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CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Belgrove Senior Girls' 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, and staff, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Policy as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Review and Research

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.ncse.ie including:

- 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 (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of Belgrove Senior Girls' 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 illness, 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

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Supervision in the school yard (see Supervision Policy)
- Side gate closed during school hours
- School doors closed during class time
- Main school door with key pad only access/bell for visitors
- Rules of the playground – Rules and Safety Procedures and also Yard Policy

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Belgrove Senior Girls' 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. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

- 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 Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessments and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available
- The School has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g NEPS, HSE, CAHMS....
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety e.g. www.aware.ie
- 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 Circular 0022/2010 (Primary) SPHE Best Practice Guidelines for Primary Schools
- 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 on 2007 for primary schools.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated support teacher/Principal/if applicable DLP, 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.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. 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.

Team leader: Principal

Role

- 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; SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda liaison: Principal /DP

Role

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

Staff liaison: Principal /DP

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 and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison : Principal /DP

Role

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison : Principal /DP

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 : Principal /DP**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: Chairperson Board of Management**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 SEC; relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator : Secretary**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 schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- 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.

The Secretary 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 Belgrove Senior Girls’ School have a responsibility to protect the privacy 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 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	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
Library	Main room for meeting all staff
Principal’s Office Classroom	Meetings with small group of students Meetings with large group of students
Principal’s Office Library Hall	Meetings with small group of parents Meetings with large group of parents Meeting with whole school parent body
Principal’s Office/ Library	Meetings with media
SEN Room	Individual sessions with students
Principal’s Office Library	Meetings with other visitors Meetings with large group of other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Parent/guardian representatives (PA) were also consulted and the Board of Management.

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 the school Principal or Deputy Principal

The plan will be updated annually in November.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Principal (Mrs. Anne McCarthy)	8331888
Garda liaison	Principal/DP (Mrs. Anne McCarthy/ Mrs. Katie Stokes)	8331888
Staff liaison	Principal/DP ISM Team Members	8331888
Student liaison	Principal/DP Relevant Class Teacher	8331888
Community liaison	Chairperson Board of Management (Dr. PJ Sexton)	
Parent liaison	Principal/DP	8331888
Media liaison	Chairperson Board of Management	
Administrator	Secretary (Ms. Finola Rossi)	8331888

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Principal/DP Staff where relevant
Who, what, when, where?	Principal in conjunction with DP and ISM Team
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Principal
Contact NEPS & if appropriate external agencies	Principal
Arrange supervision for students	Principal/DP
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Principal/DP and if necessary Chairperson Board of Management
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Class Teacher/SEN Team
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Class Teacher/SEN Team
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Chairperson Board of Management in conjunction with Principal
Inform parents	Principal/DP
Hold end of day staff briefing	Principal/DP

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Principal/DP
Meet NEPS and if appropriate external agencies	Principal/DP
Meet whole staff	Principal
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Principal/DP
Visit the injured	Principal/DP/relevant staff
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal/DP
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Principal/DP
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers/SNA/SEN Team
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	SEN Team/Class Teacher/Principal
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Principal/Class Teacher/SEN Team
Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family	Principal
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	Staff/ Parents & students/BOM
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM/Parents

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda Clontarf Station	01 666 4800
Hospital Temple Street	01 878 4200
Hospital Beaumont	01 809 3000
Hospital Mater	01 803 2000
Fire Brigade	112 OR 999
Local GPs Dr Mary Ward	01 853 20 70
HSE Vernon Avenue	01 853 95 00
Community Care Team	(01) 853 9500 Vernon Avenue Health Centre
Child and Family Centre	Tus Nua Artane/Coolock Family Resource Centre, 55 Gracefield Road, Artane, Dublin 5. 01 8512289
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	01 879 6800 North East City Team
School Inspector	As assigned by DES to the school : Mr. John Fitzgerald
NEPS Psychologist	As assigned by NEPS to the school: Ms. Caroline Cleary
DES	090 648 3600
INTO	01 804 7700
Clergy: Fr Larry White	01 8333459
State Exams Commission	N/A
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057