



Rathbeggan N.S.

Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath

Tel: 01 8259891 e-mail: office@rathbegganns.ie

Registered Charity Number: 20131616

Critical Incident Management Policy

Introductory Statement

This Critical Incident Policy was devised and formulated by the school community, involving the Board of Management, parents and staff of Rathbeggan National School, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Education and Science and the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association. This policy is informed by the "Responding to Critical Incidents – National Educational Psychological Service Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools" (2016).

Ethos

Rathbeggan National School is a co-educational primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the students are identified and addressed. While respect is paid to all religious and/or value systems, Rathbeggan National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount. The Board of Management of Rathbeggan National School has 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.

Rationale

This Critical Incident Management Policy is designed to help management and staff of Rathbeggan National School to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable the school to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. An effective plan should also assist to ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to outline the role of the school in creating effective care systems across the whole school community. This policy is designed to assist Rathbeggan National School to proactively

prepare for any possible critical incidents which may have an impact on the school community and informs the school's response to these.

Defining a Critical Incident

We 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 children or staff members, or members of the local community. Types of incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or other unexpected death.
- An accident involving members of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community
- An intrusion into the school
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community

Physical Safety:

All children in Rathbeggan N.S. are closely supervised at all times. A Health and Safety Statement has been developed for the whole school which is reviewed periodically.

An evacuation plan has been formulated for emergency situations and regular fire drills are carried out. Fire exits and fire extinguishers are serviced regularly. Defibrillator pads are regularly checked.

Psychological Safety:

The Board of Management and staff of Rathbeggan National School 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 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 Social, Personal and Health Education
- Staff are trained in the facilitation of the Fun Friends Program and the Friends for Life Program
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- The Weaving Wellbeing Program is facilitated across the senior classes
- Staff are informed about the Employee Assistance Scheme (Inspire Workplace Services)
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies and practitioners that aim to enhance pupil and staff wellbeing

- The Student Council promotes the student voice in Rathbeggan National School
- Rathbeggan National School hosts a 'Wellbeing Week' for the school community
- 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.
- 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 National Educational Psychology Service documents
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and 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.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the 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 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.

Team leader: Rob Small

Role:

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; Department of Education and Skills, the National Educational Psychology Service
- Liaises with the bereaved family

*In the absence of the Team Leader, Clíodhna Horan will assume this role.

Garda Liaison: Rob Small

Role:

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

*In the absence of the Garda Liaison, Clíodhna Horan will assume this role.

Staff liaison: Clíodhna Horan

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 Employee Assistance Service and gives them the contact number.

*In the absence of the Staff Liaison, Carol Cromwell will assume this role.

Student Liaison: Aidín McGill/Support Teachers

Role:

- Alerts other 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

*In the absence of the Student Liaison, Anna Crowe will assume this role.

Community/Agency Liaison: Eamonn Mulvihill (Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Role:

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of - 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
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

*In the absence of the Community Liaison, the Community Representatives of the Board of Management will assume this role.

Parent Liaison: Eve Flynn

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)

*In the absence of the Parent Liaison Nessa O'Brien will assume this role.

Media Liaison: Aidín McGuill

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

*In the absence of the Media Liaison Eamonn Mulvihill will assume this role.

Administrator: Caroline Doyle

Role:

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of - Parents or guardians, Teachers and Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials 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 sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. Janet Hughes 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 Rathbeggan 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 Principal will make all statements via notes, e-mail, website etc. after liaising with the family involved.

The members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will not speak about incidents to the media, on social media etc. and will ensure that the children do so also.

The Parents Association will be encouraged not to engage with the media also.

The term, suicide, will not be used unless the coroner has informed the family that death was due to suicide and the family involved consents to its use. The phrase 'tragic death' may be used instead.

Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident the staffroom will be the main room used to meet the staff.

The Library or classroom will be used for meetings with children and parents. There will never be a whole school assembly in relation to a critical incident.

Individual sessions with children will take place in the library or Principal's office.

Where possible, media will be addressed outside the school gate. If an interview is decided upon the Principal will insist on the proposed questions being asked to be provided prior to the commencement of the interview, and also insist on the right to edit the interview. If these two conditions are not met the interview will not go ahead.

Other visitors will generally meet in the Principal's Office.

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy review.

The Parents Association and Board of Management members were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Each member of the CIMT has a personal copy of the plan and it is available on the shared 'Teacher' drive. New and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan. The plan will be reviewed periodically.

Signed:

Brandon McPhillip
Chairperson
B. O. M.

Date:

26/9/2024

| Critical Incident Management Team | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Role | Name | Phone |
| Team Leader | Rob Small | On file |
| Garda Liason | Rob Small | On file |
| Staff Liaison | Cliodhna Horan | On file |
| Student Liaison | Aidín McGill/Support Teachers | On file |
| Community Liaison | Eamonn Mulvihill | On file |
| Parent Liaison | Eve Flynn | On file |
| Media Liaison | Aidín McGill | On file |
| Administrator | Caroline Doyle | On file |

Short term actions – Day 1

| Task | Name |
|--|--|
| Gather accurate information Who, what, when, where? | Team Leader |
| Contact CE, Director of Schools, NEPS Psychologist | Team Leader |
| Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly | Team Leader |
| Contact external agencies | Team Leader |
| Arrange supervision for students | Staff Liaison Officer |
| Hold staff meeting | All Staff |
| Agree schedule for the day | Team Leader |
| Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately) | Student Liaison/Class Teachers/Support Teacher |
| Compile a list of vulnerable students | Class Teachers/Student Liaison |
| Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media | Media Liaison |
| Inform parents | Team Leader |
| Hold end of day staff briefing | Team Leader |

Medium term actions – (Day 2 and following Days)

| Task | Name |
|--|---|
| Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1 | Team Leader |
| Meet external agencies | Team Leader |
| Meet whole staff | Staff Liaison |
| Arrange support for students, staff, parents | Student Liaison |
| Visit the injured | Class teacher/Team Leader/Student Liaison |
| Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements | Team Leader |
| Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service | Team Leader |
| Make decisions about school closure | Board of Management |

Follow Up – beyond 72 hours

| Task | Name |
|--|---|
| Monitor students for signs of continuing distress | Class Teachers |
| Liaise with agencies regarding referrals | Team Leader |
| Plan for return of bereaved student(s) | Team Leader, Student Liaison/Relevant Class Teacher/Support Teacher |
| Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family | Parent Liaison |
| Decide on memorials and anniversaries | BOM/Staff/Parents/Students |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Review response to incident and amend plan | Staff/BOM |
|--|-----------|

| Emergency Contact List | |
|---|--|
| Agency | Contact Numbers |
| Garda | Dunshaughlin 018010600 |
| Hospital | Navan 046 9078500 Blancharstown 01 6465000 |
| Fire Brigade | 999/112 or non emerginices Dunshaughlin Station 046-9021666 |
| Local GPs | Dunshaughlin Health Centre 01 8024100 |
| HSE | Dunshaughlin Health Centre 01 8024100 |
| Community Care Team | Dunshaughlin Health Centre 01 8024100 |
| Child and Family Centre | Child and Family Agency, Enterprise Centre, Navan , 046 9098800 |
| Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS) | CAMHS, Trim 046 9420800 |
| NEPS Psychologist | North Eastern region 076 110 8635 |
| DES | (01) 889 6400 |
| INTO | Telephone: +353 1 804 7700 LoCall: 1850 708 708 |
| Parish Priest | Fr. Gerry Stuart 01 825 6207 |
| Employee Assistance Service | 1800 411 057 |