

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01126B

Critical Incident Policy

1. Introduction

In St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, we aim to protect the well-being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, nurturing, tolerant and well catered for environment at all times as outlined in our school mission statement and Health and Safety Policy.

The BOM through the Principal, Staff and the Parents Association has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan to help the school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. They have established a Critical Incidents Management Team to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

2. Rational

This policy has been developed as recent research suggests that schools can manage incidents better and return to normal sooner after an incident when a plan is in place.

"The key to managing a critical incident is planning. NEPS psychologists report that schools that have developed school policy and a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) are able to cope more effectively in the aftermath of an incident. Having a plan enables staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. It may also ensure that normality returns as soon as possible and that the effects on students and staff are limited". Responding to Critical Incidents, Guidelines for Schools, NEPS, 2007

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie including: Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS, 2016) and Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE, 2015)

3. Ethos

The management and staff of St. Joseph's N.S. aim to create of coping, supportive and caring atmosphere in the school. Systems are in place to promote emotional health and wellbeing and build resilience in both staff and pupils, thus helping them to cope with a range of events. These systems (prevention systems) include measures to address both physical and psychological safety of the school community for example: -

- Regular Fire Drills to evacuation the school quickly and safely.
 - Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
 - Playground rules
 - School and class rules
 - Front gates are locked during school break times
 - School doors are locked during class time. All visitors to the school must enter via the main door which has a buzzer system in place.
 - School's Code of Behaviour, Anti- Bullying Policy and Health and Safety Policy
- S.P.H.E. Plan which includes resources and programmes to address the personal and social development of students to help create a psychologically safe environment. It addresses 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 are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures and the School Child Protection Policy
 - Regular training for staff and BOM on (Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Child Protection)
 - 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 and 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on www.education.ie
 - Staff are made aware of the support available to them (Employee Assistance Service, Carecall 1800 411057)

4. Aims

This policy aims to: -

- Put practical measures in place in order to cope with a critical incident should one arise (A Critical Incident Plan)
- Create a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) with clearly defined roles
- Help the school manage and the staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident
- Enable maintain a sense of control
- Ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff
- Effects on the students will be limited
- Aid returning to normality as soon as possible

5. Content

This policy will be looked at under the following headings: -

1. Definition of a critical incident
2. Types of critical incidents
3. Critical Incidents Management Team
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Action Plan
6. Record Keeping
7. Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

5.1 Definition of a Critical Incident

For this policy a critical incident will be defined as follows: -

‘A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school’. (Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS, 2016 page 16)

5.2 Types of Critical Incident

The following are examples of what might constitute a critical incident in St. Joseph's N.S.

- Death (of a pupil/ member of staff)
- Major illness/outbreak of infectious disease (e.g. Foot & Mouth)
- Criminal incidents (e.g. Break in)
- Major accidents, serious injury a pupil or staff member (e.g. ‘The Navan bus crash’)
- Suicide
- Fire in school (evacuation of school building)

- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing in Cork)
- Disappearance of student from home or school (e.g. Middleton incident in Cork)
- Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.
- World events that may affect the student body and/ or staff. May be a need for provision of discussion and involvement in ceremonies e.g. 9/ 11, tsunami
- Bus crash
- A case or outbreak of Covid 19

This list is not exhaustive and may be added to at any time.

5.3 Critical Incidents Management Team (CIMT)

At the time of a crisis there are a large number of tasks to be carried out. By identifying key roles in advance of an incident there is a clear statement of who does what, when and how. In addition to this no individual will be overburdened and no element of the response forgotten. The critical incident management team is St. Joseph's N.S. will comprise of the following roles:

Team Leader and Garda Liaison	Richella Kelly (Principal)
Staff and Student Liaison	Siobhán Finnegan McElgunn (Deputy Principal)
Parent Liaison	Chairperson of Parents Association
Chaplaincy Role	Rev. Fr. Seamus O'Rourke (Patron's nominee on BOM)
Community/ Agency/ Media Liaison	Richella Kelly (Principal)
Administrator	Maria Moran (School Secretary)

The duties of each member of the team is outlined below: -

5.4 Roles and Responsibilities

5.4.1. Team Leader and Garda Liaison: Principal, Richella Kelly

Intervention

- 1* Confirm the event and clarify facts surrounding event.
- 2* Activate the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) and co-ordinates the tasks of the CIMT
- 3* Liaise with the Gardaí/ Emergency services and media (if necessary)
- 4* Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared
- 5* Liaises with bereaved family
- 6* Liaises with the Board of Management, DES, NEPS
- 7* Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)

Post-vention

- 8* Ensure provision of ongoing support to staff and students
- 9* Facilitate any appropriate memorial events
- 10* Review Plan

5.4.2 Staff and Student Liaison: Deputy Principal, Siobhán Finnegan McElgunn

Intervention

- Lead briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

- 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 ESA and gives them the contact number (Carecall 1800 411057)
- 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

Post vention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

5.4.3 Parent Liaison: Chairperson of the Parents Association, Currently:

Intervention

- 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)

Post-vention

- Provide ongoing support to families affected by the incident, as appropriate
- Involve, as appropriate, the family in school liturgies/memorial services
- Review and evaluate plan

5.4.4 Chaplaincy Role: Rev. Fr. Seamus O'Rourke

Intervention

- Visit home(s), if appropriate
- Assist with prayer services
- Make contact with other local clergy
- Be available as personal and spiritual support to staff

Post vention

- Provide follow-up support to families in conjunction with Home School Community Liaison
- Work in partnership with Critical Incident team
- Review and Evaluate Plan

Community/agency and Media Liaison, Richella Kelly

Intervention

- 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
- 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)

5.4.5 Administrator: School Secretary, Maria Moran

- Maintain up to date telephone numbers of parents/ guardians, teachers, emergency services as directed by the principal.
- This list will be available in the secretary's office in a folder clearly named 'Contact Details'. The secretary will compile a list of all pupils and teachers going on school trips. Each teacher will bring the contact details of the children in their class on the trip. At least one teacher will have a mobile phone.
- Take telephone calls and note those that need to be responded to
- Ensure that template letters are on the school system and ready for adaption
- Prepare and send out letters and e-mails
- Photocopy materials needed
- Maintain records

5.5 Action Plan

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (Day 1)

a) Convene

- Establish accurate facts.
- Convene Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) meeting virtually.
- Conduct an initial assessment of the incident, decide what level of response is required and agree an Action Plan.
- Contact appropriate agencies, e.g. Board of Management, Emergency services Medical services, H.S.E. Psychology Departments/ Community Care Services, etc NEPS etc.
- Decide who needs to be contacted directly: - staff/students/parents/others and by what means: - phone/email/text/letter/website notice.
- Identify vulnerable students and consider how to connect with them: - phone call to parents and/or speaking to students directly.
- Consider how to communicate with the bereaved family whilst physical distancing measures are in place: - phone calls, writing a card or letter.

b) Notify staff and parents

- Agree and test available technologies as a means of communication,
- Agree a telephone tree for contacting staff and advise staff of the initial Action Plan.
- Notify parents using agreed means.
- Remember to respect family privacy and avoid references to the cause of death.
- Bear in mind that it is not usual practice for a school to inform the school community of the death of a parent.
- Manage social media. Draft a media statement if necessary (if appropriate).

- Designate a spokesperson (Leader/ Chairperson of B.O.M.)
- Gather accurate information
- Prepare a brief statement with the Team
- Protect the family's privacy

c) Connecting with staff

- Agree a telephone tree/ Whatsapp group for contacting staff.
- Make separate contact with staff who may be vulnerable.
- Remind staff of the availability of the *Inspire Service* (ph. 1800 411057).
- Agree a time for a follow-up staff meeting for updates and reflection on shared experiences.
- Draw teachers attention to *Teacher Wellbeing and Self Care during the Covid-19 school closure*
- Share with staff any resources being forwarded to parents.

d) Connecting with students

- In accordance with school policy, some staff may decide to link directly with students via telephone, video link or email.
- Remind students that maintaining communication is important for wellbeing, and encourage them to keep in touch with close family and friends, whilst observing HSE guidelines. Remind students and staff that others are available to provide support.
- Reassure students of their resilience and ability to cope. Encourage them to think of times and ways that they have coped in the past and to identify attributes that have helped them during difficult times.

e) Bereavement rituals: Funeral restrictions and alternative goodbyes

- Designated CIMT member(s) should liaise with the bereaved family regarding the funeral service and, when appropriate, a memorial service. Remind students that they are not alone in their grief and that everyone shares the loss of not being able to participate in our usual rituals and togetherness; i.e. visiting the family, attending funerals, etc.
- Reassure students that the bereaved family understands the need to comply with current Public Health restrictions and that a commemorative service may take place at a later date.
- Invite students to think of alternative ways to express sympathy, e.g. sending a card to family (see *Winston's Wish* for alternative goodbyes). Remind students to be considerate and sensitive when posting messages on any social media platforms. RIP.ie has a message condolence facility.
- School leaders may consider facilitating a school platform for compiling messages of condolences/well wishes to share with family, monitored for sensitivity by school personnel.
- Encourage students to participate individually, but collectively, in any bereavement ritual being organised, e.g. a streamed funeral service, lighting a candle at a particular time during the ceremony, playing music, etc.

Medium Term and Follow Up Actions

f) Review

- Convene a further Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) meeting virtually to review what has been done and to identify new tasks needed.
- Update staff virtually on any new information.

g) Continue to provide support

- Continue to link in with students, especially more vulnerable students.

- Remind students that others are available to provide support, e.g. teachers, guidance counsellors, close family, friends and/or online supports.
- Advise students to use practical approaches to manage anxiety. Share *DES resources and advice* for young people during COVID-19: - using breathing techniques, *relaxation techniques, coping statements*, practising yoga, doing exercise, etc.
- Support students to create action plans and to break down problems into small, realistic and manageable steps.
- Encourage students to try to spot any unhelpful thoughts and to ‘reframe’ them to more helpful thoughts (e.g. - ‘That car was unsafe, but not all cars are unsafe’).
- Encourage them to identify positive, self-soothing strategies with prompts such as ‘What will help?’ or ‘What can I do now?’ For further resources, see *www.yourmentalhealth.ie*.
- Advise parents and students against making big life changes or hasty decisions at this challenging time.
- Advise parents to make a referral to their GP should their child show signs of severe emotional distress (R14).
- Discuss and review the status of any student referrals made to outside agencies.
- Prepare for how your school might support all students and staff when schools reopen, in particular those who have been bereaved.

LONGER TERM ACTIONS

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress

If over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he/ she may need assistance from the HSE/ NEPS. Constant communication with family is essential.

- Uncharacteristic behaviour
- Deterioration in academic performance
- Physical symptoms — e.g. weight loss/ gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness
- Inappropriate emotional reactions
- Increased absenteeism

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately

- What went well?
- Where were the gaps?
- What was most/ least helpful?
- Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any unfinished business?

Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future

- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/ new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
- Ensure that new staffs are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area
- Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way
- When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, the Principal should brief the Principal of the new school

Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries being sensitive to special days and events

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

- Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/ staff and they may need additional support at this time
- Acknowledge the anniversary with the family
- Need to be sensitive to significant days like Birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day
 - Plan a school memorial service
 - Care of deceased person's possessions. What are the parent's wishes?
 - Update and amend school records

5.6 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 and materials used. All such records will be passed onto the principal after the incident for safe keeping. All records will be kept on file until the pupils involved in the incident have reached the age of 21. The school secretary, Maria Moran, will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

5.7 Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The BOM and staff of St. Joseph's N.S. 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 statement. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. 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 this. The phrase tragic death or sudden death may be used instead. Likewise, the term murder will not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term violent death will be used instead.

5.8 Critical incidents rooms

In the event of a critical incident the following rooms will be used: -

Staffroom, to meet with staff, visitors to the school

Each classroom, for meetings with students

Principal's office for media, individuals directly involved in incident

School Hall for meetings with parents or large groups of visitors to the school

Special Education Rooms for individual sessions with pupils.

In the event of a suspected case of Covid 19, the area in the corridor outside Sixth Class will be used as an isolation area.

6. Ratification and Communication

This policy was initially drawn up by the staff and Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, in the first term of the 2013 – 2014 academic year. This policy will be presented to the B.O.M for discussion, with a view to ratification, early in the 2013 – 2014 school year. This policy was reviewed in August 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic and presented to the BOM for discussion and ratification

Once ratified, this policy will be uploaded to the school website. All parents of children in the school will be informed about this via the next communications letter. All teachers will be given a copy of this policy on a school plan memory stick. Every member of the CIMT will be given a personal hard copy of this plan. This policy will be discussed at a staff meeting to highlight the areas of importance.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will communicate this plan to new and temporary staff.

7. Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented in full once it has been ratified by the B.O.M of St. Joseph's N.S. This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis. Review Date: ____

8. Reference Section

Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, (2016)

When Tragedy strikes - Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools, INTO

CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook, 2015

Well-Being in Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion DES (2015)

Websites

DES	www.education.ie
Health and Safety Authority	www.hsa.ie/osh
Allianz	www.allianz.ie
INTO	https://www.into.ie/
Covid 19 guidelines from DES	https://www.education.ie/covid19#guidance
Critical Incidents Resources for parents during Covid 19	https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/critical-incidents-resources-for-parents-during-covid-19.pdf
Responding to Critical Incidents during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from COVID-19 Information Booklet for Schools	https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/responding-to-critical-incidents-covid19.pdf

Appendix 1 Summary and Emergency Contact List

Critical Incident Management Team	
Role	Name
Team leader and Garda Liaison	<i>Richella Kelly, Principal</i>
Staff and Student liaison	<i>Siobhán Finnegan McElgunn, Deputy Principal</i>
Community/ Media liaison	<i>Richella Kelly</i>
Parent liaison	<i>Chairperson of Parents Association,</i>
Chaplaincy Role	<i>Rev. Fr. Seamus O'Rourke</i>
Administrator	<i>Maria Moran</i>

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	
Who, what, when, where?	
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	
Contact external agencies	
Arrange supervision for students	
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	
Compile a list of vulnerable students	
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	
Inform parents	
Hold end of day staff briefing	

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	
Visit the injured	
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

Make decisions about school closure	BOM
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Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY
Garda
Hospital
Fire Brigade
Local GPs
HSE
Community Care Team
Child and Family Centre
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
School Inspector
NEPS Psychologist
DES
INTO
Clergy
State Exams Commission
Employee Assistance Service

Appendix 2: Sample Letters and draft media announcement

The following letters will be printed on school headed paper: -

Letter 1: Sudden Death/ Accident

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

The school has experienced *(the sudden death, accidental injury, etc.)* of *Name of student(s)*. We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events.

Our thoughts are with *(family name)*.

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy *(elaborate)*.

It is possible that your child may have some feelings and questions s/he may like to discuss with you. It is important to give factual information that is age appropriate.

You can help your child by taking time to listen and by encouraging him/her to express feelings. All children are different and will express their feelings in different ways. It is not uncommon for children to have difficulty concentrating or be fearful, anxious, or irritable. They may become withdrawn, cry, complain of physical aches and pains, have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares. Some may not want to eat. These are generally short term reaction. Over the course of the coming days, please keep an eye on your child and allow him/her to express their feelings without criticism.

Although classes will continue as usual, I anticipate that the next few days will be difficult for everyone.

(Optional)

An information night for parents is planned for *(date, time and place)*. At that time, further information about how to help children in grief will be given.

We have enclosed some information which you may find useful in helping your child through this difficult time.

Young people frequently turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. At these times it is important that you monitor their use and engage with them about what they read. We urge you to emphasise and reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive and careful about what they post.

If you would like advice you may contact the following people at the school *(details)*.

Principal's signature

Letter 2: Violent Death

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I need to inform you about a very sad event that has happened.

A child/young person from the neighbourhood, the sister/ brother of *(name of student)*, a student here at school, was killed as a result of *(a violent attack, violent incident in the street etc.)* earlier this week. We are all profoundly saddened by his death.

We have shared this information and had discussions with all of our students so that they know what has happened. School staff members have been available for students on an on-going basis today. Other support personnel *(including psychologists etc., according to actual arrangements)* are available to advise staff in their support of students.

The death of any young person is tragic, but a violent death is even more difficult. It is hard to have to teach our children about the violence in our world and to accept that sometimes we do not have the power to prevent it.

This death may cause a variety of reactions in your child. Some children/young people may be afraid for their own life and for the lives of those they love. Take time to listen to their fears and reassure them that what has happened is rare.

We have enclosed some additional information that may be useful during this time.

The media are in the vicinity of the school and may approach you or your children. You need not respond to their questions if you are approached. We will not allow the media to interview your child at school and our general advice is that you should not let your children be interviewed. They are not mature enough to judge what to say and may say something they will regret later.

In these times, young people tend to turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. While social media can be of great consolation, we would urge you to reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive about what your son/daughter might post to others.

Our thoughts are with *(family name)* and with each of you.

Sincerely

Principal's name

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MEDIA

This can be used as a template by to be emailed, posted on the school social media site or given to the media. It may help to decrease the number of media calls and callers to the school.

In some instances, it is not appropriate to provide names or information that might identify individuals.

This announcement will need to be changed based upon confidentiality issues, the wishes of the victim's family and the nature of the incident.

My name is Richella Kelly and I am the principal of St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village. We learned this morning of the death of *(one of our students or Name of student)*. This is a terrible tragedy for family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with *(Name)* family and friends.

Name of student/students was in ---- class and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and *(insert other information if relevant)* have been with us all day supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time.

The teachers have been helping students to deal with the tragic event.

The school has been open to parents to support them and to offer them advice and guidance.

We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.

Appendix 3: Resources for young people and parents coping with loss and grief

These resources are intended to complement NEPS' existing publication '*Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools*'.

a) Coronavirus and Bereavement

The Irish Hospice Foundation have developed practical and easily accessible materials for the Irish context, and include resources and supports available from organisations such as the HSE, DES and websites such as RIP.ie. There are also topic specific resources addressing issues such as '*Planning a funeral in exceptional times*', '*Grieving in exceptional times*' and '*Helping children grieve during COVID-19 restrictions*'

Winston's Wish is a British childhood bereavement charity with a very comprehensive website. Their COVID-19 page has useful resources, such as '*How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible*', '*Telling a child someone has died from coronavirus*' and '*Managing grief in isolation*'

b) General Bereavement

Rainbows is a free, voluntary service that supports children and young people with separation and bereavement. Support programmes for children and young people at both primary and post-primary level are available for students three months (minimum) after the experience of a loss. Further information and resources are available at their website.

Barnardos provide wide-ranging services to families, including support around bereavement. There is a downloadable e-book and links to various services available on their website.

The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network is a member organisation where families, professionals and schools can obtain information, guidance and support from various professionals. In addition to resources and supports, courses are available for professionals to develop their skillset in supporting bereavement.

c) Suicide and Bereavement

The ***National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP)*** is the body responsible for co-ordination and implementation of the national strategy for suicide prevention. As well as general information and resources, the site includes details on regional contacts for Suicide Resource Officers/Samaritans etc., details of various training programmes, and how professionals can access 'Urgent Help' at times of crisis.

Headspace is an Australian organisation for youth mental health. Their website has very practical materials for supporting those who have lost a loved one through suicide.

d) SEN and Bereavement

Mencap have materials for explain loss and death to people with learning disabilities and includes literature for specific aspects such as '*What can I do to feel better*' and '*Going to a funeral*'

Resources: For parents sharing sad news with their child

The following NEPS resources may be helpful for parents:

Children's Understanding and Reaction to Death

Stages of Grief

How to cope when something terrible happens

Reactions to a Critical Incident

Ways To Help Your Child Through This Difficult Time

Other Recommended Resources

Barnardos provide a wide-ranging service to families including support around bereavement. Downloadable e-books both parents and children are available on their website as well as links to various services. A national telephone support service for parents is available in response to the challenges they are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Freephone **1800 910 123** (from 10am to 2pm, Monday to Friday). Barnardos also provide a children's bereavement helpline service, for members of the public seeking information and support in relation to bereavement. Telephone **01 473 2110** (from 10am to 12pm, Monday to Thursday)

The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network is a member organisation where families, professionals and schools can obtain information, guidance and support from various professionals. In addition to resources and supports, courses are available for professionals to develop their skillset in supporting bereavement.

Winston's Wish is a British childhood bereavement charity with a very comprehensive website. Their COVID-19 page has useful resources, such as '*How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible*', '*Telling a child someone has died from coronavirus*' and '*Managing grief in isolation*'

The Irish Hospice Foundation have developed practical and easily accessible materials for the Irish context, and include resources and supports available from organisations such as the HSE, DES and websites such as RIP.ie. There are also topic specific resources addressing issues such as '*Planning a funeral in exceptional times*', '*Grieving in exceptional times*' and '*Helping children grieve during COVID-19 restrictions*'

Mencap have materials for explain loss and death to people with learning disabilities and includes literature for specific aspects such as '*What can I do to feel better*' and '*Going to a funeral*'

Supports for younger people

Childline (ISPCC) is Ireland's 24-hour national listening service for young people up to the age of 18. Freephone **1800 666 666** (any time, day or night). Text **50101** (from 10am to 4pm every day). Chat online at www.childline.ie (from 10am to 4pm every day).

The YourMentalHealth.ie website has information on all mental health supports and services available nationally & locally from the HSE and its funded partners. You can also call the freephone *YourMentalHealth Information Line* to find supports and services: **1800 111 888** (any time, day or night).

In the event of a suspected case of Covid 19

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- if the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
- isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area in the corridor outside sixth class, keeping at least 2 metres away

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times

- if it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin
- provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. He or she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- if the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- if they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect
- carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.