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**Scoil Réalt na Mara,
Kilmore,
Co. Wexford.
Rev. Denis Doyle, PP.
(Chairperson of Board)
Micheál Martin (Principal)**

Critical Incident Policy for Scoil Réalt na Mara

Introduction

Scoil Réalt na Mara 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, Mr Martin, has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has been established to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

What is a Critical Incident?

The staff and management of Scoil Réalt na Mara recognise a critical incident to be *“any incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school”*.

Critical incident may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community.

Types of incidents might include:

- Death of a member of the school community through accident, terminal illness, sudden death, violence, suicide or other unexpected death.
- An accident on or off the school premises.
- A physical attack in school or intrusion into the school.
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.

To help determine the level of response, critical incidents are categorised by the CIMT in the following way:

Response Level 1

The death of a student or staff member who was terminally ill, the death of parent/sibling, a fire in the school not resulting in serious injury, 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 incident with a high media profile.

In the event of a critical incident occurring the CIMT will convene a meeting to determine appropriate response level.

Out of school hours incident

If a critical incident occurs outside of regular school hours e.g. weekends, school holidays etc. The CIMT may agree to meet depending on the response level required. The team leader will contact members and plan appropriate response.

Aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan 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 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 (see also Health and Safety policy)

- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers regularly checked.
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard (from 8.55am)
- Playground rules (*as detailed in yard book*) and supervision.
- Scoil Réalt na Mara has a clear code of behaviour and implements it fully.
- CCTV camera on front and back yards.
- Children are signed out by approved adults collecting them in the office when they are leaving premises.
- Adult volunteers (eg for shared reading, Maths for Fun etc) sign in at the office before presenting in classroom and must also sign out when leaving.
- All school volunteers who will have a mentoring role will be Garda Vetted.
- All work experience students and substitute staff will be Garda Vetted.

Psychological Safety

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. 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 are addressed in the SPHE curriculum. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision.
- SPHE curriculum taught in all classes.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with disclosures. School DLP is Micheál Martin (Principal) and the DDLP is Geraldine Cullen (Vice Principal).
- There is a care team in place in the school, Class teacher notes observations and refers to Mr Martin.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies: Tusla (NEPS, NEWB), HSE, SCP.

- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to Care Team.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves – EAS (Employment Assistance Service).

Members of the Critical Incident Management Team

A Critical Incident Management Team 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, plan and materials, particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Members of the Critical Incident Management Team:

1. Team leader	1. Micheál Martin	2. Geraldine Cullen
2. Staff Liaison:	1. Geraldine Cullen	2. Yvonne Miller
3. Student Liaison:	1. Yvonne Miller	2. Helen Cleary
4. Parent Liaison :	1. Micheál Martin	2. Geraldine Cullen
5. Community Liaison:	1. Ann O'Connor	2. Micheál Martin
6. Media Liaison:	1. Micheál Martin	2. Geraldine Cullen
7. Administrators 1:	1. Triona Ennis	2. Ann O'Connor
8. Administrators 2:	1. Helen Cleary	2. Yvonne Miller
9. Board of Management Rep:	1. Ann O'Connor	2. Micheál Martin

The first named person has the responsibility as defined. The second named person assists and only assumes responsibility in the absence of the first.

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Team Leader:

- Confirm the event and clarify facts.
- Activate the C.I.M.T. – arrange immediate meeting, delegate tasks to other team members.
- Prepare incident room.
- Arranges meeting of staff, gives facts as known, gives opportunity for response.
- Outlines proposed routine for day.
- Liaise with DES, NEPs and Board of Management.
- Liaise with bereaved and express sympathy to the family.
- Meets students to brief them on situation.
- Arrange end-of-day meeting

2. Staff Liaison:

- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students.
- Organises for supervision of students in the school.
- Provides material for staff (from folder).
- Keeps staff updated on information/developments/progress.
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.
- Advises of availability of the EAS and gives contact number.

3. Student Liaison:

- Identify vulnerable student (in consultation with staff).
- Provides materials for students (from folder).

- Keeps record of students concerned about.
- Makes provision for students in need of care. E.g. quiet place for reflection.

4. Parent Liaison:

- Liaising with Parents Association
- Visits the bereaved family with team leader.
- May need to facilitate parents meeting.
- Meet individual parents.
- Provide appropriate materials for parents.
- Keeps records of parents seen.
- Ensures that sample letters are available and ready for adaptation.

5. Community Liaison:

- Liaises with agencies in the community for support, e.g. Garda, local GPs etc.
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies.

6. Media Liaison:

- Gives press release (as agreed by school management).
- Arranges for photographs, interviews if deemed appropriate.
- Liaise with DES Communication office.

7/8. Administrator 1 and Administrator 2:

- Maintenance of up-to-date contact numbers of (see appendix):
 - Parents/Guardians
 - Staff
 - Emergency services – Gardaí
Local GPs
Hospital
Fire Brigade
 - Board of Management members
 - NEPS Psychologist
 - School Inspector
 - Clergy
 - HSE
- Assigns room for media.
- Identify a telephone line that will be available.
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that letters are on the school system in advance and ready for adaptation.
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails, faxes, texts etc.
- Maintains records – logs events.

9. Board of Management Liaison

- Liaise with B.O.M. members

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of:

1. phone calls made and received,
2. letters sent and received,
3. meetings held,
4. persons met,

5. interventions used,
6. materials used etc

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

A copy of the plan with all contact numbers will be kept in a secure place outside of the school, in the event of an incident affecting the part of the building where this information is normally kept.

Confidentiality and ‘good name’ considerations.

The management and staff of Scoil Réalt na Mara 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 members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that students do so also.

Critical Incident Rooms:

In the event of a critical incident:

Staffroom:	will be the main room used by staff
New PE Hall:	for parents
SCP room:	for students
Resource rooms:	other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan.

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed on this policy and plan.

Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Our school’s final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incident has been presented to all staff.

Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan and will prepare a folder of materials relevant to his/her role on the team.

All new staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Geraldine Cullen.

The plan will be updated annually each September.