

# **CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Mountbolus NS** aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The Board of Management, through *the principal* has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

## **Review and Research**

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie) including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)

## **Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'**

**The \* symbol denotes additions to the policy in light of potential Covid -19 events.**

The staff and management of *Mountbolus NS* recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism 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*
- ***The death of a pupil, sibling ,parent or Staff member from Covid -19.\****
- ***The death of a family member of any member of staff from Covid -19\****
- *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*

## **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 effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

## **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.

### **Physical safety**

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- **\* Logistics plan/Risk Assessment/School Covid-19 Response Plan for return to school in September 2020.**

### **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of *Mountbolus NS* 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
- 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
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/post primary school student are available
- 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)
- 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 and 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or support teacher), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.
- **\* September 2020- staff advised on self care in the re-opening scenario as well as wellbeing supports available alongside protocols and LWR support.**
- **\* September 2020- 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> classes following Weaving Well Being Programmes for Wellbeing on return to school post-covid closure. Infants following wellbeing guidelines as presented by DES in Roadmap for re-opening schools.**

### **Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**

A CIMT will involve all staff as we are a small school. Each staff member will have input into this policy and keep a copy with their Child Protection folder.

**Team leader:** *Principal.*

#### **Role**

- Alerts staff 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

### **Garda liaison - Marguerite White/Brenda Dunne**

#### **Role**

Liaises with the Gardaí

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

### **Staff liaison – E Buckley**

**\*Also LWR/DLWR during Covid-19**

#### **Role**

- 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 - All Staff**

#### **Role**

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact record .

### **Community/agency liaison – M Balfe**

#### **Role**

- 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

### **Parent liaison- M Balfe**

## **Role**

- 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)

## **Media liaison- M Balfe**

### **Role**

- 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)

## **Administrator – M Balfe**

### **Role**

- 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

## **Record keeping- Sheelagh Sullivan**

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.

All Staff will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

## **Confidentiality and good name considerations**

Management and staff of *Mountbolus NS* 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 legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

**\*In the case of a death from Covid-19 all protocols will be followed and privacy maintained and all guided by HSE teams as per Public Health Concerns.**

<b>Critical Incident Rooms</b>	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
<b>Room Name:</b>	<b>Designated Purpose:</b>
<i>Principal's Classroom*</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Classrooms*</i>	Meetings with students
<i>School yard*</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>School Yard*</i>	Meetings with media
<i>SET Room*</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>School Yard*</i>	Meetings with other visitors

- **Denotes use during Covid -19 incidents- HSE may change these room purposes.**

#### **Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent/guardian representatives were also consulted via BOM and Parents Association 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.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by principal

The plan will be reviewed annually or in light of National/World events having an impact on school life.

## Short term actions – Day 1

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

## Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

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

## Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	M Balfe
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	All staff
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	All staff
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020 following review as result of Covid 19 pandemic

Signed Carol Dunican Chairperson	Date	25/6/20
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Michele Balfe Principal/Secretary BoM	Date	25/6/20
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