



# Lismullen National School

Garlow Cross, Navan, Co. Meath C15NH68

Roll No. 18106P

Telephone 046 9025533

Email: [office@lismullen@gmail.com](mailto:office@lismullen@gmail.com) Website: [www.lismullenns.ie](http://www.lismullenns.ie)

Principal: Violet Molloy Deputy Principal: Jenny Dempsey



## **Critical Incident Policy**

Ratified: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024

## **AIMS:**

- To protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.
- To cater to the holistic development of the child in order to enable him/her to live a full life as a child.
- To promote a mutually respectful environment where the child is physically safe and happy and where good relationships are fostered between pupils, teachers, parents/guardians and others involved in the running of the school.

Lismullen National School has taken a number of measures to create a supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident. Recognising that the key to managing critical incidents is planning, Lismullen National School has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy following the “Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines from NEPs”. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, this will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us to achieve a return to normality

## **WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?**

Lismullen National School recognises a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school”. Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Types of incidents might include:

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

Response Level 1: death of a student or staff member who was terminally ill, the death of a parent, sibling, a fire in the school, serious damage to school property

Response Level 2: the sudden death of a student or staff member

Response level 3: an accident/event involving a number of students, a violent death, an accident with a high media profile.

## **PHYSICAL SAFETY:**

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY:**

Lismullen National School aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for same.

- SPHE programmes are included in the curriculum to address issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking, decision making and alcohol and drug prevention.
- Our Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying policies includes our approach to dealing with bullying.
- Fun Friends programme
- Child Protection Policy; Child Safeguarding Statement
- Staff are informed of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs
- Staff have access to books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school child
- The school has developed links with outside agencies, which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students such as NEPs, Túsla Child and Family Agency and the local Garda community rep.

## **SUICIDE PREVENTION:**

- Implementation of SPHE programme, the focus on building resilience and coping skills.
- Targeted programmes for distressed pupils.
- Referral procedures to local GP, counselling and linking mechanism with agencies
- Development of procedures for ensuring the supportive return of pupils to school after hospitalisation.

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM:**

Lismullen National School set up a CI Management Team in line with best practice and will maintain this team in future. The members of the team will meet once a year to review and update the plan. Each member of the team has a Resource Pack with relevant materials to be used in the event of an incident.

Key roles have been identified and assigned as follows:

1.	Team Leader	Violet Molloy
2.	Deputy Team Leader	Jenny Dempsey
3.	Staff Liaison	Violet Molloy
4.	Student Liaison	Jenny Dempsey/Aoife Galligan
3.	Family Liaison	Jean Flanagan/Aoife O'Halloran
4.	Media Liaison	Chairperson, Principal
5.	Chaplain	Fr Michael Cahill
6.	Garda Contact	Violet Molloy
6.	Administration	Maria Juhel Bradshaw

In the event of a critical incident such as a bereavement the responsibilities of Team leader, Student Liaison and Family Liaison will be as follows:

### **Team Leader**

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management and Department of Education and Skills and other outside agencies.
- Liaises with the bereaved family
- Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and outlines the routine for the day.
- Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable students
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Provides materials to staff from NEPs Guidelines p53/p57-67
- Liaises with media p56 NEPs Guidelines

### **Student Liaison**

- Liaises with other team members to keep them up-dated with information and progress
- Alerts staff to vulnerable students
- Provide materials for students and parents from the Critical Incident Pack, where applicable

### **Family Liaison**

- Co-ordinate contact with families (following first contact by Principal)
- Consult with family around involvement of school in e.g. funeral service
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident.

## **Record Keeping**

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep detailed records of phone calls made and received, letters 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.

## **Letter to Parents**

The Principal will prepare a brief, written statement to include:

- The sympathy of the school community for the affected/bereaved family
- Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured person(s)
- The facts of the incident
- What has been done
- What is going to be done

## **ACTION PLAN:**

### **Immediate Actions**

- Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team
- Organise a staff meeting, if appropriate
- Distribute information packs to all staff
- 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 Chaplain/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 (Team Leader and Student Liaison person)  
Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths
- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Media briefing
- Consult with B.O.M
- Send letter to school community p54 NEPs Guidelines

### **Medium Term Actions (24 – 72 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 relatives etc.
- Student liaison person to liaise with above on their return to school.
- Family Liaison person + Class Teacher + Principal to visit home/hospital
- Attendance and participation in 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)

### **Long Term Actions**

Class teacher will 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 H.S.E. 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
- 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 (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 parents' wishes?
- Update and amend school records

### **Critical Incident Room**

In the event of a critical incident, the Principal's Office, Staff Room and Special Education room in the main building will be the rooms used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

### **DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION OF THIS POLICY:**

All staff was consulted in the preparation of the draft plan.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

In school management and staffs

### **RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION**

State when the BoM officially ratified the policy. Make provision for the circulation of the ratified policy. Provide the policy to all new applicants on enrolment.

**REVIEW DATE**

This policy will be reviewed as requested or required.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## **CRITICAL INCIDENT PACK:**

### **Emergency contact list**

Gardaí:	046 9079930
Ambulance/Fire Brigade	112/999
Fire Brigade	
Hospital:	046 9021210
G.P.Bedford Medical Centre	046 9021369
TUSLA	046 9098560
NEPS Psychologist	01 8650635
INTO	01 8047700
Parish Priest	046 902 1731
Employee Assistance Service	1800411 057

### **Helplines:**

Barnardos	01 4530355
Samaritans	116123
Childline	1800 666666
Parentline	01 8733500
Aware	1800804848
Pieta	1800247247
Rainbows	01 4734175

## Checklist for Principal Day 1

1	Gather the facts - what has happened, when, how, where, and who is injured or dead
2	Consult Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (available on the DES website <a href="http://www.education.ie">www.education.ie</a> )
3	Is it an incident requiring a NEPS Response at Level 1, 2 or 3?
4	Who do I need to call (see Emergency Contact List - R21)?
5	Meet with the other Critical Incident Management Team
6	Meet with other agencies, if involved, to agree roles and procedures
7	Have administration staff photocopy appropriate literature
8	Arrange for the supervision of students
9	Agree content of communication for school social media site, if appropriate
10	Address the staff meeting
11	Identify vulnerable students
12	Draft a media statement (R4)
13	Prepare for a media interview, (see Section 9)
14	Draft a letter to parents (R2, R3)
15	Meet with the CIMT to review the day and arrange an early morning meeting for the following day
16	Meet with the staff group
17	Make contact with the affected family/families.

## **Medium Term Actions Day 2+**

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents/guardians	
Visit the injured	
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	
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	
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

## Checklist Pupils at Risk

Unexpected reduction of academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talking about suicide	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ideas and themes of depression, death and suicide in their work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change in mood and marked emotional instability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significant grief or stress	<input type="checkbox"/>
Withdrawal from relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>
Break up of an important relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discipline problems, being in trouble in school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Withdrawal from extra-curricular activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving personal belongings away	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of interest in things one cares about	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neglect of physical appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical symptoms with emotional cause	<input type="checkbox"/>
High risk behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol or drug abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bullying or victimization	<input type="checkbox"/>
History of suicidal behaviour e.g. cutting or overdose risk behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family history of suicide/attempted suicide	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over use or reliance on social media	<input type="checkbox"/>