



Roxboro National School CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Roxboro N.S. aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

Roxboro N.S has taken a number of measures to create a coping, 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.

The Board of Management has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying Plan.

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

What is a Critical Incident?

Roxboro N.S. 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”.¹ 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 member of the school community*
- *An accident involving members of the school community*
- *A pandemic*

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 impact on students and staff will be limited. It should also enable us to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

¹ Source: Responding to Critical Incidents in Schools – National Educational Psychological Services NEPS.

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 measure to address both the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.

Physical safety:

Key aspects of our concern for the physical safety of everyone in school are to be found in other policies and procedures such as:

- Covid-19 Response Plan and Risk Assessment
- Health and Safety Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- S.P.H.E. Programme
- Child Protection Policy
- Evacuation plan
- Fire Safety
- Supervision Policy

Psychological safety

Roxboro N.S. aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for same, as in:

- SPHE programme addresses 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.
- Wellbeing programmes
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff are informed of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs.
- Staff have access to training, books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school child.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Safeguarding Procedures and the name of the Designated Liaison Person. Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member.
- 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
- The school has developed links with outside agencies, which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students, e.g. Parish Clergy, H.S.E., N.E.P.S., D.E.S., TUSLA
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

Critical Incident Management Team

Roxboro N.S. has set up a C.I. Management Team in line with best practice² and will maintain this team in future. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. A Critical Incident Folder with relevant materials is prepared and is available in the office. Multiple copies may be made in the event of an incident.

Roles

Key roles have been identified and assigned as follows:

- Overall Team Leaders **Gillian McBride / Seamus Talbot**
- Staff Liaison **Michelle McNeela / Aoife Brides / Rachel Mullen/ Siobhan Ormsby**
- Student Liaison **Mary Fallon / Elaine Dooner / Mary Glynn / Enda Morris / Imelda Larkin / Jacinta Hoare / Elaine Cahill / Clodagh McGarry**
- Parent Liaison **Clare Dempsey / Gillian McBride / Vivienne Conlon**
- Community Liaison **Eithne Fallon / Karen Donohue / Claire Finan**
- Media Liaison **Gillian McBride / Seamus Talbot**
- Administration **Mary Tully, Team Leaders**

*The **Team Leaders** are the first named in the sub-groups above*

Team Leader

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Coordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the Board of Management and Department of Education and Skills and NEPS.
- Liaises with the bereaved family/ relevant people central to the incident.
- Liaises with the Gardaí and/or other support services

Staff Liaison

- Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known, gives 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.
- Advises them of the availability of the Employee Assistance Service and gives them the contact number. (1800 411 057)
- Provides materials to staff from the Critical Incident Folder.

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 from the Critical Incident Folder.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of ‘Quiet’ room where agreed.

² A critical incident team “is a group of individuals from the staff of the school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs” (Mary Schoenfeldt).

Community Liaison

- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support.
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies.
- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents/guardians, such as members of the parents' association
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.

Parent Liaison

- Arranges meeting if held.
- Facilitates 'questions and answers' meetings.
- Sets up room for meetings with parents/guardians
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy.
- Ensures that sample letters are prepared and available and ready for adaptation.
- Meets with individual parents/guardians.
- Maintains a record of parents/guardians seen.
- Provides materials for parents/guardians from the Critical Incident Folder.
- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.

Media Liaison

- In preparing for the role, s/he will consider issues that may arise during an incident and how they might be responded to (eg. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc).
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the Communications Section in the DES.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator

- Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Staff
 - Emergency support services
- Telephone calls need to be responded to, letters and emails sent and materials photocopied.
- Ensures that templates are available and ready for adaptation

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep detailed 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 Mary Tully will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Letter to Parents/Guardians

Team Leaders 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 persons(s)
- The facts of the incident
- What has been done
- What is going to be done

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The school has 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 pupils do so also. [For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used without the consent of the family involved or until it has been established categorically that the person's death was a result of suicide. 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.]

Development and communication of this policy and plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this plan. Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments. Our school's final policy and procedures in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.

Each member of the critical incident team has access to a copy of this plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the team leaders and the plan will be updated annually.

**CRITICAL INCIDENT
MANAGEMENT
PLAN**

September 2020

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM:

Chairperson of B.O.M.

+

All school Staff

Key Roles Assigned

TASK	NAME
OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF RESPONSE	Team Leaders
COMMUNICATION	As per roles
ADMINISTRATION TASKS	Team Leaders and Mary Tully
SUPERVISION	Team Leaders
MEDIA LIASION	Gillian McBride Seamus Talbot
PARENT LIASION	Clare Dempsey Gillian McBride Vivienne Conlon
COMMUNITY LIASION	Eithne Fallon Karen Donohue Claire Finan
STUDENT LIASION	Mary Fallon Elaine Dooner Elaine Cahill Enda Morris Mary Glynn Jacinta Hoare Imelda Larkin Clodagh McGarry
STAFF LIASION	Michelle McNeela Aoife Brides Rachel Mullen Siobhan Ormsby

Emergency Contact List

(to be displayed in staff-room, Principal's office etc)

OUTSIDE AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
GARDA	999 / 112
HOSPITAL	999 / 112
FIRE BRIGADE	999 /112
Eircode (School)	F42 NY75
LOCAL GPs	Health Centre Roscommon 090 66 65000 Dr Keenan/Dr Quinn 090 66 26289 Dr Sweeney/Dr Wawrzynek 090 66 26769 Dr Robinson 0906627000 Dr. Hanratty/Dr Crosby 090 66 26644 Dr Robinson 090 66 25650 Dr Sweeney McSharry 090 66 34404 Dr Morris 090 66 26571
H.S.E H.S.E. COVID-19 HELPLINE	090 6626304 / 6626518 1850 24 1850
INSPECTORATE	Máire Ní Mhairtín 087 2405423
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	Cathal Duffy 087 0694963
D.E.S. COMMUNICATIONS	090 6474621
D.E.S. COVID-19 HELPLINE	057-9324461.
I.N.T.O.	1850 708708
PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY	Fr Raymond Browne 090 6629518 Deacon Seamus Talbot 0876678582
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057 Text/whatsapp 'Hi' to 087 369 0010
TUSLA	090 6637810

PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES

- **CURRICULUM**

- ANTI BULLYING POLICY
- BEHAVIOUR POLICY
- CIRCLE TIME
- WALK TALL/STAY SAFE PROGRAMME
- SPHE POLICY
- STAFF ALERT TO STUDENTS WITH DIFFICULTIES
(e.g. bereaved students, self harming, eating difficulties etc)

- **SUPPORT**

- NEPS
- PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY
- CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES etc

- **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

- FIRE DRILL – EVACULATION OF PUPILS
- MAINTAIN FIRE EXTINGUISHERS
- STAFF ABLE TO USE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS
- HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
- PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION
- COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

SHORT TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

1ST DAY

TASK	NAME (KEY & SUPPORT)
GATHER ACCURATE INFORMATION	Relevant Staff and Witnesses (accidents)
CONTACT APPROPRIATE AGENCIES	Relevant Staff
CONVENE A MEETING WITH KEY STAFF	Leaders
ARRANGE SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS	Principal / Deputy Principal
HOLD STAFF MEETING	ALL STAFF
ORGANISE TIMETABLE FOR THE DAY	ALL STAFF
INFORM PARENTS	Principal / Deputy Principal
INFORM STUDENTS	Principal / Student Liaison Officers
MAKE CONTACT WITH THE BEREAVED FAMILY	Parent Liaison Officers + Leaders
DEALING WITH MEDIA	Gillian McBride Seamus Talbot

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

24 -72 HOURS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
REVIEW THE EVENTS OF THE FIRST 24 HOURS	STAFF, CORDINATED BY GILLIAN MCBRIDE & SEAMUS TALBOT
ARRANGE SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL/GROUPS OF STUDENTS, PARENTS ETC.	STAFF, CORDINATED BY GILLIAN MCBRIDE & SEAMUS TALBOT
PLAN THE REINTEGRATION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF	STAFF, CORDINATED BY GILLIAN MCBRIDE & SEAMUS TALBOT
PLAN VISITS TO INJURED	STAFF, CORDINATED BY GILLIAN MCBRIDE & SEAMUS TALBOT
LIAISE WITH FAMILY RE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS/ MEMORIAL SERVICE	STAFF, CORDINATED BY GILLIAN MCBRIDE & SEAMUS TALBOT
ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION AT FUNERAL SERVICE ETC	STAFF, CORDINATED BY GILLIAN MCBRIDE & SEAMUS TALBOT
SCHOOL CLOSURE	BOM

LONGER TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED

BEYOND 72 HOURS

TASK	NAME/GROUP
MONITOR STUDENTS FOR SIGNS OF CONTINUING STRESS	CLASS TEACHERS
EVALUATE RESPONSE TO INCIDENT AND AMEND CI PLAN APPROPRIATELY	STAFF + BOM
FORMALISE PLAN FOR FUTURE	STAFF + BOM
INFORM NEW STAFF/PUPILS	PRINCIPAL / DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
DECIDE ON APPROPRIATE WAYS TO DEAL WITH ANNIVERSARIES	BOM, STAFF AND FAMILY/FAMILIES

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

BARNARDOS	01 450355
THE SAMARITANS	1850 609090
CHILDLINE	1800 666666
PARENTLINE	1890 927277
AWARE	01 6766166 1890 303302
NATIONAL SUICIDE BEAREAVEMENT SUPPORT	024 95561
RAINBOWS	01 4734175
THE BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING SERVICE	01 8391766
BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING	01 6767727

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS – SUDDEN DEATH/ACCIDENT

(copy & edit to official school headed paper etc)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The school has experienced *(the sudden death, accidental injury, etc.)* of one of our students. We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events. Our thoughts and prayers are with *(Family name)*

(Brief details of the incident, and in the event of a death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. *(Elaborate)*

It is possible that your child may have some feelings that he/she may like to discuss with you. It is important to give truthful information that is age appropriate

You can help your child by taking time to listen and encouraging them to express their feelings. All children are different and will express their feelings in different ways. It is not uncommon for children to have difficulty concentrating or be fearful anxious or irritable. They may become withdrawn, cry, complain of physical aches and pains, have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares. Some may not want to eat. These are generally short-term reactions. Over the course of the coming days, please keep an eye on your child and allow him/her express their feelings without criticism.

Although classes will continue as usual, I anticipate that the next few days will be difficult for everyone.

(Optional)

An information night for parents/guardians is planned for *(date, time and place)*. At that time further information about how to help children in grief will be given.

We have enclosed some information which you may find useful in helping your child through this difficult time.

Young people frequently turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. At these times it is important that you monitor their use and engage with them about what they have read. We urge you to emphasise and reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive about what they post.

If you would like advice you may contact the following people at the school. *(Details)*.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian McBride

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS – VIOLENT DEATH

(copy & edit to official school headed paper etc)

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I wish to inform you about a very sad event that has happened.

A child/young from the neighbourhood, the sister/brother of (), a student here in the school, was killed as a result of *(a violent attack, violent incident in the street etc.) (earlier this week)*. We are all profoundly saddened by *his/her* death.

We have shared this information and had discussions with all of the children so they know what has happened. School staff members have been available for the children on an on-going basis today. Other support personnel *(including psychologists etc, according to actual arrangements)* are available to advise staff in support of the children.

The death of any young person is tragic, but a violent death is even more difficult. It is hard to have to teach our children about the violence in our world and to accept that sometimes we do not have the power to prevent it.

This death may cause a variety of reactions in your child. Some children/young people may be afraid for their own life and for the lives of those they love. Take time to listen to their fears and reassure them that what has happened is rare.

We have enclosed additional information that may be useful during this time *(of appropriate resources in Section 11 of 'Responding to critical Incidents – NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools')*

The media are in the vicinity of the school and may approach you or your children. You need not respond to their questions if you are approached. We will not allow the media to interview your child at school and our general advice is that you should not let your children be interviewed. They are not mature enough to judge what to say and may say something they will regret later.

In these times, young people tend to turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. While social media can be of great consolation, we would urge you to reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive about what your son/daughter might post to others.

Our thoughts and prayers are with *(family name)* and with each of you.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian McBride

**SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING CONSENT FOR INVOLVEMENT
OF OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS**

(copy & edit to official school headed paper etc)

Dear Parents,

Following the recent (tragedy, death of x) we have arranged professional support for students in school who need particular help. (x...) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to children, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your son/daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with the x..... If you would like your child to receive this support please sign the attached permission slip and return to the school by

If you would like further information on the above or to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip or telephone the school.

Principal

.....
I consent to having our daughter/son met by

I understand that my daughter/son may meet x..... in a individual or group session depending on the arrangements which are thought to be most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____

I would like my daughter/sonto avail of the support being offered by x.....

Signed: _____ Print Name:_____

Review of this Policy.

This Policy was reviewed in September of 2020 in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic and due to the appointment of a new Principal.

This policy is subject to review every four years. This, however, may be brought forward if any aspects need review. Between reviews, the names and roles of the named persons may be up-dated by the Chairperson and/or the Principal if there are staff changes etc.

Next review date: September 2024