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Coláiste Gleann Lí

*Clash Road,
Tralee, Co. Kerry.
066 71 22552*

Critical Incident Policy

Office Hours

10am – 12pm

2pm – 3.30pm



Principal
Mr. Richard Lawlor



Critical Incident Policy

Background

This policy was developed by the staff of Coláiste Gleann Lí in consultation with parents, students and management.

Aim

Coláiste Gleann Lí aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

We in Coláiste Gleann Lí strive to support and encourage each individual within the school community to reach his/her full potential in a caring environment.

The Critical Incident Management Team

A critical incident management team has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their role for at least one school year.

The team will review and update the policy and plan annually.

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 following are members of the Critical Incident Management Team

Richard Lawlor (Principal)

Liam McGill (Deputy Principal)

Maryanne Lowney (Assistant Principal)

Mervin Clifford (Adult Education Officer)

Michael Quirke (ICT Co-ordinator)

John Joe Roche (HSCL)

Michael O'Sullivan (Junior Cycle)

NEPS psychologist Jeanne Fleming will be available:-

- To meet and advise staff
- To provide support for teachers in their support of students.
- To meet with groups of parents and provide information at meetings.

A Critical Incident

The staff and management of Coláiste Gleann Lí recognize 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 be:-

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

An intrusion into the school

An accident involving members of the school community
An accident/tragedy in the wider community
Serious damage or threatened damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
A Code Red weather warning of storm, flood, snow.
The disappearance of a member of the school community.

Aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan

The aim of the C.I.M.P. 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 to ensure that the effects on the students and staff would be limited. It should enable us to effect a return to normality as a soon as possible.

Supportive and Caring Ethos in Coláiste Gleann Lí

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

Evacuation Plan formulated

Regular Fire Drills occur

Fire Exits and Fire Extinguishers are regularly checked

A high level of Supervision in the school yard and building, in the morning, during the school day (including break and lunch times) and in the evening.

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Coláiste Gleann Lí aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of students, to enhance a sense of safety in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

Social Personal and Health Education 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.

Student Support Team

Some students for a variety of different reasons are vulnerable or unable to deal with issues, which arise, in their lives. To help in these situations we have set up a Student Support Team.

This team holds regular bi-weekly meetings. The team consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, HSCL officer, Assistant Principal, SEN co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor and two other staff members. Students who are identified as being at risk or whom staff have concerns about, are referred. After an initial assessment by the team, a member of the team meets the student. Concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are contacted and informed. The team liaises with class teachers and keeps them informed of the students' progress. Where appropriate, the students are referred to the Guidance Counsellor, GP or any necessary external agencies. DEIS team, Class teacher and/or Discipline committee.

Specialist Support

The Guidance Counsellor is trained in interventions for suicidal students.

The school has developed links with a range of external agencies

HSE Social Work Department

The Samaritans

Jigsaw Kerry

KACS

Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of content and the expertise of the providers.

Bullying

The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Staff Support

Staff have been informed about how to access support for themselves through Kerry ETB Roles and Responsibilities in the Critical Incident Management Team

Team Leader – Richard Lawlor

Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting

Coordinates the tasks of the team

Liaises with the Board of Management, Kerry ETB, NEPS, HSE, DoES

Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda Liaison – Richard Lawlor

Liaises with the Gardai

Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

Media Liaison –Maryanne Lowney

Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of, 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.

In light of NEPS advice, students will not be interviewed, photographers will not be allowed onto the premises, nor will photographs of students be made available.

In the event of an incident will liaise with the media, relevant teacher unions etc.

Will draw up a press statement, give media briefing and interviews

Staff Liaison – Michael Quirke

Leads brief 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 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 appropriate support and gives them contact numbers.

Student Liaison – Liam McGill

Co-ordinates information from Class Teachers about students they are concerned about

Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)

Provides materials for students (from critical incident folder)

Keeps records of students seen by external agencies

Looks after setting up and supervision of ‘quiet room’

Parent Liaison – John Joe Roche

Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of key parents (Parent Council etc.),

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 the sample letters are typed up and stored on the school system ready for adaptation

Sets up room for meeting with parents

Maintains a record of the parents seen

Meets with individual parents

Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Administrator- Michael O’Sullivan

Maintains up to date telephone numbers of parents/guardians, teachers and emergency

services.

Takes telephone calls and notes that need to be responded to

Ensures the templates are on the school system in advance and ready for adaptation

Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes

Photocopies materials 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 sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, materials used etc.

The secretarial staff 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 Coláiste Gleann Lí have responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of 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 will do also.

The term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide and that the family consents to its use. The phrase 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead.

The word 'murder' will 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,

The staff room will be used to meet staff

Room 14 will be used to meet individual class groups.

Rooms 3 & 5 will be used to meet with larger groups

Room 6 will be used to meet parents

An office (Deputy Principal or Principal) will be used to meet the media

The Guidance room will be used to meet individual students

The boardroom will be used to meet individual parents

Consultation and Communication Regarding the Plan

All staff will be consulted and their views canvassed in the continuing review of this policy and plan. Students and parent representatives will be consulted and asked for their comments. Our school policy and plan in relation to critical incidents will be presented to all staff annually for review.

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 Richard Lawlor.

The plan will be updated annually in September/October of each year.

This Critical Incident Policy was adopted by the Board of management of Coláiste Gleann Lí on:

Date: _____

Signed _____
(Chairperson)

Signed _____
(Principal)