



Critical Incident Management Policy

Ardfinnan N.S. aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

School Ethos:

As a staff, we are committed to the creation of a warm and friendly atmosphere in the school where there is a sense of good order and an atmosphere conducive to learning. The school promotes a Christian Ethos where respect, tolerance and fairness are promoted.

Our aim is to create a secure environment to ensure everyone's well being and safety and to maintain a happy, harmonious, working school so that our pupils may develop socially, personally, spiritually, emotionally, creatively, and academically to their fullest potential.

The Board of Management, through principal, Bríd Quinlivan has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan 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.nosp.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *Ardfinnan N.S.* 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 accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death*
- *The death of a child/adult after terminal illness*
- *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*
- *Unauthorised removal of a student from the school.*
- *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

- Health and Safety Statement
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Covid-19 Response Plan and Risk Assessment
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- The Fire Alarm is serviced regularly, at least once a year.
- School doors accessible only with access code.
- Pupils leaving early will only be released by a member of staff when an authorised adult arrives to accompany the child from the premises. Such departures are recorded via the Aladdin Connect App or in the 'Sign Out' book.
- Pupils are not released into the care of persons unknown to school staff without checking with a parent/guardian.
- Pupils are reminded of playground rules as per our Code of Behaviour.
- Pupils are always supervised. One member of the teaching staff and at least one SNA supervise the children when on yard.
- First Aid boxes are maintained and kept in the 'Oopsie Daisy Room', halfway down the corridor and outside the principal's office.
- Members of staff may access ice packs from the staffroom and large prefab, disposable sleeves should be used when issuing ice pack.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Ardfinnan N.S.* 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.

- 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 Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures. Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment (Aug. 2021)

- Staff have completed the Tusla 'Introduction to Children First' programme. Principal and Deputy Principal have completed the 'Child Protection Training for DLP's and DDLP's'
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available
- Staff are informed of difficulties effecting individual pupils and are aware of and vigilant in identifying their needs, they are informed of where to find information in the area of suicide awareness -https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Parents_CONCERNED_ABOUT_SUICIDE_-_H.S.E..pdf <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/nosp/preventionstrategy/>
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers. See DES Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary)
- School Anti-bullying Policy; Friends for Life programme aimed at classes in the senior end of the school. There is a care system in place in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2007 for primary schools. These documents are available on www.education.ie. Senior cycle pupils complete the FUSE Anti-Bullying & Online Safety Programme.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. support teacher), 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. See R14 Responding to critical incidents – checklist – students at risk.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves – Employee Assistance Service (EAS) Freephone 1800411057, SMS & WhatsApp: text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010
<https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login?org=yVIIU17>
<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/23acf5-employee-assistance-service/>

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will review and update the policy and plan as necessary. 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: *Brid Quinlivan*

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/affected family
- 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

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(In the absence of the Team Leader the Deputy Principal, Liam O'Sullivan will take up the role.)

Garda liaison: *Brid Quinlivan (Principal)*

Role

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

Staff liaison: *Liam O'Sullivan (Deputy Principal)*

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 – see responding to critical incidents (NEPS) for checklist – student at risk Pg69
- 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 (Employee assistance service) and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison: *Katie Sweeney (Health and Safety Office)*

Role

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

Community/Parent liaison: *Tony Kenny (Chairperson, BOM) / Celine Ryan (AP1 Post Holder)*

Role

- Maintains up to date lists of contact number of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Council
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- 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 engaged with/contacted
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison: *Brid Quinlivan*

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 INTO, CPSMA etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator: *Anne Ahearne*

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: *each individual member/Anne Ahearne*

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.

Anne Ahearne 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 *Ardfinnan N.S.* 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.

Review

- The policy will be reviewed and evaluated every 3 years or as necessary.
- The Policy will be reflected on following each critical incident by the CIMT and staff.
- The Policy will be made available to the school community via the school website www.ardfinnanns.ie or on request from the school office.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of *Ardfinnan N.S.* on 15/12/21 and shall be reviewed every three years or where necessary.

Date: 15/12/21

Signed: *Tary Kearney*

(Chairperson)

Date: 15/12/21

Signed: B. Quinlivan

(Principal)

Critical Incident Rooms		
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes		
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:	
Staffroom	Main room for meeting staff	
Classrooms	Meetings with students	
Principal Office	Meetings with parents	
TBC	Meetings with media	
SET Rooms	Individual sessions with students	
TBC	Meetings with other visitors	
Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Emergency Phone - 0833144003
Team leader:	Brid Quinlivan	principal@ardfinnanns.ie
Garda liaison	Brid Quinlivan	principal@ardfinnanns.ie
Staff liaison	Liam O'Sullivan	losullivan@ardfinnanns.ie
Student liaison	Katie Sweeney	ksweeney@ardfinnanns.ie
Community/Parent liaison	Tony Kenny/Celine Ryan	cryan@ardfinnanns.ie
Media liaison	Brid Quinlivan	principal@ardfinnanns.ie
Administrator	Anne Ahearne	office@ardfinnanns.ie

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	Team Leader
Meet whole staff	Critical Incident Team
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Critical Incident Team
Visit the injured	TBC
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Principal
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

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

Emergency Contact List Outside Bodies

AGENCY		CONTACT NUMBERS
GARDA	999/112	Cahir 052-7445630 Clonmel 052-6177640
TIPPERARY UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL	999/112	052-6177000
FIRE BRIGADE	999/112	Cahir/Clonmel 052-6134616
Local GP'S - Primary Care Centre, Market Yard Surgery, Barnahown, Cahir. (See Aladdin for individual pupil G.P.'s)		052-7441364
HSE/Community Care Team/Child and Family Centre/County Clinic		052-6177000
Child & Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)		Team 1 - 052-6177436 Team 2 - 052-6189204
EWO		Stuart Moloney 087-2120465
School Inspector		Edel Meaney 087-3298311
NEPS Psychologist		Sofia Perrin 087-2575086
INTO		School INTO Rep. Celine Ryan 087-2355934
Clergy/Parish Office		Paddy Noonan 052-7464408 (Tues-Fri Up to 1pm) Fr. Michael 087-6564170
Employee Assistance Service		1800 411 057