

GAELSCOIL RAIFFEIRÍ
Faiche an Aonaigh
Caisleán an Bharraigh,
Co. Mhaigh Eo
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Critical Incident Policy - Polasaí um Theagmhas Criticiúil

Leagan:	2.0
Dáta daingnithe:	11ú Feabhra 2025
Dáta Athbhreithnithe:	Feabhra 2027

1. Statement:

Gaelscoil Raifteirí aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. We have taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. We have formulated a policy and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident.

2. Definition of Critical Incident

The staff and management of Gaelscoil Raifteirí recognise a critical incident, to be “an incident or sequence of events” that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school” Critical incident may involve one or more students or staff members, their family members or members of the local community.

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death.
- An accident involving members of the school community.
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community.
- An accident involving members of the school community or a break-in at the school.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- Any other incident deemed critical by the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT).

3. Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) is “to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable them to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff”. Having a good plan will also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It will enable the school to return to normality as soon as possible.

4. Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School

Gaelscoil Raifteirí has put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students through our SPHE/RSE programmes, 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.

5. Physical Safety

In the area of physical safety the school has put in place the following:

- Regular fire drills occur.
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked.
- Supervision before school.
- Signing in/out of pupils by parent / guardian via Aladdin
- General school rules under the school's behaviour policy to ensure all pupils have a safe environment.

6. Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Gaelscoil Raifteirí also 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.

7. S.P.H.E

It is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by including 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.

- The Staff has access to information in relation to SPHE
- The Staff is familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books / resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. HSE/TUSLA/Community Care /NEPS /Garda Síochana
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- The Staff are made aware of children with specific needs.
- The Staff is informed about how to access support available from external agencies

8. Critical Incident Management Team

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. Current Team names on page 6 of this policy document. The plan will be reviewed and updated with the change of team members. Each member of the team have a copy of their responsibilities and related resources.

9. A copy of the Critical Incident Management Team / and the Key Roles (attached)

- An emergency contact list / school staff contact list.
- A copy of the duties of each team member.
- An Action Plan Template relating to the role.

10. The Management team for a Critical Incident:

Key roles have been identified and assigned. The team includes:

- a. Team Leader - Niamh Uí Raois
- b. Staff Liaison - Cristin Uí Ghiobúin
- c. Student Liaison - Máire-Louise de Bhailís
- d. Community Liaison - Sinéad Ní Dhálaigh
- e. Parent Liaison – Martina Ní Mhurchú
- f. Media Liaison – Le líonadh
- g. Administrative Tasks – Lára Uí Mháille

Responsibilities

A. Team Leader - Niamh Uí Raois (Príomhoide)

- Alert the team members to the crisis and convene a meeting.
- Co-ordinate the tasks of the team.
- Liaise with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS.
- Liaise with the bereaved family/ies

B. Staff Liaison - Cristín Uí Ghiobúin (Príomhoide Tánaisteach)

- Lead briefing meetings for staff on facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions and outline the routine for the day
- Advise staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students.
- Provide materials for staff from the Critical Incident Folder.
- Keep records of students seen by external agency staff.
- Look after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

C. Student Liaison - Máire-Louise de Bhailís

- Liaises with other team members to keep them up-dated with information and progress.
- Alerts staff to vulnerable students.
- Provides materials for students from the Ready-to-go-pack.

D. Community Liaison - Sinéad Ní Dhálaigh

- Maintain up to date list of contact numbers – members of the Parents Committee, emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaise with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Co-ordinate the involvement of these agencies
- Update team members on the involvement of external agencies.

E. Parent Liaison - Martina Ní Mhurchú

- Visit the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arrange parent meetings, if held – facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Set up room for meetings with parents
- Meet with individual parents
- Maintain a record of parents seen
- Manage the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Provide appropriate materials for parents (from the Critical Incident Folder)

F. Media Liaison – le líonadh

- Prepare a written statement, if necessary.
- 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)
- Keep up-to-date with the facts as they emerge.
- Draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)
- Liaise where necessary with relevant teacher unions etc.

G. Administrative Tasks – Lára Uí Mháille

- Maintain up to date telephone numbers of:
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services
- Take telephone calls and note those that need to be responded to
- Ensure that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepare and send out letters, emails and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintain records

To do list:

- Contact parents/guardians
- Contact accident and emergency services.
- Contact Fr. Conall in life or death situation.
- Contact Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Contact Class Teacher.
- Contact Health & Safety Officer.
- Contact the I.N.T.O.

11. 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 school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

12. Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The management and staff of Gaelscoil Raifteiri 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.

13. Letter to Parents (attached)

Assistant Principal will prepare a brief, written statement to include:-

- The sympathy of the school community for the affected/bereaved family.
- Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured persons(s).
- The facts of the incident.
- What has been done?
- What is going to be done?

14. Critical Incident Room(s)

In the event of a critical incident:

- The Staff room will be the main room used to meet the staff
- The Assembly Hall for meetings with students
- Extra Rooms/ learning support rooms support for parents and other visitors.
- The collaboration room for media.

15. Consultation and Communication regarding the Plan

All staff members were consulted and regard was given to their views in the preparation of this policy and plan. 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 access to a personal copy of the plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by staff liaison member

The plan will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

Signed:_____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 11th February 2025