

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY (Reviewed February 2024)

Scoil Bhríde aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by always providing a safe and nurturing environment.

Vision and Mission Statement

“Our vision is to create a caring, learning school community and environment where all children are encouraged and supported to actively participate, achieve their potential and be proud of their achievements.”

Mission Statement

Scoil Bhríde allows everyone to participate by:

- Providing a welcoming, safe, happy, inclusive learning environment where everyone is respected and listened to; a school where we take pride in ourselves and our achievements
- By recognising and supporting the varying and individual needs of pupils
- By enabling children to become confident, successful, independent learners.
- Being a partner in the education of our pupils and being committed to working in partnership with our parents and wider community.
- Providing a general, balanced education dedicated to the development of the 'whole child'

Scoil Bhríde encourages everyone to achieve his or her potential by:

- Striving for the highest possible standards of achievement and behaviour in a stimulating, caring environment.
- Valuing independence and creativity, developing a deeper level of learning and providing a curriculum which enables our pupils to live full lives as children, equip them to avail of further education and prepare them to live full and useful lives as adults in society.
- Striving to be a centre for excellent teaching and learning, where the staff are committed to their own learning journey and the sharing of quality practice.
- By recognising and valuing the uniqueness of each child

Scoil Bhríde enables everyone to be proud of their achievements by:

- Encouraging everyone to do their very best.
- Developing a love of learning.
- Building and developing upon individual strengths and talents
- Recognising and acknowledging effort and celebrating achievements

Our “Golden Rules”

- Be kind to yourself and others.
- Be respectful.
- Be honest.
- Do your best.
- Look after our environment.

Our Motto is “Ní neart go cur le chéile”

The Board of Management has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Our aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

Definition of "critical incident"

The staff and management of Scoil Bhríde 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 member of 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 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 to 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

We have put systems in place to help 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

Specific examples of what the school is doing at this point.

- Health & Safety policy
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Morning supervision outside the school door by Margaret Howard from 9.05 a.m. to 9.20 a.m. Members of the ISM team supervise at the school gates from 3.00p.m. to 3.05 p.m. The children are supervised in their classes/school hall from 9.05 to 9.20a.m. by teachers on duty and SNAs.
- Rules of the playground/Classroom rules are revised regularly with pupils
- Access doors are locked during class time

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Scoil Bhríde 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.

List of programmes/procedures/practices in use:

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

- R.S.E
- Stay safe
- 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 school student are available
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies, Local Gardaí, Local Doctor, NEPS, DES, HSA and HSE.
- 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 Section 7 of *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools*)
- 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
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to designated staff member (Principal/Deputy) 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 e.g. Employee Assistance Service/Inspire Workplace Services 1800411057.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected from the In School Management team and the Board of Management 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 will be familiarised with their roles and responsibilities. A dedicated critical incident folder has been prepared and is available in the secretary's office. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to all roles, to be used in the event of an incident.

Preparation of CIMP

Roles.

The following roles have been assigned to the Critical Incident Management Team. The Key roles are as follows:

Team Leader:	Margaret Howard/Elaine McDonnell/Mary Barry
Garda Liaison:	Margaret Howard/Elaine McDonnell/Mary Barry
Student Liaison:	Sharon Murphy/Aishling McGrath(Aoife Lynch-Frahill)
Media Liaison:	Sharon Murphy/Margaret Howard
Community Liaison:	Clodagh Bermingham/Elaine McDonnell/Josephine Collins
Staff Liaison:	Elaine McDonnell/Noelle Crowley
Outside Agencies:	David O'Sullivan/Margaret Howard
Parent/Guardian Liaison:	Anna Hogan/Margaret Howard/Eileen Barry
Administrator:	Anke Fitzgerald

Outlined below are some points on the key responsibilities of each role.

Team Leader

- Alerts the team members to crisis and convenes a meeting
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with Board of Management, DES, NEPS, Southern Health Board, Local Gardai, local G.P.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.

Garda Liaison

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

Staff Liaison

- 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
- Advise staff on 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 them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

Student Liaison

- Alerts staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records(R1)
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

Community/Media Liaison

- Maintains up to date list of contact number of Emergency Support services and other external contracts 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
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

Parent/Guardian Liaison

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings and manage 'questions and answers' sessions
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures the 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 Liaison

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management).

Administrator

- Maintenance of up-to-date telephone numbers of
 - Parents/guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services

- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response
- Ensures that templates are available on the school's IT system and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails texts
- Photocopies materials as needed
- Maintains records.

Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of the phone calls made and received, letters, emails and text sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, materials used etc. The school secretary Anke Fitzgerald 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 Scoil Bhríde 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.

Critical incident rooms

Staff Room: Meeting with staff

Library: Meeting with students

Library/Halla: For parents

Staff Room: For media

Resource Room 4: For individual sessions with students

Halla: For other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding this plan

All staff were consulted in the preparation of this policy and plan. Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff. Each member of the CIMT has access to the plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the principal/deputy principal. The plan has been reviewed and updated in February 2024.

Signed: Mary Barry Date: 19/02/2024
Chairperson B.O.M