



Bandonbridge N.S. Critical Incident Policy

Date ratified by BoM: 09/09/2019

Date of review:

Introduction:

In Bandonbridge N.S. we aim to protect the well being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and nurturing environment as outlined in our school ethos statement.

The BoM, through the Principal, the Staff and the Parent Association, has drawn up a **Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)**. A **Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)** has been established to steer the development and implementation of this plan.

What is a Critical Incident?

A critical incident is “any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school”. Critical incidents may involve one or more students, or members of staff or members of the school or local community.

Examples:

- 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
- Civil unrest, war
- Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing, building incident)
- Disappearance of student from home or school
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.
- World events that may affect the student body and/or staff.

Aim

The aim of the CIMP 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 return to normality as soon as possible.

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

Systems have been put 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

- Health & Safety Policy in place
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits, and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Front gates closed during school hours
- Main door secured with keypad entry
- Side gate locked until students are leaving
- Rules of the playground regularly reinforced to pupils and reviewed regularly

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Bandonbridge N.S. 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.

These may include:

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. In the curriculum we may address 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 and other issues, as necessary. Promotion of mental health is an integral element of this provision. Programmes such as “Get Up Stand Up” and “Friends for Life” may be used.
- 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. The risk assessment and safety statement are located in each classroom and displayed on a notice board at the main entrance where the name and photo of the DLP and DDLP are on view.
- Books and resources on difficulties which may affect the primary student are available. A list of books has been compiled and supplied to staff.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. Gardaí, NEPS, CAMHS, SESS, HSE, Enable Ireland.
- There is a care system in place in the school using the “Continuum of Support” approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2007 for primary schools, this document is available in the school and on www.education.ie
- 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 circular 0022/2010)
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. support teacher), concerns are explored, and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents/guardians are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency. (See Appendix 6 for guidance)
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Staff members are informed about how to access support for themselves.
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some have attended specialist training such as ASIST provided by the HSE

Critical Incidents Management Team:

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team are selected on a voluntary basis early in the school year and will retain their roles until new members are selected for the following school year. The members of the team will meet to review and provide feedback for the update of 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.

The team roles are as follows:

- Team Leader
- Garda Liaison
- Staff Liaison
- Student Liaison
- Parent /Guardian Liaison
- Community Liaison
- Media Advisor
- Administrator

The names of the persons fulfilling these roles are in Appendix 1.

TEAM LEADER

(A person who carries authority and can make decisions during a crisis e.g. school closure, attendance at memorial services, etc.)

- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS;
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Liaises with the bereaved family.

This role is normally undertaken by the Principal or in the Principal's absence by the Deputy Principal.

GARDA LIAISON

(This may be seen as part of the team leader's role)

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

STAFF LIAISON

(A staff member known and trusted by the staff)

- 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)
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Advises them of the availability of the Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants and gives them the contact number. (on DES website)

STUDENT LIAISON

(A trusted and familiar figure to the students.)

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

COMMUNITY/AGENCY LIAISON

(Someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community.)

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parent 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
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

PARENT/GUARDIAN LIAISON

(Someone known to parents. This person should be comfortable speaking before a large group and have skills to manage emotional reactions of individual or groups of parents)

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges meetings, if held
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers' sessions
- Ensures that sample letters are prepared and available on the school's IT system 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).

MEDIA ADVISOR

(Someone with good interpersonal skills)

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. media requesting staff, students and parents to be interviewed, intrusion of photographers on the premises, etc.)
- In the event of an incident, will advise staff and students on dealing with the media and in dealing with unsolicited media attention.
- Will liaise where necessary with relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up and issue a press statement (to be agreed by school management).
- Will adhere to confidentiality and good name considerations as set out later in this document.

ADMINISTRATOR

- Maintenance of up-to-date telephone numbers of:
 - Parents/guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Ensures that templates are available on the school's IT system and ready for adaptation
- Photocopies materials as needed
- Maintains records.

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. 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 Bandonbridge N.S. 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' or 'murder' will not be used. The role of the coroner is to enquire into the circumstances of sudden, unexplained, violent and unnatural deaths. The coroner essentially establishes the "who, when, where and how" of unexplained death, they must establish the facts. Phrases such as 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be considered.

Critical incident rooms:

In the event of a critical incident:

Room 8 – will be the main room used to meet the staff

Individual classrooms – for meetings with students of a specific class

GP room – for meetings with student body or multiple classes

Principal's office – for individual parents/small groups

GP room – for larger parent groups

Special Ed room – for individual sessions with students

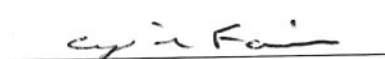
Principal's office/Special Ed room – for other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan:

All staff were consulted, and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Parent/guardian 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. The plan will be updated periodically.

Signed: Chairperson:

Date: 09/09/2019



Principal:

