of students/staffs' responses e.g. sympathy cards, flowers, book of condolences 	Family/child liaison	
Meeting of the CIMT and NEPS (Where necessary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reconvene CIMT ▪ Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/pupils/staff ▪ Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable pupils ▪ Establish contact with absent staff and pupils 	CIMT	
Plan for re-integration of pupils and staff e.g. absentees, injuring, siblings, close relative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCL to liaise with individual/s on their return to school • Plan visits to the injured. • FCL/ class teacher/ principal to visit home/hospital. • School closure: request a decision on this from school management. 	Family/Child Liaison	

Long term

Item	Responsible	Complete?
Monitor pupils for signs of continued distress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If, over a prolonged period of time, a pupil continues to display the following, he/she may need assistance from NEPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uncharacteristic behaviour ▪ Deterioration in academic performance ▪ Physical symptoms – e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness 	FCL along with class teachers	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inappropriate emotional reactions ▪ Increased absenteeism 		
Inform new staff members to the CIP	Team leader	
<p>Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (be sensitive to special days/events)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in pupils/staff and they may need additional support at this time. ▪ Acknowledge the anniversary with the family ▪ Be sensitive to significant days like birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day and Father's Day ▪ Plan something in the school to mark the passing of the pupil/staff member ▪ Care of the deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes? ▪ Update and amend school records 	Team leader/all staff	


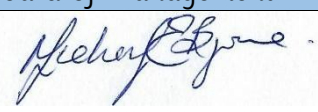
Implementation

Implementation Date

This policy was created, ratified and communicated in September 2022

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended annually or sooner if required.

This policy was ratified by the school's Board of Management	
<p>Signed: </p> <p>Chairperson</p>	<p>Signed: </p> <p>Principal</p>
Date: 6/12/22	Date: 6/12/22