

St Bernadette's Junior School
Quarryvale, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
Tel (01) 6263188 Fax (01) 6261865
E-mail: stbjns@gmail.com
Roll Number: 19743E.



Principal: Dónal Ward
Deputy Principal: Noirin Kenny

Policy Summary Details:

Policy Title:	Critical Incident Management Policy
Version Number:	6
Written/Adopted Date:	January 2025
Written by:	Board of Management
Date Shared with Staff:	31 st of January 2025
Date Ratified by BOM:	5 th of February 2025
Review Date:	December 2025
Policy Implementation Date:	6 th of February 2025

St Bernadette's Junior School 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 Mr Donal Ward has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Review and Research

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) have consulted resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.neps.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of St Bernadette's Junior School 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 students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include

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

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 effects on the 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

Our school has a Health and Safety Policy which is reviewed and updated annually. In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the policy of the Board of Management to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare at work of all staff and to protect students, visitors, contractors, and other persons at the school from injury and ill health arising from any work activity.

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening of end doors on wet mornings at 8.40 am, supervision undertaken by Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal 1*
- Front gate to be kept closed from 8.50 am
- School exit doors closed during class time
- Rules of the playground –are laid down in Our Golden Rules
- Pupils leaving early will be released to an adult who has prior parental permission. This will be logged on Aladdin system.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of St Bernadette's Junior 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 (SPHE) 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 SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available in Room 15A
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – CAMHS, the Clergy, NEPS, Community Garda, HSE, School Inspectors, INTO.
- 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 Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary).
- 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 NEPS documents published in 2007 for primary schools These documents are available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (the Principal or the Deputy Principal), 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.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

Advice in the event of a Critical Incident

In the event of a Critical Incident advice will be sought from relevant bodies e.g. Garda Síochána, NEPS, CPSMA.

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.

Team leader: *Donal Ward*

Role

- Informs the Board of Management
- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the DES; NEPS; CPSMA

- Liaises with the bereaved family

In the absence of the team leader the Deputy Principal shall take charge

Garda liaison; *Liz Cashin*

Role

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

Staff liaison *Noirin Kenny*

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 EAS (Employee Assistance Service) and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison *Sandra Bowen*

Role

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison *Gillian Lynch*

Role

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Council
 - 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

Parent liaison *Gillian Lynch*

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)

Media liaison *Donal Ward*

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

Administrator *Kathleen Carroll*

Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - 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 *Kathleen Carroll*

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.

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

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of St Bernadette's Junior School have a responsibility to protect the privacy, data and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, e.g. the term 'suicide' will not be used the phrase 'tragic death' will 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.

Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Hall and classroom</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Parent's room</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Principal's Office</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Subject to room availability</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Principal's Office</i>	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent/guardian representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff. Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Nóirín Kenny

The plan will be updated annually in December.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Donal Ward</i>	0879611006
Garda liaison	<i>Liz Cashin</i>	0872580102
Staff liaison	<i>Noirin Kenny</i>	0864009062
Student liaison	<i>Sandra Bowen</i>	0876202636
Community liaison	<i>Gillian Lynch</i>	0857630466
Parent liaison	<i>Gillian Lynch</i>	0857630466
Media liaison	<i>Donal Ward</i>	0879611006
Administrator	<i>Kathleen Carroll</i>	0879680677

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Nóirín Kenny
Who, what, when, where?	Nóirín Kenny
Inform Chairperson of the Board of Management	Dónal Ward
When time allows seek advice e.g. Gardaí, CPSMA, NEPS	Dónal Ward
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Dónal Ward
Contact external agencies	Gillian Lynch
Arrange supervision for students	Dónal Ward
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Dónal Ward
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Class teacher/ Support teacher
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Sandra Bowen

Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Dónal Ward
Inform parents	Letter/ texts
Hold end of day staff briefing	Noirin Kenny

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Donal Ward Team leader
Meet external agencies	Gillian Lynch
Meet whole staff	Noirin Kenny
Arrange support for students, staff, parents. If applicable, advice and support sought from NEPS for this .	Donal Ward
Visit the injured	Class teachers/Principals/HSCL
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Donal Ward
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Donal Ward
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	Class teacher and support teacher
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Donal Ward and Class teacher
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Donal Ward and Class teacher
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students

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

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	Ronanstown 6667700
Hospital	Crumlin 4096100
Fire Brigade	999
Local GPs	Dr Quigley 6260562
HSE	Rowlagh health Centre 6754900
Community Care Team	Rowlagh 0766955900
Child and Family Centre	Dochas 6264531
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Clondalkin 7782050 Ballyfermot 7782085
School Inspector; Bríd Cahill	087 1150230
NEPS Psychologist; Jane Guerin	0873836709
DES	0906474621
INTO	8722533
Clergy (Fr. Hugh Kavanagh)	6261010 (9.00 – 12.30) / 0860121066

Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
-----------------------------	--------------

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Joyce", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Michael Joyce

Review Date – December 2025