



Critical Incident Management Policy

St. Nathy's College
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon

Roll Number 68067P

St Nathy's College Mission Statement

St. Nathy's College was established by the Diocese of Achonry to act as a centre of learning.

We strive to cultivate learning within a Christian environment which provides for the personal, physical, intellectual, moral and faith development of each student.

All of our school endeavours and activities are towards these objectives.

Introductory Statement

This policy has been formulated and drafted by the Board of Management of St. Nathy's College following the publication of Responding to Critical Incidents in Schools which requires all schools to have a Critical Incident Management Policy in place.

In accordance with the Mission Statement, St. Nathy's College aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

St. Nathy's College has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos. We have formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and pupils, both in ordinary times and in the event of a critical incident.

The Board of Management in collaboration with Fr. Martin Henry, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the College's policies and plans.

Review and Research

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) have consulted resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from COVID-19 *Information Booklet for Schools* (NEPS 2020)
- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources 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)
- Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)

Critical Incident

The Staff and Management of St. Nathy's College 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 sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide
- An accident involving student(s) or staff on or off the school premises
- A physical attack on a staff member(s)
- A physical attack on a student(s)
- An intrusion into the school
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Policy 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

Systems have been established 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

Our school carries out the following to ensure the physical safety of all school members on the school premises

- Only staff vehicles are permitted to enter the school grounds between 8:30am and 9:10am and between 3:30pm and 4:05pm
- A CCTV security system operates throughout the school
- During the school day, entry to the school is via the main entrance only
- The entrance gates are locked and the school is alarmed when vacant

- Staff or students shall not open fire exits to allow parents and or/students or others to enter the building
- During the school day, parents, students and visitors must report to the Main Office
- Late arrivals and early collection is recorded. It is necessary for parents/guardians to submit a message using the iClass app.
- Parents are not to block the entrance gates while waiting for the dismissal of students
- Fire Drills are conducted regularly. Evacuation procedures are clearly displayed in all classrooms and general purpose areas
- All Fire Extinguishers are checked on yearly basis
- Supervision is provided before class commences and during break times

Psychological Safety

St. Nathy's College aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for the same. The management and staff of St. Nathy's College 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 College and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the College. It is communicated 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
- prevention of alcohol and drug misuse
- personal safety

Promotion of mental health is integral to the development of a supportive and caring ethos in the College.

- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Children First 2015 and Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the post primary student are available
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies:
 - NEPS
 - CAMHS
 - TUSLA
 - Educational Welfare Service
 - Jigsaw
 - Gardai Siochana
 - Health Service Executive (HSE)
 - School Completion Programme (SCP)
 - Ballaghaderreen Youth Centre
 - Ballaghaderreen Family Resource Centre
- 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, in accordance with DES Circular 0023/2010
- The College has an anti-bullying policy
- There is a Pastoral Care system in place in the College using the 'Continuum of Support' approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the appropriate personnel where concerns are explored and the appropriate support provided
- When required a referral is made to an external agency
- Staff 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 include the Pastoral Care Team and others who were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet 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.

Team leader: Fr. Martin Henry

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 family

Garda liaison Fr. Martin Henry

Role

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

Staff liaison Ms. Geraldine Gildea

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 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 www.spectrum.life.ie

Student liaison Ms. Alison Beirne

Role

- At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and Year Heads about students they are concerned about
- Alert other staff to vulnerable students
- Provide materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintain student contact records (R1)
- Prepare the College Chapel as necessary

Community/agency liaison Ms. Karen Healy

Role

- Maintain up to date lists of contact numbers of emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaise with external agencies for support and referral
- Check credentials of individuals offering support
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these external agencies
- Remind external support personnel to wear name badges
- Update CIMT on the involvement of external personnel

Parent liaison Ms. Kathryn O'Dowd, Mr. Paul Connaughton (SCP) and Ms. Ashling Garvey

Role

- Visit the bereaved family with the CIMT leader
- Ensures that sample letters are available
- Prepare room for meetings
- Meet with individual parents
- Provide appropriate materials for parents from their critical incident folder

Media liaison Fr. Martin Henry

Role

- Will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the SEC
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews as agreed

Administrator College Secretarial Staff

Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency Services
- Answers telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensure that templates are on VSware and ready for adaptation
- Prepare and send letters, emails and texts
- Photocopy materials required
- Maintain records

Record keeping: Ms. Karen Healy

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.

The College 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 St. Nathy's College 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.

Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

| Room Name: | Designated Purpose: |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Staffroom</i> | Main room for meeting staff |
| <i>Classroom/Hall</i> | Meetings with students |
| <i>Classroom</i> | Meetings with parents |
| <i>To be agreed</i> | Meetings with media |
| <i>Guidance Counsellor's Office</i> | Individual sessions with students |
| <i>Refectory</i> | Meetings with other visitors |

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

St. Nathy's College Critical Incident Management Policy has been communicated to all staff. Each member of the Critical Incident Team has a personal copy of the policy.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan.

The plan will be updated annually.

Signature: 

Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 11.09.2024

Next Review Date: September 2025

Critical Incident Management Team

| Role | Name | Phone |
|--------------------------|--|---------------|
| Team leader | Fr. Martin Henry | (094) 9860010 |
| Garda liaison | Fr. Martin Henry | (094) 9860010 |
| Staff liaison | Geraldine Gildea | (094) 9860010 |
| School Chaplain | | |
| Student Liaison | Alison Beirne Guidance Counsellor | (094) 9860010 |
| Community Liaison | Karen Healy Guidance Counsellor | (094) 9860010 |
| Parent Liaison | Kathryn O'Dowd HSCL Paul Connaughton SCP Ashling Garvey Deputy Principal | (094) 9860010 |
| Media Liaison | Fr. Martin Henry (Principal) | (094) 9860010 |
| Administrator | College Secretarial Staff | (094) 9860010 |

Short term actions – Day 1

| Task | Name |
|---|---|
| <p>Gather accurate information It is crucial that the school has the correct information regarding the crisis. Therefore, it is important that involved staff gather to establish the facts - this may involve contacting others such as hospitals, Gardaí, parents.</p> | All College Staff |
| <p>Who, what, when, where?</p> | |
| <p>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</p> | Principal |
| <p>Contact external agencies</p> | Guidance Counsellors |
| <p>Arrange supervision for students</p> | Deputy Principals Year Heads |
| <p>Hold staff meeting</p> | Principal Deputy Principals |
| <p>Agree schedule for the day</p> | CIMT |
| <p>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</p> <p>Information to students should:</p> <p>Be communicated in a sensitive manner Give the facts as they are known Highlight the support that will be available Indicate the actions that are planned.</p> | Principal Deputy Principals Year Heads Guidance Counsellor |
| <p>Compile a list of vulnerable students</p> | Guidance Counsellor Special Education Needs (SEN) Team |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</p> <p>In preparing a press statement thought should be given to the following suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority to be given to the sensitivities and needs of those affected directly by the crisis • The non-release of names, addresses and phone numbers • Rely on facts and avoid speculation • Consider likely questions and a response to them • Agree with the press a time for briefings if this is necessary in an ongoing situation • Nominate a specific location for press briefings It is recommended that this Press Statement be simple and brief. If appropriate, it should express the sorrow of the entire school community at the sudden death or illness of one of their members and it should extend sympathy to the bereaved family. This statement should be adhered to, and not elaborated on, in all communications with the media and it should be familiar to every member of the school staff. | <p>Principal</p> <p>Deputy Principals</p> |
| <p>Inform Parents</p> | <p>Principal</p> <p>Deputy Principals</p> |
| <p>Contact Chairperson of the Board of Management</p> <p>You may want to consider informing the Chairperson and other members of the Board and call an emergency board meeting.</p> | <p>Principal</p> |
| <p>Hold end of day staff briefing</p> | <p>Principal</p> <p>Deputy Principals</p> |

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

| Task | Name |
|--|--|
| Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1 | Principal |
| Meet external agencies | Guidance Counsellor |
| Meet whole staff | CIMT |
| <p>Arrange support for students, staff, parents</p> <p>The students may wish to organise some service or ritual within the confines of the school. They should be consulted as to the nature of such a service. Such an event may be of great benefit to staff and parents.</p> <p>Focus on the friends of a bereaved student, as they can be the best source of support. Often the bereaved student may not wish to speak to an adult and may rely heavily on friends. These close friends may need support as they attempt to find ways to be of help.</p> | <p>Principal</p> <p>Deputy Principals</p> <p>Guidance Counsellor</p> <p>HSCCL</p> <p>School Completion Officer</p> <p>Year Heads</p> |
| Visit the injured | Principal |
| <p>Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements</p> <p>The involvement of students in any funeral or other services needs to be discussed. This requires invitation, planning and review. The families involved need to be consulted, the students invited to take part, time given to prepare for this participation and, finally, a debriefing of those concerned. While it would be appropriate for the deceased student's classmates to attend the funeral, it may be inappropriate for large numbers of students to be present. The presence of large numbers of young people at such highly charged events could prove to be inappropriate as well as being upsetting for individual students and for the parents of the deceased student.</p> <p>At all times the rights of the deceased family to privacy must be respected.</p> | <p>Principal</p> <p>Deputy Principals</p> <p>Year Head</p> <p>Tutor</p> <p>HSCCL</p> <p>Guidance Counsellors</p> |

Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service

Principal to delegate

- Decide what form of representation is appropriate. It is essential where possible, to consult the family concerned. Do not presume that the bereaved family will want a very public presence by the school.
- Prepare students ahead of the funeral. For some this may be the first occasion they have been exposed to a major grief.
- For those students who wish, encourage and assist them to write a personal message of sympathy. Consider also a common expression from students and/or staff.
- Contact the Funeral Directors regarding the arrangements concerning floral tributes. Any accompanying messages should be hand written.
- If possible, representatives of the school should visit the home of the bereaved. If students request to visit the home, phone ahead to check that this is appropriate. Visiting the bereaved may be distressing- support those involved.
- Students wear the College uniform when attending or participating at the funeral.

Make decisions about school closure

Board of Management

Whether the school will remain open or will close as a mark of respect to the bereaved family will depend on the judgement of the Principal, management and the Department of Education following consultation with the school staff. If the decision is to close the school, it is advisable to do so ONLY after informing the bereaved family and of the routine which the school will follow over the coming days. Parents should be formally notified of the school closure.

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

| Task | Name |
|--|---|
| Monitor students for signs of continuing distress | Year Heads, Tutors and Class teachers |
| Liaise with agencies regarding referrals | Guidance Counsellors |
| Plan for return of bereaved student(s) | Principal, Deputy Principals Guidance Counsellors |
| Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family | Guidance Counsellors/HSCCL |
| Decide on memorials and anniversaries | Principal Deputy Principals Guidance Counsellors HSCCL |
| Review response to incident and amend plan | CIMT |

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

| AGENCY | CONTACT NUMBERS |
|--|----------------------------|
| Gardai Ballaghaderreen | 999/112 (094) 9860002 |
| Castlerea | (094) 9621630 |
| Ambulance/Roscommon Hospital | 999/112 (090) 6626200 |
| Ambulance/Castlebar Hospital | 999/112 (094) 9021733 |
| Ambulance/Sligo Hospital | 999/112 (071) 9171111 |
| Fire Brigade Ballaghaderreen | 999/112 (094) 9877860 |
| Local GPs Dr. Costelloe | (094) 9860154 |
| Dr. Garvey | (094) 9860084 |
| West Doc | 1850 365000 |
| Bus Drivers John Towey | (087) 9394583 |
| Ailin O'Hara | (087) 2213731 |
| Garry Smith | (086) 0511355 |
| Geraghty Travel | (086) 8234242 |
| Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS) | (090) 6630350 |
| NEPS Psychologist | (01) 8650895 |
| DE | (090) 6483600 |
| JMB | (01) 2838255 |
| Clergy Ballaghaderreen | (086) 0858889 |
| School Completion Programme (SCP) | (086) 4411219 |
| Spectrum.Life | 1800 411 057 |
| State Exams Commission | (090) 6442700 |
| Teacher Unions ASTI | (01) 6040160 / 1850 418400 |
| TUI | 01 4922588 |

Appendix 1

Principal's checklist for consideration

The following is a checklist of things to consider on the morning of a tragedy. They are not written in order of what must come first etc. It is important for a Principal to take time to plan what he/she must do and what is appropriate to say to all concerned.

- Put together as much factual information as possible
- Inform staff what has happened
- Discuss school routine for the first day with the staff
- Identify particular students who may need to be told individually, e.g. close friends, relatives etc.
- Inform the pupils of the event and explain that this is something that everyone will find difficult to cope with
- Take time to let the news sink in
- Call a meeting of the CIMT, include Year Head and Tutor.
- Explain school routine for the day and outline the support and back-up for the students.
- Contact NEPS, CAMHS, Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Patron.
- Make contact with the family.
- Meet with key staff who can offer student support and decide on the format.
- Decide on any other arrangements which need to be made on the first day, e.g. a short religious service.
- Check in with staff in the staff room during the day and keep abreast of what is happening in the school.
- Be aware of members of staff who may be particularly distressed, e.g. staff who are recently bereaved themselves or who have had prior experience of a similar tragedy.
- Encourage staff to come to you during the day and let you know how things are going
- Find out details of the funeral etc. and communicate this to staff and students.
- At the end of the first day review events with staff and make plans for the following day.
- Make staff aware of students who are particularly vulnerable and what supports will be available for them.
- If there is a likelihood of interest from the media discuss a strategy to deal with any such requests.
- Liaise with Principals if the incident involves a student(s) who has sibling(s) in another school(s).

Appendix 2

Staff Support

The Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants is provided by Spectrum.Life. under the logo of *'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'*.

Under the EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc.

Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home).

A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available.

In addition, online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided.

As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service.

Spectrum.Life will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

Website: <https://www.spectrum.life.ie>

ADDENDUM

Responding to Critical Incidents

during

School Closures

and

Public Health Restrictions

ACTION PLAN FOR CRITICAL INCIDENT during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions

Short Term Actions – Day 1

| Task | Name |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Establish accurate facts <i>Who, what, when, where?</i> | Principal |
| Convene a CIMT meeting virtually - specify date and time clearly | Principal |
| Conduct an initial assessment of the incident, decide what level of response is required and agree an Action Plan | CIMT |
| Contact Chairperson of the Board of Management | Principal |
| Contact appropriate agencies | Principal Deputy Principals |
| Decide who needs to be contacted directly – staff/students/others and by what means: text/email/letter/notice on website | CIMT |
| Identify vulnerable students and consider how to connect with them:- phone call to parents and/or speaking to students directly | SEN Team |
| Notify staff via school administration system of the initial Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make separate contact with staff who may be vulnerable • Remind staff of the availability of <i>Spectrum.Life</i> https://www.spectrum.life • Agree a tie for a follow-up staff meeting for updates and reflection on shared experiences • Draw teachers' attention to <i>Teacher Wellbeing and Self Care during Covid-19 school closure</i> • Share with staff any resources being forwarded to parents. | Principal Deputy Principals |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Notify parents via the school administration system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember to respect family privacy and avoid references to the cause of death Bear in mind it is not usual practice for a school to inform the school community of the death of a parent Manage social media as per guidelines (R22). Draft a media statement if necessary (Appendix 1) Distribute resources ‘for parents sharing sad news with their child’ as appropriate outlined on page 7 ‘Responding too Critical Incidents during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from COVID-19’ | <p>Principal Deputy Principals</p> |
| <p>Connecting with students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with school policy, some staff may link directly with students via telephone, video link or email. Staff should refer to the DES document on ‘Continuity of Guidance Counselling-Guidelines for school providing online support for students’. 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 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. | <p>Principal Deputy Principals Teachers</p> |
| <p>Bereavement rituals: Funeral restrictions and alternative goodbyes</p> <p>The designated CIMT member(s) should liaise with the bereaved family regarding the funeral service and, where appropriate, a memorial service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 the funeral etc. Reassure students that the bereaved family understands the need to comply with Public Health restrictions and that a commemorative service will take place at a later date. Invite students to think of alternative ways to express sympathy e.g. sending a card to the family, lighting a candle, prayer, message of condolence, etc. Remind students to be considerate and sensitive when posting messages on any social media platform. Encourage students to participate individually, but collectively in any bereavement ritual being organised e.g. streamed funeral service, lighting a candle at a particular time during the ceremony, playing music, etc. <p>At all times the rights of the deceased family to privacy must be respected.</p> | <p>Principal Guidance Counsellors HSCL</p> |

Medium Term and Follow Up Actions (Day 2 and following days)

| Task | Name |
|---|--|
| <p>Convene a further Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) meeting virtually to review what has been done and to identify new tasks needed.</p> | <p>Principal</p> |
| <p>Update staff virtually on any new information</p> | <p>Principal Deputy Principals</p> |
| <p>Continue to provide support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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, 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 a more helpful thought. ● Encourage them to identify positive, self-soothing strategies with prompts such as ‘What will help?’ or ‘What can I do now?’ Further resources 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 stress (R14) | <p>Principal Guidance Counsellor SEN Team HSCL</p> |

Follow-Up Actions

| Task | Name |
|--|--|
| Discuss and review the status of any student referrals made to outside agencies | Principal Deputy Principals Guidance Counsellors |
| Prepare for how the school might support all students and staff when schools reopen, in particular those who have been bereaved | Principal Deputy Principals |
| Review response to incident and amend plan | CIMT |



St. Nathy's College

Established 1810

Chapel Street,
Ballaghaderreen,
Co. Roscommon.
F45V122

Tel. (094) 9860010
Email: office@stnathys.com

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

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

A young person from the locality, the sister/brother of (name of student, a student here at the College) 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/her death.

We have shared this information and had discussions with all of our students so that they know what has happened. College Staff have been available for students on an on-going basis today. Other support personnel are available to advise staff in their support of the students.

The death of any young person is tragic, (but a violent death/unexpected death) is even more difficult. It is hard to teach our students about 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 son/daughter. Some 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.

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

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.

Our thoughts and prayers are with (the family of) and with each of you at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Principal



St. Nathy's College

Established 1810

Chapel Street,
Ballaghaderreen,
Co. Roscommon.
F45V122

Tel. (094) 9860010
Email: office@stnathys.com

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

The College is deeply saddened by the sudden death of (*Name of student(s)*).

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of (*name*).

We have support structures in place to help your son/daughter cope with this tragedy.

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

You can help your son/daughter by taking time to listen and by encouraging them to express their feelings.

All young people are different and will express their feelings in different ways. It is not uncommon for young people to have difficulty concentrating or to 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 reactions. During the next few days, please keep an eye on your son/daughter 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.

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.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

Critical Incident Sample Media Announcement

This can be used as a template by schools 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 (**EDIT*Name*) and I am the Principal of St. Nathy's College, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. We learned today of the death of (**EDIT*one of our students or Name of student*). This is a terrible tragedy for the (**EDIT* Family Name*) family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with the (**EDIT* Family Name*) family and friends.

(**EDIT*Name*) was a (**EDIT* e.g. 5th year boy/girl*) and will be greatly missed by all who knew him/her.

We have been in contact with his/her family 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 have implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

The College has been in contact with Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) who have offered support and advice to teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time.

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

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

Thank you.

Prayer Service on the occasion of a death

Music The Cloud's Veil

Lighting of Candles

Opening Prayer

Compassionate God, we come to you at this very sad time for our school community. _____ touched our lives by his/her presence here with us. Life is a series of beginnings and endings. Comfort us as we cope with this ending and lead _____ into a new beginning in the shadow of your love.

Reading:

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.



Prayers of Intercession

Response: Lord hear our prayer

We pray for _____ whose life was cut short (by tragedy) may he/she now enter the fullness of life which Christ won for us. In your mercy....

For those who are mourning the loss of _____. Give them strength in the days ahead and help them to feel your healing presence. In your mercy....

For our school community. May we remember with joy the life of _____ and be grateful for the gift of his/her presence with us. In your mercy ...

Closing Prayer

O Lord, support us all the day long,
Until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over, and our work is done.
Then, Lord, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

