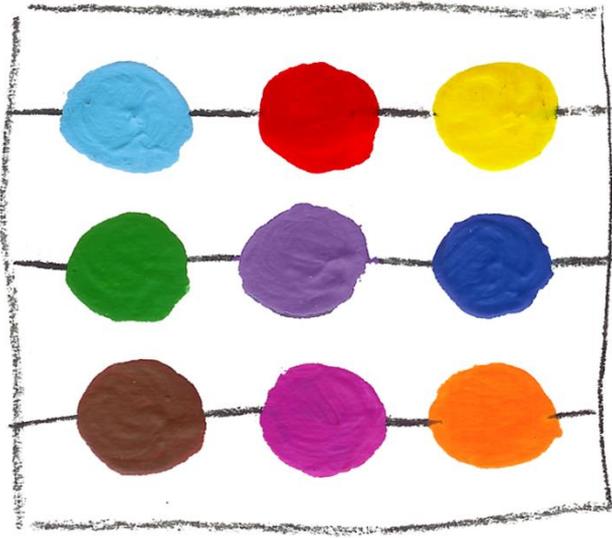


Critical Incident Management Plan



Carrigaline Educate Together N.S.

Version	Description	Authors
December 2010	First version of policy	Mel Thornton & Policy Committee on behalf of the Board of Management
October 2012	Review of existing policy	Mel Thornton & Christine O'Brien on behalf of the Board of Management
September 2012	Review of existing policy	Mel Thornton, Christine O'Brien & Grace O'Connor on behalf of the Board of Management
October 2013	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Mel Thornton, Christine O'Brien on behalf of the Board of Management
September 2014	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Mel Thornton, Christine O'Brien & Grace O'Connor on behalf of the Board of Management
October 2015	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Grace O'Connor & Bríd Stack on behalf of the Board of Management
September 2016	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Middle Management Team on behalf of the Board of Management
October 2017	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Middle Management Team on behalf of the Board of Management
September 2018	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Middle Management Team on behalf of the Board of Management
September 2019	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Middle Management Team on behalf of the Board of Management
September 2020	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Middle Management Team on behalf of the Board of Management
December 2021	Review of existing policy & minor amendments	Middle Management Team on behalf of the Board of Management

School Contact Details

Principal: Mel Thornton

Board of Management Chairperson: Eric Hurley

School Phone Number: 021-4375616 or 087-7453659

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Kilnagleary, Carrigaline, Co. Cork.

Critical Incident Management Plan

Background:

“The key to managing a critical incident is planning. NEPS psychologists report that schools that have developed school policy and a **Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)** are able to cope more effectively in the aftermath of an incident. Having a plan enables staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. It may also ensure that normality returns as soon as possible and that the effects on students and staff are limited”. *Responding to Critical Incidents, Guidelines for Schools, NEPS, 2016*

This policy was completed with reference to

- Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools, NEPS, 2016
- Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2016

Issues the school needs to address:

- Creation of a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school
- Defining a critical incident
- Creation of a critical incident management team
- Development and communication of the plan
- Administrative tasks.

Creation of a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school:

The CIMP reflects the overall ethos of the school which states

Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. is one of a number of multi-denominational schools throughout the country. The representative organisation for these schools is ‘Educate Together’.

Educate Together aims to meet a growing need in Irish society for schools that recognise the developing diversity of Irish life and the modern need for democratic management structures. In particular, Educate Together guarantees children and parents of all faiths and none equal respect in the operation and governing of education.

The schools operated by the member associations of Educate Together are fully recognised by the Irish Department of Education and Science and work under the same regulations and funding structures as other national schools. However, they have a distinct ethos or governing spirit. This has been defined in the following terms:

- ***Equality based*** i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected
- ***Co-educational*** and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities,
- ***Child centred*** in their approach to education
- ***Democratically run*** with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers (*Source: Educate Together Charter*)

Whilst the concepts of child-centredness and co-educationalism are now widely accepted in Irish primary education, what distinguishes the Educate Together schools is their hard work in developing a culturally inclusive and democratic ethos. This has pioneered unique approaches to inclusion of minority opinions and faiths in the Irish context.

The schools have developed education programmes which open the eyes of children to the naturally positive contribution that social, religious and cultural diversity and difference of viewpoint and opinion make to society.

The other characteristic feature of these schools is that they are democratically organised and governed. This maximises the potential for building a genuine partnership between the professional, objective role of the teacher and the necessarily personal involvement of the parent in contributing to their children's education.

Information taken from the Educate Together website www.educatetogether.ie

Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. makes the distinction between denominational education and moral/religious education. The ethical curriculum followed by the school is called the Learn Together Curriculum. It is comprised of four strands: *Morality & Spirituality, Equality & Justice, Belief systems, Ethics & the environment.*

Denominational instruction is facilitated by the school insofar as groups are permitted to use the school premises.

The CIMP recognises and endeavours to adopt the values that are set out in the ethos of the school. It attempts to support and sustain a harmonious environment in which potential is nurtured through the co-operation between staff, pupils, parents, board members and all other relevant parties.

Consideration has been given in relation to

- Elements that contribute to the creation of a psychologically safe environment
- Integration of the SPHE programmes in the curriculum addressing issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, self-esteem, coping skills, etc
- Incorporation of mental health issues into regular SPHE provision
- Creation of a physically safe environment (*Refer to the Code of Behaviour, Health and Safety Statement*)
- Provision of staff training and resources
- Systems and procedures for the identification of students at risk (*Refer to the Child Protection Policy*)
- Procedures to link with external agencies
- System to ensure staff are familiar with Child Protection Guidelines & Procedures (*Refer to the Child Protection Policy*)
- Support for staff, if required e.g. Employee Assistance Service (Free phone 1800 411 057) and Spectrum Life

Defining a critical incident:

The school understands a critical incident to be defined as follows:

“In general it is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school” *Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools, NEPS, 2016*

Types of critical incidents that may arise 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

Staff are familiar with the Guidelines and Resource Materials from NEPS. These are available in the planning folder on school Google common drive

Development and communication of the plan:

Development of plan (*Refer to Templates R21 and R22 Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2016*).

- The two staff representatives of the Policy Committee drafted the plan
- All staff were consulted prior to its circulation to the Board of Management
- The two parent representatives of the Policy Committee were consulted in drafting the plan
- The two members of the Board of Management of the Policy Committee were consulted in drafting the plan
- There are clear guidelines outlined in relation to short term, medium term, and long term actions that may be required set out in Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools, NEPS 2016
- There a plan for evacuation included in the school’s critical incident plan (*See Appendix 1*)
- There are particular issues that need to be addressed in the event of a suicide/suspected suicide, road traffic accident or violent death set out in the Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools, NEPS, 2016, Section 7 and 8
- A media liaison person has been assigned to deal with the media. Specific guidelines/procedures for dealing with the media are set out in Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools, NEPS, 2016, Section 9

Communication and availability of plan

- The plan is readily accessible to all members of staff. It on their School USB and in the Plans & Policies Folder in the office
- All members of the critical incident management team have a copy of the plan
- The head of the Policy Committee will communicate this plan to new and temporary staff
- The plan will be communicated to parents/guardians via the school newsletter. It will be available for viewing by appointment in the school office.

Administrative Tasks:

Contact numbers

- Maintaining an up to date list of contact numbers. Numbers should be available for:
 - Pupils, Parents/Guardians, Staff
 - Emergency support services (*Refer to R23 in Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2016*)
- The secretary, in consultation with the named administrator, will compile and update these lists regularly. These lists will be kept in the office
- The list of emergency support services will be displayed in the office, the staff room and principal’s office

Resources

- Resources can be prepared in advance of an incident e.g. templates for letters to parents, templates for press releases, list of emergency contact details, checklist for first 24 hours, map of school building
- A plan of the school building, with exits highlighted, will be displayed
- Rooms have been assigned to use should a critical incident arise (*see below*)

Information for school trips

- The class teacher will compile list of all pupils/staff involved and the teacher in charge
- The class teacher compile list of mobile phone numbers for the accompanying teacher/s
- The school will ensure that it has up to date medical information on pupils by referring to the child’s Aladdin

Record keeping

- In the event of an incident each member of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.
- The administrator will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.
- These records will be kept indefinitely
- The Principal is responsible for these records. The Principal, the CIMT and the Board of Management will have access to these records

The Critical Incident Management Team:

- A planning team of key personnel should be formed
- The following points will be considered when selecting members of the Critical Incident Management Team:
 - Members should be suited to the role. They should have an interest in this type of work and some particular skills (e.g. good interpersonal skills, organisational skills, a calm approach). It is suggested that someone who is recently bereaved may not be a suitable candidate for the team
 - Each member should be willing to contribute a number of hours to the work
 - Responsibilities attached to the various roles should be clearly outlined
 - The size of a team should be appropriate to the size of the school
 - The team should meet annually to update and review the plan
 - The members should usually remain on the team for at least one full school year
- The team members include Mel Thornton (Principal), Christine O'Brien (Deputy Principal), Rory Ward (Acting Deputy Principal), Grace O'Connor (Acting AP1 Post-holder), Brid Stack (AP2 Post-holder); Caroline O'Connor (Acting AP2 Post-holder); Owen Hennessy (AP2 Post-holder), Martina Luttrell (AP2 Post-holder).
- The team should meet annually to update and review the plan. The team will meet every September/October

The key roles which need to be covered are as follows:

- Team Leader
- Garda liaison
- Staff liaison
- Student liaison
- Parent liaison
- Community/agency liaison
- Media liaison
- Administrator

The role of the team leader *Mel Thornton*

- 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

In the absence of the team leader Rory Ward/Christine O'Brien will deputise.

The role of the garda liaison *Mel Thornton*

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

The role of the staff liaison *Rory Ward & Grace O'Connor*

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions and outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff of the availability of the EAS and Spectrum Life and gives them the contact number 1800411057

The role of the student liaison *Brid Stack & Martina Luttrell*

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students appropriately
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff

The role of the community / agency liaison *Caroline O'Connor & Owen Hennessey*

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Association
 - 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
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

The role of the parent liaison *Mel Thornton & Rory Ward/Christine O'Brien*

- Arranges meetings
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- May meet individual parents

The role of the media liaison *Mel Thornton*

- 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.)
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

The role of the administrator *Rory Ward, Christine O'Brien, Grace O'Connor & Owen Hennessey*

- 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
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and Aladdin notification
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management, staff, parents and school community of Carrigaline Educate Together 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.

Critical incident rooms

In the event of a critical incident,

- The halla will be the main room used to meet the staff-*Middle management first, SET team, then class teachers and then SNAs.*
- Principal's office for parents-*Not applicable due to COVID-19*
- Principal's office for media- *Not applicable due to COVID-19*
- SEN team room for individual sessions with students
- Group meetings of any sort in the Halla

Implementation Date

This plan was implemented following ratification in term one of the school-year 2010/2011. Amendments to this policy were made in December 2021 will be implemented with immediate effect.

Timetable for Review

This plan will be reviewed in September/October annually at the meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team.

Ratification & Communication

This plan was ratified at a Board of Management meeting in term one of the school-year. Amendments to the policy was ratified at a meeting of the Board of Management on November 2021.

Parents will be made aware via Aladdin that the policy is available to view on the school website. A copy of the policy will be made available for the staff to view on Google Drive. A hard copy of the policy will be available in the school office in the policy folder.

Date of ratification: December 8th 2021

Signed: _____
CHAIRPERSON OF BOM

Date: _____

Reference Section

- Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools and Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2016
- Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2016
- When Tragedy strikes - Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools, INTO
- Governance Manual for Primary Schools, 2019-2023, Department of Education & Skills, 2019

Websites

DES – NEPS	www.education.ie
Health and Safety Authority	www.hsa.ie/osh
Allianz	www.allianz.ie
INTO	www.into.ie

Appendix 1
Evacuation Procedure

1. All **stand** and **line up**. Do not bring bags, coats, books etc.

[Note: teacher gets roll sheet if safe to do so]

2. All pupils, with their teacher, **walk** calmly through their **designated door** if safe to do so, to their **assembly point**.

Your assembly point is Number



[Note: teacher should close doors and windows on leaving the classroom if possible]

3. Pupils **line up** with their teacher. Teacher takes a **roll call**.

4. Any **information relevant to the safety** of the pupils and/or staff should be conveyed **to the Principal** at this time.

Remember:

- ❖ Do not return for anything you may have forgotten
- ❖ Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- ❖ Do not open a door if you suspect a fire on the other side
- ❖ Do not re-enter the building under any circumstances unless advised to do so by the fire brigade