



Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg,  
Bóthar Rúisc  
Dún Búinne  
Co na Mí

## **POLASAÍ UM THEAGMHAS CRITICIÚIL/CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY**

### *Introductory Statement*

*This policy was devised and formulated by the school community, involving the Board of Management, parents and Staff of Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Education and Skills.*

### *Ethos*

*Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg is a co-educational, primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While respect is paid to all religious and/or value systems, Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg is an interdenominational Gaelscoil. A respect of the two main religions of this country: Catholicism and Protestantism and their traditions will be promoted.*

### *Aim*

*To outline the steps that should be taken to ensure an effective response to crisis situations.*

### ***What is a Critical Incident?***

*A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school.*

#### *Examples:*

*Death, major illness/outbreak of disease*

*Criminal Incidents (e.g. Dunblane shooting)*

*Major incidents, serious injury (e.g. Navan bus crash)*

*Suicide*

*Civil unrest, war (e.g. refugees may be traumatised by events that happened elsewhere)*

*Fire, natural and technological disaster (e.g. school ceiling collapsing)*

*Disappearance of student from home or school*

*Unauthorised removal of student from school or home.*

### *Sainmhíniú:*

*Agus an plean á fhorbairt again, ní mór dúinn sainmhíniú a thabhairt ar cad is Teagmhas Criticiúil ann. Is féidir féachaint orthu mar theagmhais a sháraíonn gnáth mheicníochtaí déileála na scoile agus a chuireann isteach ar reáchtáil na scoile.*

*Ní ar an mbealach céanna I gconaí a bheidh an plean á chur I bhfeidhm, mar go mbraithfidh sé sin cuid mhór ar an gceinéal teagmhais a bheidh I gceist. Seo a leanas roinnt samplaí de thárlúintí a chuirfeadh isteach ar rith na scoile:*

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Cailliúnt duine de phobal na scoile trí bhás tobann, timpiste nó féinmharú  
Timpiste ag baint le daltaí nó baill foirne ar shuíomh na scoile nó lasmuigh di  
Ionsaí fisiciúil ar dhalta(i) nó ar bha(i)ll foirne  
Eachtra buirgléireachta ar scoil  
Dochar tromchúiseach d'fhoirgneamh na scoile de bharr tdóiteáin/tuillte  
Duine de phobal na scoile a dhul ar iarraidh  
Timpiste/tragóid sa phobal máguaird.

### **Critical Incidents Management Team:**

Leadership Role: Principal – Seán O’Laimhín/Chairperson of BOM-Niall O’Braonáin  
Communication Role: Principal – Seán O’Laimhín/Chairperson of BOM-Niall O’Braonáin  
Student Liaison/Counselling Role: Mairín Ní Chonaire  
Family Liaison Role: Mairín Ní Chonaire  
Parents Association Rep: Caroline O’Hara (2014-15)  
Board of Management Rep: Séamus O Caomhonaigh  
National Educational Psychological Services Rep: Vanessa Duffy

Foireann Bainistíochta do Theagmhais Chriticiúla

Beidh Foireann Bhainistíochta do Theagmhais Chriticiúla ag an scoil. Ar an bhfoireann seo beidh an Príomhoide, Príomhoide Cúnta, maraon le duine amháin ainmnithe ag an bhfoireann teagaisc, ionadaí de chuid Choiste na dTuismitheoirí. Ionadaí ó NEPS agus duine ainmnithe ag an mBord Bainistíochta.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### Leadership Role:

Intervention  
Confirm the event  
Activate the C.I. response team  
Express sympathy to family  
Clarify facts surrounding event  
Make contact with other relevant agencies  
Contact and inform family/friends of incident  
Establish lines of communication with agencies dealing with incident with a view to being kept informed of developments as they occur.  
Decide whether a site visit is appropriate (site visit by Principal or person nominated by Principal)  
Decide how news will be communicated to different groups (staff, pupils, outside school)  
Post-intervention  
Ensure provision of on-going support to staff and students  
Facilitate any appropriate memorial events  
Review plan

### Communication Role:

#### Intervention

Prepare a public statement with team

Organise designated room to address media promptly

Ensure telephone line is free for outgoing/important incoming calls

Liaison with relevant outside support agencies

#### Post-intervention

Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

### Student Liaison/Counselling Role:

#### Intervention

Outline specific services available in school

Put in place clear referral procedures

Address immediate needs of pupils/staff

Decide on information to be presented to children with team leader

Provide information on counselling services available

#### Post-intervention

On-going support to vulnerable students

Monitor class most affected

Refer on as appropriate

Review and evaluate plan

### Family Liaison Role:

#### Intervention

Coordinate contact with families (following first contact by C.I. team leader)

Keep families of pupils involved informed of current developments of incident.

Consult with family around involvement of school in possible events e.g. funeral service

Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident.

#### Post intervention

Provide on-going support to bereaved/affected family/families

Involve as appropriate family in school liturgies/memorial services

Offer to link family with community support groups

Review and evaluate plan

## ACTION PLAN

### Short-term action plan (Day 1)

Immediate contact with families involved in incident

Consult with the family regarding appropriate support from the school e.g. funeral service

Contact with families of other children affected (options are in-school support or withdrawal by family)

Ensure a quiet place can be made for pupils/staff

Rooms will be made available as follows:

Individual meetings: resource room, staff room

Parents room: school hall

### Gníomhartha Gearrthéarmacha (an chéad lá):

Baileofar eolas chruinn

Déanfar teagmháil le gníomhaireachtaí cuí (Seirbhísí éigeandála agus leighis, NEPS, An Bord Bainistíochta, An Roinn)

Beidh cruinniú idir na príomh bhaill foirne agus an fhoireann bainistíochta do theagmhais chriticiúla

Tionólfar cruinniú foirne

Eagrófar tráthchlár don lá

Coimeádfar rudaí mar is gnách chomh fada agus is féidir.

Cuirfear tuismitheoirí ar an eolas

Cuirfear daltaí ar an eolas

Déanfar teagmháil leis an teaghlach atá faoi mhéala

Ullmhófar ráiteas scríofa: fíricí maidir leis an teagmhas, cad atá déanta cheana féin, cad a dhéanfar, eolas dearfach faoin duine atá básaithe.

Ainmneofar duine chun labhairt leis na meáin, más gá. Coinneófar daltaí ar shiúl óna meáin.

Socrofar teacht le chéile daltaí lena dtuismitheoirí, más gá.

### Contact appropriate agencies

Emergency services: 999

Medical services: 999

H.S.E. Psychology Departments/ Community care services: 046 9078861

NEPS: 0761 108635

CALMS: 046 9420800 Marie Lawlor

BOM: 087 6993439 Traic

DES/Schools inspector: 087-9447409 Mary\_TDunne@education.gov.ie

### Convene a meeting with Key Staff/Critical Management Team – 8.30am

Organise a staff meeting if appropriate – 9am

Organise timetable/routine for the day – adhering to the normal school routine is important if possible

Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted, list of friends etc - this information should be given to the Student Liaison person.

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Arrange supervision of pupils

Liase with the family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial service

The Chaplin/Principal liase with the family, to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial service.

Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate (Principal and Class Teacher)

Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths.

**Medium-Term Actions (24-72 hours)**

Preparation of pupils/staff attending funeral

Involvement of pupils/staff in liturgy if agreed by bereaved family

Facilitation of pupils/staffs responses, e.g. sympathy cards, flowers, book of condolences etc

Ritual within the school.

**Seo leanas na gníomhartha mean téarmacha a leanfar:**

Déanfar athbhreithniú iomlán

Eagrófar tacaíocht do dhaltaí aonair, do ghrúpaí de dhaltaí agus do thuismitheoirí más gá

Déanfar plean chun daltaí a thógáil le chéile arís

Tabharfar cuairt orthú siúd a gortaíodh

Déanfar teagmháil leis an teaghlach maidir le socraithe sochraide

Déanfar cinntí faoi rannpháirtíocht phobal na scoile sa tsochraid.

Review the events of the first 24 hours:

Reconvene key staff/critical incident management team – 8.30am

Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/pupils/staff

Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students

Have reviews with critical incident managements team -3pm

Establish contact with absent staff and pupils

Arrange support for individual pupils, groups of pupils and parents if necessary

Hold support/information meeting for parents/pupils, if necessary, in order to clarify what has happened.

Teacher for each group to talk separately to children, depending on age, there will be certain things they do not need to know.

Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out.

Arrange in consultation with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings (parental permission for this should be given at the time a child is enrolled in the school, included on enrolment form).

Plan for re-integration of pupils, staff e.g. Absentees, injured, siblings, close relatives etc.

Student liaison person to liase with above on their return to school.

Plan visits to injured.

Family liaison person + Class teacher +Principal to visit home/hospital.

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Attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service (to be decided)  
Decide this in accordance with parent's wishes and school management decisions and in consultation with close school friends. School closure.  
Request a decision on this from school management.

### **Longer Term Actions:**

Monitor pupils for signs of continued distress.

If over a prolonged period of time a student continues to display the following s/he may need assistance from the Health Board;

- Uncharacteristic behaviour
- Deterioration in academic performance
- Physical symptoms, e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness
- In appropriate emotional reactions
- Increased absenteeism

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately:

- What went well?
- Where were the gaps?
- What was the most/least helpful?
- Have all the necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any unfinished business?

Formalise the Critical Incident Plan for the future.

Consult with NEPS psychologist.

Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by the critical incident where appropriate.

Ensure that new staff is aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.

Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way.

When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, it would be useful to brief the Principal of the new school.

Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries and be sensitive to special days e.g. birthdays, Mothers' day, Fathers' day etc.

Acknowledge anniversaries with the family.

Plan a school memorial service e.g. plant tree.

Care of deceased persons possessions – what are the parents' wishes?

Update and amend school records.

Seo leanas na gníomhartha fadtéarmacha a leanfar:

Déanfar monatóireacht I gcomhair leis and bhfoireann Chúraim ar dhaltaí chun comharthaí a aithint.

Déanfar cinneadh ar bhealaí oiriúnacha chun deighleáil le cothrom lae and teagmhais.

## RESOURCES

“Young People and Loss, A Handbook for Schools” – Robin Cooper

“Silver Linings: Community Crisis Response” - Rainbows

“Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools”-DES

“Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools” - DES

## Review

This policy will be reviewed during or before the school year September 2015.

Síniú: \_\_\_\_\_

Síniú: \_\_\_\_\_

Traic O’Braonáin  
Cathaoirleach an Bhord Bainistíochta

Seán O’Laimhín  
Príomhoide