

SCOIL NAOMH IOSAF

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN



Introduction

Scoil Naomh Iosaf's Critical Incident Management Plan outlines the preparation that the personnel in Scoil Naomh Iosaf will take in order to ensure an effective response to a crisis situation/critical incident. This should enable the school to cope effectively in the event of a crisis and will enable staff to react quickly and to maintain a sense of care and control. The plan may also ensure that normality returns as soon as possible, and that the effects on students and staff are as limited as possible.

The ethos of Scoil Naomh Iosaf is characterised by a warm and caring environment where pupils and Staff members encourage and nurture the creation of a caring and safe school environment. This is manifest in our Revised Code of Behaviour (2019), our anti-bullying policy, our ongoing focus on health safety issues in the school and its environs, the implementation of the school's SPHE programme and so forth. This caring and supportive environment will contribute to the successful implementation of this plan in the event of a critical incident.

The school has an evacuation plan also (for instance, in the event of a fire), which all pupils and staff are aware of. This is outlined in our Health and Safety Policy, a fire drill is undertaken at least once, a school year.

In the event of a critical incident, the staff will endeavour to maintain normal routines as far as possible, particularly for classes not immediately involved or affected by the incident.

Definition of a Critical Incident:

In general, a critical incident refers to "any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school" (*Responding to Critical Incidents p.16*). This may include the sudden death/accident/suicide of a member of the school community, an accident involving pupils/staff on the school premises, a physical attack on a staff member or pupil or serious damage to the school building. The disappearance of a member of the school community and an accident/tragedy in the wider community are also regarded as critical incidents.

SNI Critical Incident Management Team

- Mairead Hennessy: Principal.
- Carmel Doyle: Deputy Principal.
- Catherine Burke: BOM Chairperson
- BOM: Ber Alcock Earley and Diane Patterson
- SMT Personnel: Fionnuala Larkin and Joan Murtagh

To ensure that communication between the school and relevant personnel is speedy and effective in the event of a critical incident, the Critical Incident Management Team will ensure that:

1. A phone number and email for all parent/guardians and Board of Management members and staff members are available on Aladdin.
2. A Critical Incident Folder is in the Principal's Office containing a contact list of Key personnel including the current NEPS Psychologist (Muireann Fingleton), Baltinglass Garda Station and other key services.

3. An emergency Contact List is displayed in the Staff room, the school office and the Principals Office.
4. Teachers have ready access to contact details for all parents in their child's class on Aladdin.
5. On school trips a physical list of all the students is held by the teacher with the names and phone number of accompanying staff members along with relevant medical information. The phone numbers of parents is available on Aladdin.
6. The Administration of Medicine Folder is up to date. All staff will be made aware of children with severe medical issues. Photos of the relevant pupils and details of protocols to be followed are on the staff notice board.
7. Each of the team members has a role or responsibility in the event of a critical incident.
8. An Emergency Pack is readily accessible in the Principals Office in the event of an emergency containing emergency contact list, including the layout of school building, Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and a checklist for the first 24 hours.
9. The Guidelines will be followed relating to any Administration issues in the course of an incident and in the communication of the plan to staff and students.

Task	Name
Overall management of response	Principal: Dr M. Hennessy Deputy Principal: Carmel Doyle Chairperson: Catherine Burke
External Liaison (outside support agencies; parents; distressed visitors; the media)	NEPS: Muireann Fingleton Education Welfare Officer: Jacinta Callan HSE/ Garda/ Principal: Dr M. Hennessy
Internal care and communication (with staff, pupils immediately involved/affected and pupils in general)	Assistant Principal: Senior Management Team: F. Larkin, C. Lynch, E. Casey, J. Murtagh NEPS; Muireann Fingleton BOM member(s) : Ber Alcock Earley and Diane Patterson
Administration Tasks (answering telephone/emails organising room(s) for debriefing, letters, log of events etc.)	School Secretary: Rachel Fennell BOM Member(s):
Organising any memorial service/prayers/mass etc. Organising school choir.	Colette Lynch, Clare Owens and Martina Gibbons
Other	BOM Members: Chairperson: Catherine Burke, Fr Ger. Ahern, Noel Howard, Ber Alcock Earley, Diane Patterson, Tom Fox, Carmel Doyle, Mairead Hennessy PTA Members: Orlaith Murphy

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS

A. Short-Term Actions (1st Day)

Task	Name
Consult Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools. Refer to Section 4 <i>Responding to Critical Incidents</i> for details pertaining to each task.	Principal: Dr M. Hennessy.
Gather accurate information (who, what, where...). Establish the facts.	Principal: Dr M. Hennessy Deputy Principal: Carmel Doyle SMT personnel
Contact appropriate agencies (details in staff room and Principal's office). Contact NEPS if appropriate. Refer to Emergency Contact List.	Principal: Dr. M. Hennessy Deputy Principal: Carmel Doyle
Convene a meeting with key staff/Critical Incident Management Team, any other agencies involved to agree roles and procedures.	Principal: Dr M. Hennessy
Arrange for the supervision of students. Identify vulnerable students. Appropriate literature photocopied.	Principal: Dr M. Hennessy, SMT personnel. Secretary: Rachel Fennell
Draft a media statement and Prepare for Media interview. Draft a letter to parents.	Principal: Dr M. Hennessy.
Meet with CIMT to review the day and arrange early morning meeting for the following day. Meet with the staff group. Make contact with the affected family/families.	Principal: Dr M. Hennessy.

B. Medium-Term Actions (24 – 72 Hours)

1. Consult Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools.
Refer to Section 5 Action plan for Principals Medium term Actions. *Responding to Critical Incidents* for details pertaining to each task.
2. It is advisable that the CIMT continues to meet each day until the school returns to normal functioning. The Principal or critical incident team leader normally conducts the meeting. Refer to pg. 29 for suggested agenda.
3. Meeting with the whole staff. The principal gives an update on any new information and outline schedule for the day. An opportunity is given for any questions.

C. Longer Term Actions

1. Consult Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools.
Refer to Section 6 : Action Plan for Principals: Follow- up for details pertaining to each task.
2. The school may decide to review the critical incident policy and plan memorials.

3. Meet with appropriate staff to review the list of affected staff and students. Identify who will be responsible for the follow up.
4. Discuss referral procedures and when an onward referral may be indicated.
5. Evaluate the school's response to the incident and amend the Critical Incident Management plan if necessary.
6. The school may decide to review the whole school approach to promoting health and well-being and student support.

Please refer to Section 7 for specific information on how to deal with suicide or suspected suicide.

Please refer to Section 8 for specific information on how to deal with road traffic accidents or violent deaths.

[Covid 19](#)

In the event of an outbreak of the Covid 19 virus in the school among pupils and/or staff the school will follow HSE procedures and guidelines and will contact the HSE for advice on the correct procedures to follow.

RESOURCE DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR USE BY THE SCHOOL

See 'When Tragedy Strikes'.

See 'Responding to Critical Incidents - Guidelines for Schools'

See 'Critical Incidents Information' Folder in Principal's office.

See 'Infection in School' in Office and Principal's Office

See 'Children Also Grieve' in Principal's office

See 'The Little Book of Bereavement for Schools' in Principal's office

School Mass/Service

See 'Critical Incidents' Folder in Principal's office. Sample Ceremony Arrangements, Prayers of the Faithful etc.

Sample Media Statement

Sample Letter to Parents attached

Appropriate Prayers/ Hymns: See Appendix 1 and See 'Critical Incidents Information' Folder in Principal's office. Sample Ceremony Arrangements

This policy was updated and ratified by the BOM on December 21st 2020

Scoil Naomh Iósaf Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow

Principal: *Dr. Máiread Hennessy*

Deputy Principal: *Ms. Carmel Doyle (M.Ed)*

Email: secretary@snibaltinglass.ie **Phone:** 0596481083

Secretary: *Ms. Rachel Fennell*



Dear Parent/Guardian

The school has experienced (*the sudden death, accidental injury, etc.*) of *Name of student(s)*. We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events. Our thoughts are with (*family name*).

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 and questions s/he may like to discuss with you. It is important to give factual information that is age appropriate.

You can help your child by taking time to listen and by encouraging him/her to express 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 reaction. Over the course of the coming days, please keep an eye on your child and allow him/her to 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 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 read. We urge you to emphasise and reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive and careful about what they post.

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

Principal's signature

Scoil Naomh Iósaf Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow

Principal: *Dr. Máiread Hennessy*

Deputy Principal: *Ms. Carmel Doyle (M.Ed)*

Email: secretary@snibaltinglass.ie **Phone:** 0596481083

Secretary: *Ms. Rachel Fennell*



Sample Announcement to the media

My name is *(Name)* and I am the principal of *(Name)* School. We learned this morning of the death of *(one of our students or Name of student)*. This is a terrible tragedy for family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with *(Name)* family and friends.

Name of student/students was a (5th year boy) and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and *(insert other information if relevant)* have been with us all day supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time.

The teachers have been helping students to deal with the tragic event.

The school has been open to parents to support them and to offer them advice and guidance.

We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.

Prayers of the Faithful. Sample

1. Today we remember _____'s special talents and unique qualities. We celebrate and remember _____'s caring nature, caring for his/her family members especially for his/her _____ .
LORD HEAR US.
2. We remember _____'s time in Scoil Naomh Iosaf, particularly her willingness and ability to lend a helping hand during activities in the classroom.
LORD HEAR US.
3. Today we ask God to give strength and consolation to _____'s parents _____ and _____, to her sisters _____, and _____, to his/her brothers _____, to _____ and family who are heartbroken at this sad time.
LORD HEAR US.
4. As we gather here in faith let us remember _____'s short but fulfilled life. We thank God for the gift of life and we ask Him to help all those experiencing difficulties.
LORD HEAR US.
5. Pray for all the faithful departed especially the deceased members of the _____ families. Comfort all those who grieve at this time.
LORD HEAR US.
6. We pray for all those who have assisted the _____ family at this time, their neighbours and friends, their extended family members, the priests, the schools and all who helped in the community.
LORD HEAR US.