



Gaelscoil Choráin

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Polasaí & Plean Bainistíochta Teagmhais Chríticiúil/Critical Incident Management Policy & Plan

Réamhrá/Introduction:

In Gaelscoil Choráin we aim to protect the well being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and well catered for environment as outlined in our school mission statement.

The Board of Management through the Principal, the staff and representatives of the Parents Council has drawn up a critical incident management policy and plan. They have established a Critical Incidents Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the policy and plan.

Athbhreithniú agus Taighde/Review and Research:

The Critical Incident Management Team 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 2016)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group 2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

The Principal Cairíona Ní Riada and the Vice-Principal Carmel Uí Chiardha-Bhriain have attended training on responding to critical incidents in schools. This training was provided by the National Educational Psychological Services in Autumn of 2018.



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Cad is teagmhaís chríiciúil/What is a critical incident?

‘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:

- 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
- Criminal incidents, major accidents, serious injury
- Fire, natural and technological disaster
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home
- 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

- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin).

- 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

Aidhm/Aim:

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan and 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 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.



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Éiteas déileála atá comhbhách agus tacúil a chruthú sa scoil/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.

Sábháilteacht choirp/Physical safety

- Regular fire drills occur
- A fob swiping system to access classes in the school
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Yard supervision policy
- Rules of the playground communicated regularly to all classes

Sábháilteacht Shíceolaíochta/Psychological safety

The management and staff of Gaelscoil Choráin 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
- The Stay Safe Programme is timetabled and taught on an annual basis to all classes.
- The Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) Programme is timetabled and taught on an annual basis to all classes in line with our RSE policy.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures. The school Child Safeguarding Statement has been communicated to all staff and is reviewed



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on an annual basis. All staff have completed the Children First E-Learning Programme developed by TUSLA.

- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies - list these agencies (NEPS, HSE etc)
- 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 (Primary) or 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)
- 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. These documents are available on www.education.ie
- A care programme developed by the Anti-Bullying Institute is taught to all classes from Rang 1 to Rang 6. Each month a different care theme is explored.
- The school has a care team who are available to students who wish to discuss matters of concern with them.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves (Inspire Workplaces) and details of wellbeing courses, talks and seminars are regularly communicated to them by e-mail and are displayed on the staff notice board.

Foireann Bainistíochta Teagmhais Chriticiúil/Critical Incident Management Team

A Critical Incident Management Team has been established in line with best practice and a sub team has been established should any member of the team be absent or for any reason unable to fulfil their role. The members of the team and of



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the sub 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 and sub 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.

Foireann Bainistíochta Teagmhais Chriticiúil/Critical Incident Management Team:

Ról/Role	Foireann/Team	Foireann Ionaid/Sub Team
Ceann foirne/Team leader:	Caitriona Ní Riada	Carmel Uí Chiardha-Bhriain
Teagmhálaí leis na Gárdaí/Garda liaison:	Carmel Uí Chiardha-Bhriain	Úna de Paor
Teagmhálaí leis an bhfoireann/Staff liaison:	Barra Ó Ceallacháin	Hanóra Uí Mhathúna
Teagmhálaí leis na daltaí/Student liaison:	Caoimhín Ó Drisceoil	Liam Ó Riain
Teagmhálaí leis na tuismitheoirí/Parent liaison:	Cáit Mhic Inneirí	Emer Uí hAodhagáin
Teagmhálaí leis an bpobal/Community/agency liaison:	Julie Uí Bhuachalla	Aoife Mhic Canann
Teagmhálaí leis na meáin/Media liaison:	Caitriona Ní Riada	Carmel Uí Chiardha-Bhriain



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Riarthóir/Administrator:	Áine Uí Chróinín	Julie Uí Bhuachalla
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The first-named person has the responsibility as defined.

The second-named person assists and only assumes responsibility on the absence of the first-named.

Freagracht/Responsibility

1. Ceann foirne/Team leader: (Caitriona Ní Ríada)

Idirghabháil/Intervention

- Confirm the event and facts
- Activate the Critical Incident response team. Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Lead briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Express sympathy to family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS and with other relevant agencies
- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)
- Ensure provision of ongoing support to staff and students
- Facilitate any appropriate memorial events
- Review Plan



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2. Teagmhálaí leis na gárdaí/Garda liaíson:

Idirghabháil/Intervention

- Liaise with Gardaí and emergency services
- Ensure that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared
- With Team, prepare a public statement
- Organise a designated room to address media promptly
- Ensure telephone lines are free for outgoing and important incoming calls
- Designate mobile numbers for contact
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies
- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

3. Teagmhálaí leis an bhfoireann/Staff liaíson:

Idirghabháil/Intervention

- 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 staff of the availability of Inspire Workplaces and gives them the contact number.



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4. Teagmhálaí leis na daltaí/Student liaison

Idirghabháil/Intervention

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

5. Teagmhálaí leis an bpobal/le gníomhaireachtaí /Community/agency liaison

Idirghabháil/Intervention

- 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



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6. Teagmhálaí le tuismitheoirí/caomhnóirí/Parent/guardian liaison

Idirghabháil/Intervention

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent/guardian 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/guardians
- Maintains a record of parents/guardians seen
- Meets with individual parents/guardians
- Provides appropriate materials for parents/guardians (from their critical incident folder)

7. Teagmhálaí leis na meáin/Media liaison

Idirghabháil/Intervention

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



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8. Riarthóir/Administrator: (Áine Uí Chróinín)

Idirghabháil/Intervention

- 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

Coinneáil taifead/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.

Áine Uí Chróinín the school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Ceisteanna maidir le rúndacht agus dea-chlú/Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff of Gaelscoil Choráin 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



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legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

Seomraí Teagmhais Chriticiúil/Critical Incident Rooms	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Seomra/Room:	Cuspóir Ainmnithe/Designated Purpose:
Staff Room	Main room for meeting staff
Classrooms	Meetings with students
SEN Room 1 - Downstairs	Meetings with parents
Town Hall	Meetings with media
SEN Room - Third Floor	Individual sessions with students
SEN Room 1 - Downstairs	Meetings with other visitors

Gníomhú/Action Plan

Gníomhaíochtaí láithreach/Short term actions (Lá 1/Day 1)

- Immediate contact with family/families
- Consult with the family regarding appropriate support from the school, e.g. funeral service
- Ensure that a quiet place can be made for students/staff

Teangmhál Meán Cumarsáide (más iomchuí)/Media Briefing (if appropriate)

- Designate a spokesperson (Leader)
- Gather accurate information
- Prepare a brief statement (Team)



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- Protect the family's privacy
- It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident
 1. What happened, where and when?
 2. What is the extent of the injuries?
 3. How many are involved and what are their names?
 4. Is there a risk of further injury?
 5. What agencies have been contacted already?
- Contact appropriate agencies
 1. Emergency services
 2. Medical services
 3. H.S.E. Psychology Departments/Community Care Services
 4. NEPS
 5. Board of Management
 6. DES/Cigire Scoile
- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team
- Organize a staff meeting, if appropriate
- Ensure any absent staff members are kept informed
- Organise timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible)
- Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted, list of friends etc, or any other relevant information. This is to be given to the Student Liaison person
- Arrange supervision of students
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service
- The Principal will liaise with the family, to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial service
- Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate. (Student Liaison person + Team Leader)
- Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths



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Gníomhaíochtaí meán tréimhseach/Medium term actions (24-72 Uair/Hours)

- Preparation of students/staff attending funeral
- Involvement of students/staff in liturgy if agreed by bereaved family
- Facilitation of students/staffs responses, e.g. Sympathy cards, flowers, Book of Condolences, etc.
- Ritual within the school
- Review the events of the first 24 hours
- Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team
- Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff
- Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students
- Have review of Critical Incident Management Team meeting
- Establish contact with absent staff and pupils
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary
- Hold support/information meeting for parents/students, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened
- Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out
- Arrange, in consultation, with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission
- Plan for the re-integration of students and staff e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relative etc)
- Student Liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.
- Plan visits to injured
 - Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital
 - Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (To be decided)
 - Decide this in accordance with parent's wishes, school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends
- School closure (if appropriate)
- Request a decision on this from school management



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Gníomhaíochtaí fad-téarmach/Longer term actions

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress.

If over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he/she may need assistance from the Health Services Executive. Constant communication with family is essential.

- Uncharacteristic behaviour
- Deterioration in academic performance
- Physical symptoms – e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness
- Inappropriate emotional reactions
- Increased absenteeism

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately

- What went well?
- Where were the gaps?
- What was most/least helpful?
- Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any unfinished business?

Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future

- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
- Ensure that new staffs are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area
- Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way



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- When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, the Principal should brief the Principal of the new school

Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (Where appropriate-be sensitive to special days and events)

- Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff and they may need additional support at this time
- Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
- Need to be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day
 - Plan a school memorial service
 - Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
 - Update and amend school records

Comhairliúchán agus cumarsáid maidir leis an bplean/Consultation and communication regarding the plan

The Board of Management and staff were consulted and their views were considered in the preparation of this policy and plan. Representatives of the Parents Council 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 Príomhoide Caitríona Ní Riada.

The plan will be updated annually in March of each year.



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Daingniú & cur i bhfeidhm/Ratification and implementation:

This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management at its Meeting on 05.03.2019

Its implementation was deemed effective from that date.

Sínithe/Signed:

Dáta/Date:

Antóin Ó Laoire
Cathaoirleach An Bhoird Bhainistíochta

05.03.2019



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Aguisín 1 / Appendix 1

Foireann Bainistíochta Teagmhais Chriticiúil / Critical Incident Management Team:

Ról/Role	Foireann/Team	Foireann Ionaid/Sub Team
Ceann foirne/Team leader:	Caitriona Ní Riada	Eoin Ó Siochrú
Teagmhálaí leis na Gárdaí/Garda liaison:	Eoin Ó Siochrú	Úna de Paor
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Teagmhálaí leis na meáin/Media liaison:	Caitriona Ní Riada	Eoin Ó Siochrú
Riarthóir/Administrator:	Áine Uí Chróinín	Julie Uí Bhuachalla



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Aguisín 2/Appendix 2

Gníomhú/Action Plan

Gníomhaíochtaí láithreach/Short term actions (Lá 1/Day 1)

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



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Gníomhaíochtaí meán tréimhseach/Medium term actions (24-72 Uair/Hours)

Tásc/Task
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1
Meet external agencies
Meet whole staff
Arrange support for students, staff, parents
Visit the injured
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service
Make decisions about school closure



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Gníomhaíochtaí fad-téarmach/Longer term actions

Tásc/Task
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family
Decide on memorials and anniversaries
Review response to incident and amend plan



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Aguisín 3/Appendix 3

LIOSTA TEAGMHÁLAITHE ÉIGEANDÁLA/ EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

GNÍOMHAIREACHT/AGENCY	UIMHREACHA TEAGMHÁLA/CONTACT NUMBERS
An Garda Síochána/Garda	024 92200
Ospidéal/Hospital	021- 4922000 - CUH 021- 4920200 - Emergency Dept CUH
An Bhriogáid Dóiteáin/Fire Brigade	024 - 92351
Dochtúirí Ginearálta Áitiúla/Local GPs	Dr. Matthews - 024/93552 Dr. O' Callaghan - 024/92702 Dr. Twomey - 024/92101 Dr. O' Brien - 024/93411
FSS/HSE	021 - 4966555
An Ghníomhaireacht Um Leanaí & An Teaghlach/TUSLA	021 - 4927000
Na Seirbhísí Áitiúla Meabhairshláinte do Leanaí & d'Ógánaigh/CAMHS	021 - 4659730
Cigire Scoie/School Inspector	087 - 9802682 (Máire Mhic Craith)
Siceolaí SNSO/NEPS Psychologist	076 - 108474 (Colette Uí Fhaoláin)



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ROS/DES	090 - 6483600
CMÉ/INTO	01 - 8047700
Cumann Bainistíochta na mBunscoileanna Caitliceacha/CPMSA	01 - 6292462
Cléir/Clergy	086 - 8292560 - (Fr. Winkle) 087 - 9601558 - (Fr. Corkery)
Inspire Workplaces	1800 411 057