



Harold Boys' National School
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Principal: *Teresa Buckley*

Critical Incident Policy & Plan Framework

Harold Boys' N.S. aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. (See the school's mission statement). The Board of Management, through **Teresa Buckley**, has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plan.

Our aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the Critical Incident Management Plan.

The staff and management of Harold Boys' 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.e.g.

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or 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.

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 impact on students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to affect 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

Some specific examples of what the school is doing at this point are:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Side gate closed during school hours
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the playground –
 1. **When you hear the whistle STOP playing, look up and pick up the ball.**
 2. **Stay in your own area.**
 3. **If a ball comes from another yard area HAND back the ball. Don't kick it.**
 4. **No contact.**
 5. **No running in the picnic area.**
 6. **Listen to the teacher and follow the Code of Behaviour.**
 7. **When you hear the bell at 11am and 1pm STOP playing, pick up the ball and line up. Children responsible for bringing footballs inside do so immediately.**
 8. **STOP talking when you hear the 2nd bell.**
 9. **Show respect to Teachers and SNAs by obeying their directions.**

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Harold Boys' 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. e.g.:

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. Issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, resilience, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking, bullying and decision making are addressed in the SPHE curriculum. 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 Procedures and the name of the Designated Liaison Person (T Buckley is DLP & J O'Carroll is Deputy DLP)
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available
- Information is provided on mental health in general and specific areas such as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – E.g. NEPS, HSE, GARDA.
- 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 which is outlined in the NEPS documents published on 2007 for primary schools
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. SEN 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
- Staffs are informed about how to access support for themselves.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team are consulted annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

The key roles which need to be covered are as follows:

TEAM LEADER
GARDA LIAISON
STAFF LIAISON
STUDENT LIAISON
PARENT/GUARDIAN LIAISON
COMMUNITY LIAISON
MEDIA LIAISON
ADMINISTRATOR

Outlined below are some points on the key responsibilities of each role.

TEAM LEADER

A person who carries authority and can make decisions during a crisis (e.g. school closure, attendance at memorial services, etc.)

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS

- Liaises with the bereaved family
J O'Carroll will be Deputy Team Leader in the absence of T Buckley

GARDA LIAISON

(This may be seen as part of the team leader's role)

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

STAFF LIAISON

A staff member known and trusted by the staff

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually

COMMUNITY/AGENCY LIAISON

Someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents' Association
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

PARENT/GUARDIAN LIAISON

Someone known to parents. This person should be comfortable speaking before a large group and have skills to manage emotional reactions of individual or groups of parents

- The parent/guardian liaison visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers' 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 meetings with parents

- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder).

MEDIA LIAISON

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

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

ADMINISTRATOR

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents/guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services
- 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 sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials as needed
- Maintains records.

Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretary (Ms. Doyle) will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff of Harold Boys' 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 statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is confirmed information that death was due to suicide, and that the family involved consents to its use. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead. Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

Critical incident rooms

In the event of a critical incident,

Hall - will be the main room used to meet the staff

Hall - for meetings with students

Hall - for parents

Hall - for media

SEN Rooms - for individual sessions with students

Principal's Office – for other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Parent/guardian representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff

Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by T Buckley

The plan will be updated annually (October)

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE FOR SCHOOL PLAN

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Role	Name and Email address	Telephone number
Team Leader	T Buckley info@haroldboysdalkey.ie	0876175995
Garda Liaison	T Buckley info@haroldboysdalkey.ie	0876175995
Staff Liaison	J O'Carroll info@haroldboysdalkey.ie	0868414689
Parent Liaison	Andy O'Brien andy.obrien.01@gmail.com	0871230541
Community Liaison	Ian Flood ianvflood@gmail.com	0876201350
Media Liaison	Frank Mc Cooley mccooleyfrank@yahoo.ie	0874179540
Administrator	O Doyle info@haroldboysdalkey.ie	0834256002

SHORT TERM ACTIONS – DAY 1

Task	Name
Gather Accurate information	T Buckley
Who, What, When, Where?	T Buckley
Convene A CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	T Buckley
Contact external agencies	T Buckley
Arrange supervision for students	T Buckley
Hold staff meetings	J O'Carroll
Agree Schedule for the day	All Staff
Inform Students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	T Buckley / A O 'Regan
Compile a list of vulnerable students	T Buckley / A O 'Regan
Contact/ visit the bereaved family	T Buckley / A O 'Regan
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with the media	F Mc Cooley
Inform parents/ guardians	Parents' Association
Hold end of day staff meeting	J O'Carroll

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS - (DAY 2 AND FOLLOWING DAYS)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	T Buckley
Meet external agencies	T Buckley
Meet whole staff	J O'Carroll
Arrange support for students, staff, parents / guardians	T Buckley/ A O 'Regan
Visit the injured	T Buckley/ J O'Carroll/ Parents' Association
Liase with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	T Buckley
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	T Buckley
Make decisions about school closure	Board of Management

FOLLOW-UP BEYOND 72 HOURS

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class Teachers
Liase with agencies regarding referrals	T Buckley
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	T Buckley
Plan for giving of 'Memory box' to bereaved family	T Buckley
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	Board of Management/ Staff, Parents and Students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/ Board of Management

R21 EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

(To be displayed in staff-room, school office and Principal's office etc.)

Agency	Contact Numbers
Garda Dun Laoghaire	6665000
Hospital Loughlinstown	2825800
Fire Brigade	112/999
Local GPs Dr Lavelle	2856600
HSE	663 73000
School Inspector	Edel Corcoran Edel_Corcoran@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist Orla Dunne	087 7097215 0761 108400
DES	8896400
INTO	8722533
Parish Priest/ Clergy	Fr Declan Fr Liam Lacey Catriona 2859418
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Ratified on 20th October 2021