

# Critical Incident Policy



## INITIATED AND ESTABLISHED STRUCTURE

A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) met and was established on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This team will meet annually to review roles and responsibilities and to ensure that a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) is in place.

Esker ETNS aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Esker Educate Together National School aspires to create a happy, safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where each child is provided with the opportunity to reach his or her highest potential. The uniqueness of each individual is celebrated and each member of the school community, child and adult, is treated with dignity and respect. Children are encouraged to develop attitudes which will enable them to become respectful, responsible, considerate, open-minded and imaginative members of society.

The Board of Management (BOM), through Gemma Curry, has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

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

## REVIEW AND RESEARCH

The CIMT should consult resource documents available to schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie), these include:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group, 2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community – A practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools – Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (SES, DOH, HSE, 2015)
- Barnardos – [www.barnardos.ie/resources](http://www.barnardos.ie/resources)
- The Childhood Bereavement Care - [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

- The PDST Health and Wellbeing Team – [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)
- Irish Hospice Foundation – [www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)
- Lifelines (supports families who are affected by self injury) – [www.selfharm.org](http://www.selfharm.org)
- Winstonwish Foundation (grieving families) – [www.winstonwish.org.uk](http://www.winstonwish.org.uk)
- Mental Health Ireland – [www.mentalhealthireland.ie](http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie)
- Childline – 1800 666 666
- The Samaritans – 116 123

## DEFINITION OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT

The staff and management of Esker ETNS 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 the 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, or vandalism.
- The disappearance of a member of the community.
- Spread of an infectious disease throughout a class / 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 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 student, 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

The following are specific examples of what the school is doing at this point:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked.
- Fire drill practices at least once a term.
- Pre – opening supervision in the classrooms at 9.10am.
- No visitors to the school without prior agreements

- All side gates of school are locked and side doors are locked from the outside during class time.
- Robust arrival and dismissal procedures are in place.
- Rules of the playground include: (see also code of behaviour)
  - All children have the right to a happy and safe break time. As a safety measure we split the school into two separate yard spaces. Junior Infants and Senior Infants in the junior yard and 1<sup>st</sup> class to 2<sup>nd</sup> class in the main yard. 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class children are on a separate break.
  - Other areas of the school are out of out of bounds for safety reasons.
  - Children are not allowed to re-enter the building during break times without the specific permission of the teacher on yard duty.
  - Running dangerously and playing dangerously are not allowed.
  - Deliberate interference in other children's play is unacceptable.
  - Offensive language in any form is unacceptable.
  - Children should freeze when the first bell goes and walk to their line in an orderly fashion on the second bell. Line up quietly on the third bell.
  - Serious incidents will be noted in the Accident / Incident book and the principal and parents will be informed.
  - There is a trained First Aid team in place in the school – Sarah, Jayne, Elaine, Aisling
  - There is a defibrillator in the building.
  - The named key holders in the school are: Catherine, Grace, Barry, Gemma, Paula, Linda. They hold master keys

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

The management and staff of Esker ETNS 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.

Some suggestions:

- 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.
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Procedure and the name of the Designated Liaison Person.
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available.
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies:
  - TUSLA
  - HSE – Psychological clinics
  - CAMHS

- o NEPS Psychologist – Leeza Burns
- o Jigsaw
- o Pieta House
- o Dorothy Ingram – School mentor
- o Parent support groups – Rosse Court
- o Primary care
- 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
- The school policy has a clear anti – bullying policy and deals with incidents of 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.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are discussed at the care team meetings with appropriate teacher and a plan is put in place to support them. Parents / guardians are informed, and where appropriate a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves. Every teacher is entitled to free counselling sessions under The Teacher’s Counselling and Advice Helpline on 1800 411 057.
- A care team meeting meets when necessary – this involves, HSCL – Linda, Principal – Gemma and Teacher / SNA who has welfare concerns for a child.

#### 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.

#### PREPARATION OF CIMP

Roles:

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

|                           |                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Team Leader               | Gemma Curry                                                                              |
| Garda Liaison             | Gemma Curry                                                                              |
| Staff Liaison             | Catherine Hare / Paula Murphy                                                            |
| Student Liaison           | Grace Jordan/Carmen Aguilera / Paula Murphy / Tania Daly / <a href="#">Linda Quigley</a> |
| Parent / Guardian liaison | Leah HSCL                                                                                |

|                   |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Community Liaison | Leah HSCL / Catherine Hare     |
| Media Liaison     | Gemma Curry                    |
| Administrator     | Grace Jordan / Carmen Aguilera |

## RECORD KEEPING

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

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND GOOD NAME CONSIDERATIONS

The management and staff of Esker ETNS 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 confirmed 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

In the event of a critical incident:

The school hall– will be the main room used to meet the staff

The school hall / Individual classrooms – for meetings with students

Home visits – for meetings with parents

The Principal's office – for meetings with the media & outside agencies

The quiet room / multi purpose room – for individual sessions with students.

## 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 Gemma / Catherine

The CIMT will meet annually in the 1<sup>st</sup> term to review and update policy and contacts.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST**

| <b><u>AGENCY</u></b>                                             | <b><u>CONTACT NUMBERS</u></b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| GARDA (Lucan Garda Station)                                      | 01 6667300                    |
| Tallaght Hospital                                                | 01 4142000                    |
| St James' Hospital                                               | 01 4103000                    |
| Crumlin Children's Hospital                                      | 01 4096100                    |
| Poisons Information, Beaumont Hospital                           | 01 8092566                    |
| Infectious Diseases, Beaumont Hospital                           | 01 8093006                    |
| Dr Mary Conlon<br>HSE Infectious Diseases                        | 086 3893634                   |
| Public Health Area A                                             | 046 9282700                   |
| Fire Brigade/Ambulance                                           | 999/112                       |
| Inspector Eileen O'Sullivan                                      | 0879813928                    |
| HSE                                                              | 1800 700 700                  |
| <b><u>Local GP's:</u></b>                                        |                               |
| Dr. John Barrett                                                 | 01 6212528                    |
| Dr. Teresa Golden, Ballyowen Med Centre                          | 01 6214224                    |
| Dr. Stuart Kenny, Dodsboro Clinic                                | 01 6241181                    |
| Lucan Health Centre                                              | 01 6281395                    |
| Duty Social work<br>Dublin South Central Dedicated Contact Point | 087 3981713                   |
| NEPS Psychologist – Leeza Burns                                  | (0761) 108673                 |
| Your Mental Health                                               | 1 800 111888                  |
| DES Inspector                                                    | @education.gov.ie             |
| DES Athlone                                                      | 090 6483600                   |
| DES Tullamore/Planning                                           | 057 9324300                   |

|                                                                                                         |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Educate Together Head Office                                                                            | 01 4292500  |
| INTO Head Office                                                                                        | 01 8047700  |
| HSA (Health Service Authority) Local Office<br>Information line/help desk 9.30-12.30<br>Website: hsa.ie | 0818 289389 |
| ESB Emergency                                                                                           | 1800 372999 |
| Gas Emergency                                                                                           | 1800 205050 |

\*These numbers were checked and updated by Carmen Aguilera/Grace Jordan.

\*\* Will be reviewed annually.