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# **CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

## **Policy & Management Plan**

# **2024**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introductory statement

Situations such as the sudden death within the school community can have a traumatic effect and be a challenging time for the community, calling on all its resources to deal with the event and its aftermath.

A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) should be established by the Board of Management to oversee the development of this *Critical Incidents Policy and Management Plan (CIMP)*. The purpose of this policy and plan is to have appropriate practices and supports in place, should such a situation arise.

## 1.2 Review and research

The CIMT should consult resource documents that included:

*Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines for Schools* (DES)

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

*Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines* (IAS, National Suicide Review Group)

*Suicide Prevention in the Community - a practical guide* (HSE)

*Well-Being in Primary Schools - guidelines for mental health promotion* (DES, DOH, HSE)

Other useful documents may be found on

➤ [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

➤ [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie)

as well as resources listed on *Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools* (NEPS).

## 1.3 Consultation and communication

In preparation of this policy:

- all staff – consulted, views canvassed
- parent/guardian and student representatives – consulted, views canvassed
- The final policy and plan should be presented to all staff.
- Each member of the CIMT should have a copy of the plan.

All new and temporary members of staff should be informed of the details of the plan (designate a team member to do this).

## 1.4 Definition

The staff and management of St Patrick's National School recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school" (ref *Responding to Critical Incidents, Guidelines for Schools*, DES).

Critical incidents may involve one or more students, staff members, or members of our school or local community. Such events might include

- the death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide, suspected suicide, or other unexpected death;

- an intrusion into the school;
- an accident involving members of the school community;
- a major accident/tragedy in the wider community;
- serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.

## 2. Rationale

This policy and CIMP are being developed in consultation with the school's education partners, outside agencies and contacts from other schools where critical incidents have occurred. The school's Critical Incident Management Team will be responsible for development of the policy and CIMP.

## 3. Aims

The CIMP aims 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 is limited, and should enable us to effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

## 4. Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

St Patrick's NS aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times (ref *Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS*) and school's *Mission Statement*). The Board of Management is developing this policy and plan as one element of this responsibility.

Systems should be put 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.

### 4.1 Physical safety

A number of policies and practices are in place to support the safety of students and staff, (ref *Health & Safety Policy*), including

- evacuation plan (ref Appendix)
- regular fire drills, in consultation with Fire Brigade)
- regular checking of fire exits and equipment
- restricted access to buildings during school hours
- rules of the playground (ref *Supervision Policy*).
- routine risk assessments
- code of behaviour
- Intimate care policy

### 4.2 Psychological safety

The management and staff 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, e.g.

- *Social, Personal and Health Education* (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. Issues

addressed within SPHE include grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management; resilience; conflict management; problem-solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision-making and prevention of substance misuse. Promotion of healthy living and positive mental health is an integral part of this curricular area.

- Staff receive professional development in delivering the SPHE programme.
- Staff are familiar with Child Protection Procedures (reviewed at the beginning of each school year), the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) and their roles.
- A wide range of resources 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, eg TUSLA, HSE, NEPS, NCSE, It Takes A Village, Barnardos, Rainbows.
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about their safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers (ref DES *Circular 0022/2010*)
- The school 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, as outlined in the NEPS documents (ref [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)).
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to a designated staff member, in consultation with the Principal (ie Principal, Deputy Principal, ISM Team member, Class Teacher, or SEN Support Teacher); concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents/guardians are informed and, where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency (ref *Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools* (NEPS, 2016, pp 92 - 94).
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves through the Employee Assistance Service.
- The school has formulated a wellbeing policy

## **5. Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**

A CIMT should be established in line with best practice, the members of the team to be selected on a voluntary basis, and membership of the team to be reviewed annually, or sooner if deemed necessary. It is advised that the CIMT include members of the Board of Management as well as staff.

At the beginning of each school year, the members of the team should meet

- to review and update the policy and plan, as necessary;
- review and update the membership of the team as necessary.

Each member of the team should have a dedicated critical incident folder, which contains a copy of the policy and CIMT materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

## 5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The key roles to be covered are:

### **Team Leader – Rachel Harper**

- a person who carries authority and can make decisions during a crisis (e.g. school closure, initiation of a critical incident plan etc.)

#### 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; etc
- liaises with the bereaved parties.

### **Garda Liaison – Canon David Mungavin**

(may be part of the Team Leader's role)

#### Role

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

### **Staff Liaison – Evana Barkley**

- a staff member known and trusted by the staff

#### 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 material for staff (ref 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 Employee Assistance & Well Being Service and gives them the contact number.

### **Student Liaison – Karen McCormick, Alizia Gisler**

- a trusted and familiar figure to the students.

#### Role

- alerts other staff to vulnerable students (as appropriate)
- provides materials for students (ref Critical Incident folder)
- maintains Student Contact Record (ref *Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools*)
- arranges the setting up and supervision of a 'Quiet Room', where agreed.

### **Community/Agency Liaison – Jenny Lewis, Arthur Godsil**

- someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community.

#### Role

- maintains up-to-date lists of contact numbers of
  - key parents, such as members of the PTA Committee, PTA Class Liaison Reps, etc
  - emergency support services
  - 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/Guardian Liaison – Laura Bourne**

- someone known to parents, this person should be comfortable speaking before a large group and have the skills to manage emotional reactions of individual or groups of parents.

#### Role

- visits the bereaved parties with the Team Leader
- arranges meetings, if held
- may facilitate meetings, and manage 'question and answer' sessions
- manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- ensures that sample letters are prepared and available on the school's IT system, ready for adaptation
- sets up room for meeting with parents
- maintains a record of parents seen
- meets with individual parents
- provides appropriate materials for parents (ref Critical Incident folder).

### **Media Liaison – Laura Bourne, Arthur Godsil**

- someone with good interpersonal skills, who would be comfortable talking to the media by phone or in person, a person who is able to set limits without being offensive.

#### Role

- in advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (eg student being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc)
- in the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the Patron, the Church of Ireland Board of Education, relevant unions, etc
- will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management).

## **Administrator – Hannah O'Connor**

### **Role**

- through Aladdin, maintains up-to-date lists of contact numbers of
  - parents/guardians
  - teachers
  - emergency support services (incl. Tusla, NEPS, Greystones Garda Station, etc.)
- takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response
- ensures that templates are available on the school's IT system and ready for adaptation
- prepares and co-ordinates the sending out of letters, e-mails, and texts (as approved)
- photocopies materials as needed
- maintains records.

## **6. Preparation of Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)**

In preparing a CIMP, account must be taken of practical issues such as school size, layout of buildings, access and egress. number of students and availability of staff.

## **7. Record keeping**

In the event of an incident, each member of the team will keep records of phone calls, made and received, as well as letters and e-mails that are sent and received, meetings held, persons met, support material used, etc.

The School Secretary has a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc,

## **8. Confidentiality**

The management and staff at St Patrick's NS have a responsibility to protect the privacy of people involved in any incident, and are sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. Members of staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. All public statements are to be made via the media liaison representative.

## 9. Critical Incident rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms will be assigned:

- Staff Room
- School Hall
- Quiet Room
- Principal's Office
- Library
- Other.

Room	Purpose
Staff Room	
School Hall	
Quiet Room	
Principal's Office	
Library	
Other	

## 10. Success criteria

While it is hoped that the implementation of this policy will never be required, its success will be measured by the manner in which a critical incident is managed, and by the feedback received from all interested and effected parties.

## 11. Implementation

This policy will be implemented from the date of its ratification by the Board of Management. All relevant parties are fully briefed on their roles and responsibilities from that time (ref 5.1).

## 12. Ratification and communication

This *Critical Incident Policy and Management Plan* was ratified by the Board of Management on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2024, and became school policy from that date. A copy of the policy was provided to all staff, members of the Board of Management and parent representatives. It is available to all parents/guardians on the school website and through the school office

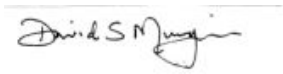
## 13. Review

### 13.1 Responsibility

The review of this policy is the responsibility of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT). A review may be sought by the Board of Management at any time, should such a need be identified.

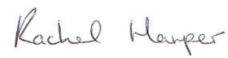
### 13.2 Timeframe

This policy will be reviewed at the beginning of each school year. Also, a review may be initiated by the Board of Management at any time (ref 13.1).



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson  
Board of Management

Date: 10/10/2024



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal  
Rachel Harper

Date: 10/10/24

## Appendix 1

### St Patrick's NS - Critical Incident Management Plan

#### Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>E-mail address</b>	<b>Telephone number</b>
<b>Team Leader</b>	Rachel Harper	rachelharper@stpns.ie	0879701063
<b>Garda Liaison</b>	David Mungavin	davidsmungavin@gmail.com	0887373663
<b>Staff Liaison</b>	Evana Barkley	evanabarkley@stpns.ie	0877572770
<b>Student Liaison</b>	Karen McCormick	karenmccormick@stpns.ie	0868893248
<b>Student Liaison</b>	Alizia Gisler	aliziagisler@stpns.ie	0879086334
<b>Parent Liaison</b>	Laura Bourne	laura@schnittgerbourne.ie	0861639197
<b>Community Liaison</b>	Arthur Godsil	arthur@godsil.ie	0872888990
	Jenny Lewis	jennylewis@gmail.com	0868174914
<b>Media Liaison</b>	Arthur Godsil	arthur@godsil.ie	0872888990
	Laura Bourne	laura@schnittgerbourne.ie	086174914
<b>Administrator</b>	Hannah O'Connor	hannahoconnor@stpns.ie	0871264918

## Critical Incident rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms will be assigned for various purposes, eg

- main room to meet with the staff
- for meetings with students
- for parents
- for media
- for individual/ small group meetings with students
- for other visitors
- other.

Room	Purpose
Staff Room	
School Hall	
Quiet Room	
Principal's Office	
Libraruy	

## Short-term Actions (Day 1)

Task	Name
<b>Gather accurate information</b>	
<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting (When? Where?)</b>	Team Leader
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	
<b>Arrange supervision of students</b>	
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	All staff
<b>Inform students</b> (Depending on situation)	
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	
<b>Contact/visit the bereaved family</b>	
<b>Prepare and agree media statement, and deal with the media</b>	
<b>Inform parents/guardians</b>	
<b>Hold end-of-day staff briefing</b>	

## Medium-term Actions (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review events of Day 1	Team Leader
Meet external agencies	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents/guardians	
Visit the injured	All staff
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

## Follow-up (beyond 72 hours)

Task	Name
<b>Monitor students for signs of continuing distress</b>	Class Teachers
<b>Liaise with agencies regarding referrals</b>	
<b>Plan for return of bereaved student(s)</b>	
<b>Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family</b>	
<b>Decide on memorials and anniversaries</b>	BOM, staff, parent and student reps
<b>Review response to incident and amend plan (as required)</b>	CIMT/BOM/Staff

## EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

(to be displayed in Staff Room, School Office, Principal's Office)

Agency	Contact numbers
<b>GARDA</b>	Greystones 01 666 5800 999/112
<b>HOSPITAL</b>	Loughlinstown 01 282 5800 St James 01 410 3000 St Vincents 01 221 4000
<b>FIRE BRIGADE</b>	999/112
Local GPs (* NB school GP)	??
<p><b>HSE/Primary Care Team/ Primary Care Centre/CAMHS/Resource Office for Suicide Prevention</b></p> <p><b>The Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Service (EWMHS) formerly known as CAMHS.</b></p>	<p>HSE Greystones 01 287 7311 Greystones Health Centre 01 287 7311 Bray Primary Care Centre 01 778 6020 Lucena Clinic 01 286 6886 Adam Byrne Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention 087 063 7096 Adam.bynre@hse.ie</p>
<b>DES INSPECTOR</b>	<p><a href="http://www.gov.ie">www.gov.ie</a> Inspectorate</p>

	<p>Dept of Education,  Inspectorate Secretariat,  Marlborough Street, Dublin 1</p> <p><a href="mailto:inspectorate@education.gov.ie">inspectorate@education.gov.ie</a></p> <p>01 889 6553</p>
<b>NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST</b>	<p>NEPS Floor 2 Block 1  Marlborough Pl, North Dublin,</p> <p>01 889 2700</p>
<b>DES</b>	<p><a href="http://www.gov.ie">www.gov.ie</a></p> <p>Inspectorate</p> <p>Dept of Education,  Inspectorate Secretariat,  Marlborough Street, Dublin 1</p> <p><a href="mailto:inspectorate@education.gov.ie">inspectorate@education.gov.ie</a></p> <p>01 889 6553</p>
<b>INTO/IMPACT</b>	??
<b>CLERGY</b>	Canon David Mungavin
<b>EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE</b>	1 800 411 057

## Appendix 2

### Guidance on Social Media Use and Critical Incidents

(ref *Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools*, NEPS, 2016, pp 89 - 91)

Social media is now part of everyday communication and information sharing. Most students are avid and competent users. Social media messages speed up the rate at which information is shared. This can have a significant influence on the behaviour of young people during a critical incident. Some social media communication may occur without the knowledge of school staff that leads to distress among students or their parents/ guardians.

The following information may help schools to consider issues related to social media use when dealing with a critical incident.

It is essential that schools take account of the need to have competency in the use of social media among management and staff. If the members of the CIMT have particular concerns or fears about social media, they should consult those familiar with its use. Normalising social media use by the students during a critical incident is very important.

Schools should include social media literacy in the school curriculum. It is essential that school management, staff and students understand the role of social media, and its positive and negative aspects. A positive disposition to social media by the school may encourage thoughtful use by students during a critical incident.

Agreement on appropriate use of social media during a critical incident should be included in the school's *Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)*. All school staff should follow agreed online professional protocols as prescribed by the *New Code of Professional Conduct by Teachers*, ie

*Teachers should ensure that any communication with students, colleagues, parents/ guardians, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as -email, texting and social media etc.*

*New Code of Professional Conduct by Teachers, Teaching Council, 2012*

The CIMT may also remind staff, students and other relevant community members about the school's AUP during times of crises.

When dealing with a critical incident, it is advised that schools act quickly and with caution. A message could be placed on the school website, or by e-mail / text, eg

*You may be aware of a recent event within the school community. We ask you to respect the family's privacy and sensitivities by considering if you should post any comments, especially on social media. We will inform you through the normal channels of any relevant developments.'*

School can use social media to provide up-to-date information for all concerned throughout the various stages of the incident. Positive messages and appropriate advice for young people and their parents/ guardians can be provided. One important message would be to remind parents/ guardians to discuss social media use with their children and to monitor use more actively following a crisis.

It is important that CIMT members are familiar with safe messaging guidelines and the document *Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide and Self-harm* (Barnardos, 2010). Safe messaging guidelines should be followed when sending messages to staff, students, community or the media following a death by suicide. If making contact with the school during a critical incident, media personnel should be provided with the guidelines. Should the need arise during a crisis, schools can contact the Department of Education and Skills Press Office for advice and support.

Young people often post Rest-In-Peace (RIP) messages on social media sites when tragedies occur. These posts can be heartfelt and emotional particularly in cases of death by suicide. Messages such as "I miss you and will see you soon" or "I will follow in your path" should cause concern and be followed up with the individual concerned. The death by suicide of an individual may influence others. Young people are especially prone to contagion. Those who are emotionally vulnerable may act on suicidal impulses.

Activity on social networking sites during a critical incident can be a source of potentially important information, such as suicide pacts, identification of vulnerable groups or individual young people who may be at increased risk of suicide. Given privacy restrictions to people's personal web pages, distressing information may be posted without the knowledge of parents or school management. It is likely that users will block access so activity of this nature will not be accessible to everyone.

Monitoring sites raises issues of privacy and surveillance. Schools are not advised to engage in monitoring. However, should schools become aware of inappropriate posts by students, they could inform the parents/guardians and encourage them to request that it is deleted. The easiest way to have a post removed is for the person who originally posted it to delete it from their account or request its removal. Service providers will not usually remove posts unless content is contrary to their AUP.

The following advice for journalists is provided in *Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide and Self-harm*.

*The internet has created additional opportunities and challenges for journalists due to the speed and ease of accessing and publishing information. Points of view can now be presented more quickly and easily but sometimes without review or factual basis. It can be difficult for some readers to understand the distinction between what is fact and what is opinion. If you are posting your story on a news website or blog, please consider the following points:*

General tips

- *Avoid linking to or mentioning the names of websites that encourage or glamorise suicide. Helpful websites offering support are listed at [www.ias.ie](http://www.ias.ie) and [www.samaritans.org/ireland/links](http://www.samaritans.org/ireland/links).*
- *Try to exercise care and judgment in the creation of news stories that will appear online, as they can often be surrounded by adverts and commentary which are outside the control of the author. Additional features on the page can create a negative context, allowing, for example, adverts promoting depression aids to appear alongside articles on mental health.*
- *Add hyperlinks to sources of support to ensure that people in distress can access useful resources quickly, eg [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org).*
- *[www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) is an internet safety initiative funded by the DES, focused on raising awareness of online safety issues and good practice among students, their parents/guardians and teachers.*

## Appendix 3

### Guidelines for teachers helping students in time of crisis or emergency

(ref *Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools*, NEPS, 2016, pp 92 - 94)

#### **1. LISTEN 2. PROTECT 3. CONNECT 4. MODEL & 5. TEACH**

THINK ABOUT your students' DIRECT EXPERIENCE with the event, ie FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE of the event (physically experiencing or directly seeing it as it happens).

After the event, changes can happen in students' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Your students may worry about family members, classmates, friends, or pets they care about, and may worry that it will happen again. Common reactions to crises and emergencies include trouble sleeping, problems at school and with friends, trouble concentrating and listening, and not finishing work. Your students may become more irritable, sad, angry, or worried as they think about what has happened, and as they experience recovery efforts after the event.

When students share their experiences, thoughts and feelings about the event, LISTEN for RISK FACTORS for adverse reactions.

Risk factors that may indicate a need for counselling referral for students include:

- loss of a family member, schoolmate, or friend
- observing serious injury or the death of another person
- family members or friends missing after the event, past traumatic experiences or losses
- getting hurt or becoming sick due to the event
- home loss, family moves, changes in neighbourhoods/schools, and/or loss of belongings.

If a student has had any of these experiences, you may wish to consider referring her or him to the HSE services. Your NEPS psychologist will be available to provide support and advice. Now that you know what can affect your students after a disaster, school crisis, or emergency, you're ready to **Listen, Protect, Connect, Model & Teach**.

#### **1. LISTEN, PROTECT, CONNECT, MODEL & TEACH**

The first step after an event is to listen and pay attention to what they say and how they act. Your students may also show their feelings in non-verbal ways, like increased behavioural problems or increased withdrawal. Let them know you are willing to listen and talk about the event, or to make referrals to talk to an appropriate professional, if they prefer it. Use the following questions to talk with your students. You can listen for clues that indicate when they are having a hard time. Write down a few examples that may be helpful to note:

- What might be preventing a student from coming to or staying in school?
- What might be preventing a student from paying attention or doing homework?
- What might be preventing a student from returning to other school based activities?

Listen, observe, and note any changes in:

- behaviour and/or mood;
- school performance;
- interactions with schoolmates and teachers;
- participation in school-based activities;
- behaviours at home that parents/guardians discuss with you.

## **LISTEN, 2. PROTECT, CONNECT, MODEL & TEACH**

You can help make your students feel better by doing some or all of the following:

- answer questions simply and honestly, clearing up any confusion students may have about what happened;
- let your students know that they are not alone in their reactions;
- provide opportunities for your students to talk, draw, and play, but don't force it;
- talk to your students about what is being done by the school and community to keep everyone safe from harm;
- watch for anything in the environment that could re-traumatize your students;
- keep your eyes and ears open for bullying behaviours;
- maintain daily routines, activities and structure with clear expectations and consistent rules;
- make adjustments to assignments to be sensitive to students' current level of functioning;
- limit access to live television and the Internet that show disturbing scenes of the event;
- remember, what is not upsetting to adults may upset and confuse students, and vice versa;
- encourage students to "take a break" from the crisis focus with activities unrelated to the event;
- find ways for your students to feel helpful to your classroom, the school, and the community;
- list other things you do that help your students feel better - sharing this list with other teachers may increase ideas to help your students.

## **LISTEN, PROTECT, 3. CONNECT, MODEL & TEACH**

Reaching out to people in your school and community will help your students after a school crisis or emergency. These connections will build strength for everyone. Consider ways to make some or all of the following connections:

- “check in” with students on a regular basis;
- find resources that can be supportive to your students and staff;
- restore interactive school activities, including sports, club meetings, student projects, and student councils, coaches, etc.);
- encourage student activities with friends, including class projects and extra-curricular activities;
- empathise with your students by allowing a little more time for them to learn new materials;
- build on your students’ strengths by encouraging them to find ways to help them use what they have learned in the past to help them deal with the event;
- remind your students that major disasters, crises, and emergencies are rare;
- discuss feeling safe and times they have felt safe;
- list programs and activities that connect you and your students with the community;
- share your list with other teachers to create a larger list of activities and resources.

#### **LISTEN, PROTECT, CONNECT, 4. MODEL & TEACH**

As you help your students after a disaster, crisis, or emergency, your efforts may be more successful – and you may be less stressed – if you keep in mind that:

- it is good to be aware of your own thoughts, feelings, and reactions, these can be seen and may affect your students;
- how you cope and behave after an event will influence how your students cope and behave - your students will be watching you for both verbal and non-verbal cues;
- monitor conversations that students may hear;
- acknowledge the difficulty of the situation, but demonstrate how people can come together to cope after such an event.

#### **LISTEN, PROTECT, CONNECT, MODEL & 5. TEACH**

Talk to your students about expected reactions after a crisis (emotional, behavioural, cognitive, and physiological). There are ‘normal’ reactions to abnormal events, eg

- different people may have very different reactions, even within the same family;
- after the event, people may also have different amounts of time they need to cope and adjust;
- encourage your students to identify and use positive coping strategies to help them after the event;
- help your students to problem-solve to get through each day successfully;
- help your students set small ‘doable’ goals and share in these achievements as ‘wins’ for the students and your classroom;
- remind students that with time and assistance, things generally get better - if they don’t, they should let a parent or teacher know;
- over time, you, your students, their families, your classroom, can EXPECT RECOVERY.

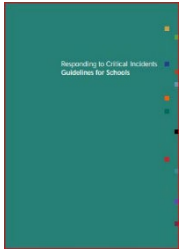
## Appendix 4

### Useful references, websites and helplines for accessing resources

(ref *Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools*, NEPS, 2016, pp 95 - 96)

**All materials should be reviewed by school management to ensure that they conform to school ethos and policy before they are used.**

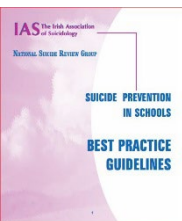
#### REFERENCES (as recommended by DES, NEPS, Barnardos, INTO)



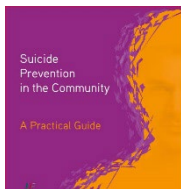
***Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines for Schools*** (DES, 2015)



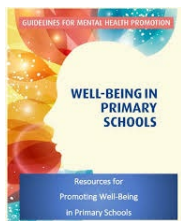
***Responding to Critical Incidents, NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools*** (NEPS, 2016)



***Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines*** (IAS, National Suicide Review Group, 2002)



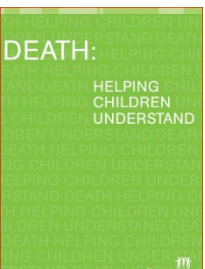
***Suicide Prevention in the Community - a practical guide*** (HSE, 2011)



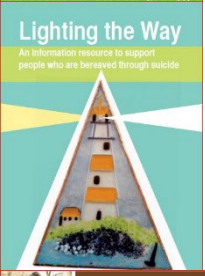
***Well-Being in Primary Schools - guidelines for mental health promotion*** (DES, DOH, HSE, 2015)



***Beyond the Rough Rock – supporting a child who has been bereaved through suicide***, MP Walsh (Winston's Wish, 2000)



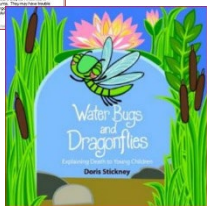
**DEATH: helping children understand**, Barnardos Bereavement Counselling for Children (Barnardos, 2007)



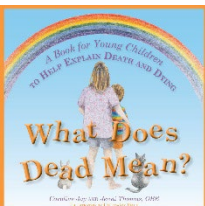
**Lighting the Way - an information resource to support people who are bereaved through suicide**, HSE Community Health Organisation (HSE, 2016)



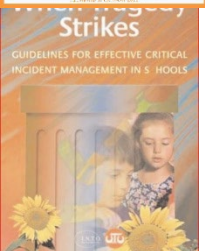
**Tips for talking with, and helping children and youth cope after a disaster or traumatic event – a guide to parents, caregivers and teachers**, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2012)



**Water Bugs and Dragon Flies – explaining death to young children**, D Stickney (Pilgrim Press, 2009)



**What Does Dead Mean – a book for young children to help explain death and dying**, Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012)



**When Tragedy Strikes – guidelines for effective critical incident management in schools**, INTO (INTO, 2000)

NEPS has identified the following websites that schools may find helpful.

**TRAINING** - [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie)

**ASIST Training:** ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first-aid. It is suitable for all kinds of caregivers - health workers, teachers, community workers, Gardaí, youth workers, volunteers, people responding to family, friends and co-workers. It is free of charge. If you'd like to make a difference in your community, you may wish to access ASIST training and learn how to help. Information can be obtained on the website of the *National Office for Suicide Prevention*.

**SafeTALK:** SafeTALK 'suicide alertness for everyone' is a half-day training programme that prepares participants to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources. These specific skills are called suicide alertness and are taught with the expectation that the person learning them will use them to help reduce suicide risk in their communities. Participants learn how to provide practical help to persons with thoughts of suicide in only a few hours. Following a SafeTALK workshop, you will be more willing and able to perform an important helping role for persons with thoughts of suicide.

## **WEBSITES**

**Barnardos** provide resources and advice.  
[www.barnardos.ie/resources](http://www.barnardos.ie/resources).

The **Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN)** is a multi-professional federation of organisations and individuals working with bereaved children and young people.  
[www.irishchildhoodbereavementnetwork.ie](http://www.irishchildhoodbereavementnetwork.ie)

**Cruse Bereavement Care** exists to promote the wellbeing of bereaved people and to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss.  
[www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

The **Professional Development for Teachers (PDST) Health and Wellbeing Team** provides support for teachers in physical education (PE), social personal and health education (SPHE) which includes anti-bullying, child protection, mental health and wellbeing, relationships and sexuality education (RSE) and other SPHE related areas. Supports offered to schools include in-service for Principals; co-ordinators; teachers of SPHE; whole-staff groups; programme planning; school policy development; school visits. [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie).

The former SPHE Support Service has been integrated into the Health and Wellbeing team of the PDST.  
[www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)

The **National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP)** was established to oversee the implementation of *Reach Out, the National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention*, and to co-ordinate suicide prevention efforts around the country. The NOSP works closely with HSE Suicide Prevention Officers. Up-to-date contact details for suicide prevention officers can be found on the NOSP website.  
[www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie)