

Tubber National School

CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN

Initiation and establishment of structures:

Tubber N.S. 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 *Ann Comyn*, has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

We have established a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

Review and Research:

The CIMT has consulted the following resource documents:

When Tragedy Strikes: Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools (INTO/Ulster Teachers Union 2000)

Responding to Critical Incidents; Guidelines for Schools (NEPS 2007)

Defining what we mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *Tubber N.S.* 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 pupils 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*
- *Sexual, physical or psychological abuse*
- *Unauthorised removal of pupil from home and school*

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 pupils, 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:

Procedures to promote physical safety include

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- School doors have the option of being locked and safeguarded during class time if necessary
- Rules of the playground including segregation of the yard for class groupings, limited access to front garden, expectation that children remain within yard boundary
- School Code of Behaviour policy outlining expectations for behaviour
- School Health and Safety Policy

Psychological safety:

The management and staff of *Tubber N.S.* 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.

The RSE programme and Stay Safe is implemented. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision. Our SPHE School Plan is

differentiated to suit the multi-class situation by implementation of a 4 year plan that outlines skills, content and resources.

- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE e.g. Walk Tall, Child Protection, PCSP cuiditheoir support
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures. School Child Protection Policy is in place.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. HSE, GAA, Burren Life/ Burren Beo, educational psychologists, Gardaí
- Inputs to pupils by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about pupil safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- Concerns regarding pupils who are identified as being at risk 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. (Employee Assistance Service 1800411057)

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. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Roles

The key roles which need to be covered are as follows:

- Team Leader
- Garda liaison
- Staff liaison.
- Student liaison
- Parent liaison
- Community liaison
- Media liaison
- Administrator

Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name	Telephone number (home and mobile)
Team Leader	Ann Comyn	087-6591185
In the absence of team leader	Patricia Lee	087-6249145
Garda Liaison	Ann Comyn	087-6591185
Staff Liaison	Patricia	087-6249145
Pupil Liaison	Class teacher	087-6591185
Parent Liaison	Paddy Fahy	087-9052003
Community Liaison	Enda O'Connor	086-2446666
Media Liaison	Mary McCormack	087-6392540
Administrator	Mary Clancy	087-9165449

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; DES; NEPS
- Liaises with the bereaved family.

Garda liaison:

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

Staff liaison:

- 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 and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison:

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room, where personnel is available.

Community/agency liaison:

- 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:

- 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:

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

Administrator:

- 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 schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

Record keeping:

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.

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

Confidentiality and good name considerations:

The management and staff of *Tubber National School* 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. For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was

due to suicide, *and* that the family involved consents to its use. 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.

Critical incident rooms:

Senior Room will be the main room used to meet staff/students/parents/visitors/others.

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 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 *Ann/Patricia*

The plan will be updated annually (*December*).

**DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN
RESPONDING TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

Short term actions - Day 1

Task	Resources	Name
Gather accurate information	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 20	Ann/Patricia
Who, what, when, where?	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 20	Ann/Patricia
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 20, 21 and 22	Ann/Patricia
Contact external agencies, including priest	See Emergency Contact List in this policy	Ann/Patricia

Arrange supervision for students		Ann Patricia
Hold staff meeting And distribute relevant literature	Relevant resources for teachers Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R19 (other resources for teachers R13-16)	Ann/Patricia
Hold staff meeting	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 22-25	Ann/Patricia
Agree schedule for the day		Ann/Patricia
Inform students - (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)		Ann/Patricia
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 24 Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools R16	Ann/Patricia
Contact/visit the bereaved family	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 26 (4.8)	Parish Priest
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 43-45 Responding to Critical Incidents: Resources for Schools R6	B.O.M.
Inform parents	Responding to Critical	Ann/Patricia

	Incidents: Resources for Schools R4, R5	
Hold end of day staff briefing Remind all members of team to record events of that day	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 25	Ann/Patricia
Send letter of consent to parents regarding NEPS	Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools R2	Ann/Patricia

SUMMARY CHECKLIST FOR PRINCIPALS: 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 for Schools* (available on the DES website www.education.ie). Go to NEPS link.
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 - **R23**)
5. Meet with the Critical Incident Management Team.
6. Meet with other agencies, if involved, to agree on roles and procedures.
7. Have administration staff photocopy appropriate literature.
8. Arrange for the supervision of students.
9. Address the staff meeting.
10. Identify vulnerable students.
11. Inform students.
12. Draft a media statement (see **R6**).
13. Prepare for a media interview, (see Section 9).
14. Draft a letter to parents (see **R 2, R4** and **R5**).
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 and following days)

Task	Resource	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the Team leader events of day 1	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 27	Ann/Patricia

Meet external agencies		Ann/Patricia
Meet whole staff		Ann/Patricia
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools Parents: R14, R20 Pupils: R10, R11	Ann/Patricia
Visit the injured		Ann/Patricia
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements		Parish Priest
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service		B.O.M.
Make decisions about school closure BOM		B.O.M.

Follow-up - beyond 72 hours

Task	Possible resources	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools R9, R16	Ann/Patricia
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals		Ann/Patricia
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools R13	Ann/Patricia
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools pg 28-29	Ann/Patricia

Decide on memorials and anniversaries		Parish Priest
Review response to incident and amend plan		Ann/Patricia
Resources for children	Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools pg 43-50	

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST:

Resource for schools: R23

(To be displayed in staff-room, school office and Principal's office etc)

GARDA	Garda Declan Keavey Crusheen Garda Station 065-6827122 Mobile - 087-1208904
HOSPITAL	Ennis County Hospital 065-6863100
FIRE BRIGADE	Ennis Fire Brigade 065-6846302
LOCAL GPS	Dr Raymond Piggott 091-632595 Dr Richard Joyce 091-632311
HSE/Community Care Team/ Child and Family Centre/ CAMHS	Ennis Local Health Office 065-6868090
SCHOOL INSPECTOR	Gerry Kearney
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	N/A
DES	
INTO	Joe Killeen C.E.C. Rep 087-6735114
PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY	Fr. Geoghegan 091-633124 087-2387067
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057

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Implementation Date:

This plan will be implemented in Tubber N.S. at the beginning of the school year 2010/2011.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually in December.

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was formally ratified at a meeting of the B.O.M. in June 2010.

A copy of the policy will be made available on the school website www.tubberns.com.