

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (CIMP)

Ardgillan College

Date for review: October 2022

Gerry McGuire (Acting Chair) 6/10/2022
Gerry McGuire Date ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson

Board of Management

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Ardgillan College aims to protect the well-being of its students by providing a safe, supportive and nurturing environment at all times. The school has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos. The Board of Management has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) as one element of the school'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 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)
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DE, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Responding to Critical Incidents during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from COVID-19: Information Booklet for Schools (DE, NEPS, 2020) Included in Appendix 1

Definition of Critical Incident

The staff and management of Ardgillan 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. Examples of critical incidents include:

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, serious illness, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death
- Major accidents involving serious injury
- Serious damage to the school caused by fire, flood, vandalism, technology etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- Serious physical attack on a member of the school community
- An intrusion into the school
- An accident involving members of the school community
- A serious accident or tragedy in the wider community

Aims of Plan

This Critical Incident Management Plan aims to help school management, existing pastoral care systems 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 return the school 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

- Evacuation plan formulated (including our students in wheelchairs)
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Ardgillan 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 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
- Resources on difficulties affecting the post primary school 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 the Career Guidance teacher is trained in interventions for suicidal students

- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies, including: Pieta House, Jigsaw, CAMHS, HSE, DDLETB Psychological Services, Balbriggan Family 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 provider
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system in place in the school.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or 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.
- A referral system has been established and students have access to the Guidance Counsellor through a referral from their Year Head.
- 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 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. There is a dedicated critical incident folder in the main office. 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 Principal will play a key leadership role in the management of the incident by organising the team to effectively deal with the incident and by communicating with the various parties involved in, or affected by the incident. In the absence of the Principal this role may be delegated to the Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellors or Year Heads.

Team leader: (Nuala Ní Mhurchú)

Role

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management, DDLETB, DE, SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family
- Confirms the event and clarifies the facts.
- Convenes a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team.
- Activates the Critical Incident Plan.
- Co-ordinates and delegates tasks.
- Liaises with family, Board of Management, DDLETB and Support Agencies.

- Provides follow-up support.
- Reviews and evaluates the plan.
- Keeps written records of phone calls, letters, meetings interventions etc.

Garda liaison (*Nuala Ní Mhurchú*)

Role

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

Staff liaison (**Deputy Principals / Year Heads / Guidance Counsellors**)

Role

- Implement the Critical Incident Plan as outlined by the Principal.
- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, and outlines the routine for the day.
- Meet with Year Head, Tutors, advises them of the Critical Incident Plan.
- 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
- Are alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the DDLETB Psychological Support Services and gives them the contact number (01 4598446)
- Meet with tutor groups and limit the adverse effects of the incident. Support vulnerable students/teachers.
- Tries to maintain normal school routine as far as possible.
- Keeps written records of phone calls, letters, meetings interventions etc.
- Identifies rooms which may be used for various purposes – individual and group support sessions; meeting parents; a quiet room; a waiting room etc.

Parent liaison (*Nuala Ní Mhurchú*)

Role

- Liaises with the bereaved family

Media liaison (DDLETB)

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 the SEC; relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrators (Claire Leonard & Yvonne Cheevers)

Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Staff members
 - Emergency services
 - Students
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to.
- Ensure that telephone lines are free for outgoing and important incoming calls.
- 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
- Liaises with Principal
- Keeps written records of phone calls, letters, meetings interventions etc.

Record keeping (Claire Leonard and Yvonne Cheevers)

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.

Claire Leonard and Yvonne Cheevers and will both have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Guidance Counsellor will keep records of student meetings.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of Ardgillan 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:
007	Main room for meeting staff
C3	Meetings with students
068	Meetings with parents
N/A	Meetings with media
218	Individual sessions with students
068	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and 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.

New and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan.

The plan will be updated every two years or as matters arise.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>	01 9680734/5
Garda liaison	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>	01 9680734/5
Staff liaison	<i>Niall O'Connor</i> <i>Caitriona Rooney</i> <i>Robert Finnegan</i>	01 9680734/5

Parent liaison	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>	01 9680734/5
Media liaison	<i>DDLETB</i>	01 4529600
Administrators	<i>Claire Leonard & Yvonne Cheevers</i>	01 9680734/5

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Who, what, when, where?	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú Niall O'Connor Caitriona Rooney Robert Finnegan</i>
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Contact external agencies	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Arrange supervision for students	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú Niall O'Connor</i>
Hold staff meeting	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Agree schedule for the day	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú / Niall O'Connor / Caitriona Rooney / Robert Finnegan / Year Head</i>

Compile a list of vulnerable students	<i>Appropriate Year Head Guidance Councillor SEN Team</i>
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	<i>DDLETB/Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Inform parents	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Hold end of day staff briefing	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Meet external agencies	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Meet whole staff	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú/ Niall O'Connor/Caitriona Rooney/Robert Finnegan/Guidance/Year Head</i>
Visit the injured	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú/ Niall O'Connor/Caitriona Rooney/Robert Finnegan/Guidance/Year Head</i>

Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú</i>
Make decisions about school closure	<i>BOM</i>

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	<i>Year Head/Tutor/Class Teachers</i>
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú Guidance Counsellors</i>
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	<i>Nuala Ní Mhurchú Appropriate Year Head</i>
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	<i>BOM/Staff, Parents & students</i>
Review response to incident and amend plan	<i>Staff/BOM</i>

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Balbriggan Garda Station	01 8020510
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Swords	018907152
DDLETB Psychological Services	01 4598446
Emergency Services	999
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411057
Fire Station Balbriggan	01 8412137
Hospital (Our Lady of Lourdes, Drogheda)	041 9837601
HSE	1890 252 919
Jigsaw	01 9603020
Local Health Centre	01 8834906
National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)	01 8892700
Parish Priest	01 8412116
Primary Care Centre Balbriggan	01 8412138
Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention Dublin North: Sara Maxwell	0766958993 086 0214241
State Exams Commission	090 644 2700
Unions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INTO • ASTI • TUI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 01 8047700 • 01 6040160 • 01 492 2588

Coláiste Pobail Ard Giolláin
Fearann an Chaisleáin
Baile Brigín
Contae Átha Cliath
Fón: 01 9680734 Fax: 01 9680738
Ríomhphost: info@ardgillancc.ie
Príomhoide:
Nuala Ní Mhurchú
Príomhoidí Tánaisteacha:
Robert Finnegan
Niall O'Connor
Caitriona Rooney



Ardgillan Community College
Castlelands
Balbriggan
County Dublin
Telephone: 01 9680734 Fax: 01 9680738
E-Mail: info@ardgillancc.ie
Principal:
Nuala Ní Mhurchú
Deputy Principals:
Robert Finnegan
Niall O'Connor
Caitriona Rooney

Dear Parents/Guardians

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

*(*EDIT*Give accurate information about the incident, but avoid using the word murder as this will not be established until the court case is completed).*

We have shared this information and had discussions with all of our students so that they know what has happened. School staff members have been available for students on an on-going basis today. Other support personnel (**EDIT*including psychologists etc., according to actual arrangements*) are available to advise staff. This support will continue to be available to advise staff in their support of students (**EDIT*if appropriate insert how long*).

The death of any young person is tragic, but a violent death is even more difficult. It is hard to have to teach our children about the 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 child. Some children/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.

We have enclosed some additional information that may be useful during this time.

The media are in the vicinity of the school and may approach you or your children. You need not respond to their questions if you are approached. We will not allow the media to interview your child at school and our general advice is that you should not let your children 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. (If planned) A support meeting for parents is planned for (date, time and place). At that time we can talk further about how to help ourselves and our children.

Our thoughts are with (**EDIT* family name*) and with each of you.

Sincerely

Coláiste Pobail Ard Giolláin
Fearann an Chaisleáin
Baile Brigín
Contae Átha Cliath
Fón: 01 9680734 Fax: 01 9680738
Ríomhphost: info@ardgillancc.ie
Príomhoide:
Nuala Ní Mhurchú
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Principal:
Nuala Ní Mhurchú
Deputy Principals:
Robert Finnegan
Niall O'Connor
Caitriona Rooney

Dear Parents/Guardians

The school has experienced (**EDIT* the sudden death, accidental injury, etc.*) of *Name of student(s)*. We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events.

(**EDIT* Brief details of the incident, and in the event of a death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost*).

Our thoughts are with (**EDIT* family name*).

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. (**EDIT* Elaborate*).

It is possible that your child 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 child by taking time to listen and by encouraging them to express their feelings.

All children are different and will express their feelings in different ways. It is not uncommon for children 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. Over the course of the days to come, please keep an eye on your child 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.

(**EDIT* Optional*) An information night for parents is planned for (**EDIT* date, time and place*). At that time, further information about how to help children in grief will be given.

We have enclosed some information which you may find useful in helping your child through this difficult time.

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.

If you would like advice you may contact the following people at the school. (**EDIT* Details*).
Principal's signature

Sincerely

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 *Nuala Nì Mhurchù* and I am the Principal of *Ardgillan College*. We learned this morning 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*) and will be greatly missed by all who knew him/her.

We have been in contact with his/her parents 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.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and (**EDIT*insert other information if relevant*) have been with us all day supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time.

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

The school has been open to parents, to support them and to offer them advice and guidance.

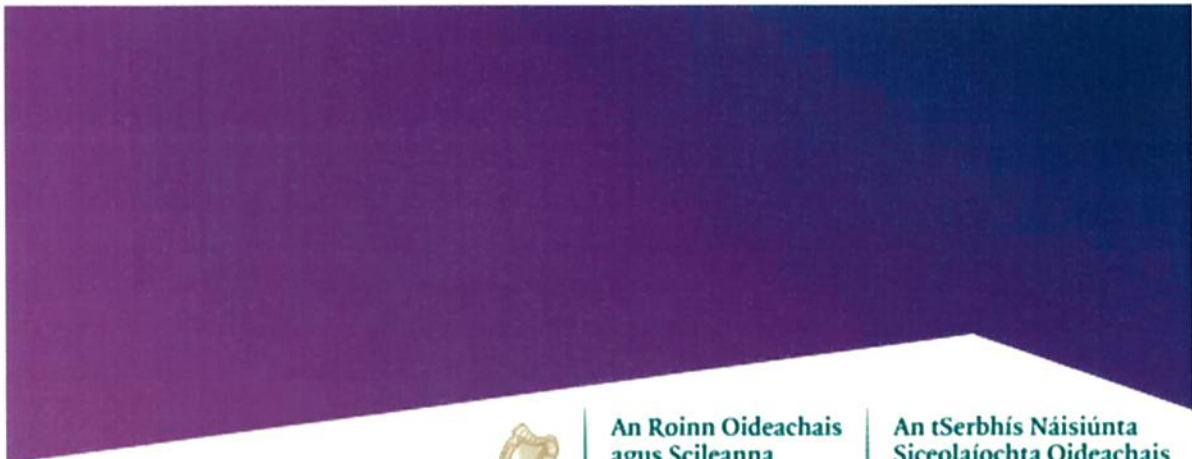
We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.



**Responding to Critical Incidents during School
Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from
COVID-19**

Information Booklet for Schools



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

**An tSerbhís Náisiúnta
Síceolaíochta Oideachais**
National Educational
Psychological Service

Purpose of this booklet

NEPS publication '*Responding to Critical Incidents - NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools*' outlines best practice in guiding school communities to respond to a critical incident in a way that promotes resilient outcomes. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the actions typically taken by schools in responding to critical incidents require adaptation.



RESPONDING TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS

NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

The purpose of this booklet is to outline how schools might adapt their response to critical incidents (both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related), particularly those short-term and medium-term actions outlined in Sections 4 and 5 of '*Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials*



for Schools' (pages 20-29). This booklet should be read in conjunction with these main guidelines. Various sections and resources (R) from these guidelines are referenced throughout this booklet.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Public Health measures in place at this time are challenging students, staff and families, in particular those who may be already vulnerable. Therefore, it is even more important at this time to attend to preventative factors that may mitigate against distress and promote wellbeing. In this regard, we direct schools and parents to the [NEPS advice & resources for keeping children and young people well during COVID-19](#) for suggestions on maintaining student, teacher and parent wellbeing.

It is also recommended that schools review their Critical Incident Management Plan to ensure that they are ready to respond effectively to critical incidents occurring at this time.

NEPS wants to acknowledge the unprecedented challenges that the school closures and public health restrictions arising from COVID-19 brings for the whole school community, and especially for school leaders. Responding to a critical incident during this time brings additional concern. To support you to support your school communities, school leaders are encouraged to pay particular attention to their own self-care in the first instance;- suggestions available on [Teacher Wellbeing and Self Care during the Covid-19 school closure](#)

NEPS is available to provide telephone/online support to you and your community in the event of a critical incident.

Day 1: Action Plan for Critical Incident Management Team. (See Section 4 of main guidelines *)

Short Term Actions

a) Convene

- Establish accurate facts.
- Refer to the school's Critical incident Management Policy and to [Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools](#) document.
- Convene Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) meeting virtually.
- Conduct an initial assessment of the incident, decide what level of response is required (guidelines pgs. 20–21) and agree an Action Plan.
- Contact appropriate agencies, e.g. Board of Management etc. (R21).
- Decide who needs to be contacted directly:- staff/students/parents/others and by what means:- phone/email/text/letter/website notice. See R2/3 for sample notices.
- Identify vulnerable students (see risk factors pg. 25) and consider how to connect with them:- phone call to parents and/or speaking to students directly.
- Consider how to communicate with the bereaved family whilst physical distancing measures are in place:- phone calls, writing a card or letter.

b) Notify staff and parents

- Agree and test available technologies as a means of communication,
- Agree a telephone tree for contacting staff and advise staff of the initial Action Plan.
- Notify parents using agreed means.
- Remember to respect family privacy and avoid references to the cause of death.
- Bear in mind that 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 (R4).
- Distribute resource page 7 of this document as appropriate, 'For parents sharing sad news with their child'.

c) Connecting with staff

- Agree a telephone tree for contacting staff.
- Make separate contact with staff who may be vulnerable.
- Remind staff of the availability of the *Inspire Service* (ph. 1800 411057).
- Agree a time for a follow-up staff meeting for updates and reflection on shared experiences.
- Draw teachers attention to [Teacher Wellbeing and Self Care during the Covid-19 school closure](#)
- Share with staff any resources being forwarded to parents.

* Section 4: Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

Day 1 contd.: Action Plan for Critical Incident Management Team. (See Section 4 of main guidelines *)

Short Term Actions (cont.)

d) Connecting with students

- In accordance with school policy, some staff may decide to link directly with students via telephone, video link or email. Post Primary staff should refer to DES document on '[Continuity of Guidance Counselling-Guidelines for schools 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 and staff 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.

e) Bereavement rituals: Funeral restrictions and alternative goodbyes

- Designated CIMT member(s) should liaise with the bereaved family regarding the funeral service and, when appropriate, a memorial service. 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 funerals, etc.
- Reassure students that the bereaved family understands the need to comply with current Public Health restrictions and that a commemorative service may take place at a later date.
- Invite students to think of alternative ways to express sympathy, e.g. sending a card to family (see [Winston's Wish](#) for alternative goodbyes). Remind students to be considerate and sensitive when posting messages on any social media platforms. RIP.ie has a message condolence facility.
- School leaders may consider facilitating a school platform for compiling messages of condolences/well wishes to share with family, monitored for sensitivity by school personnel.
- Encourage students to participate individually, but collectively, in any bereavement ritual being organised, e.g. a streamed funeral service, lighting a candle at a particular time during the ceremony, playing music, etc.

* [Section 4. Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools](#)

Day 2+: Action Plan for Critical Incident Management Team (See Section 5 & 6 of main guidelines *)

Medium Term and Follow Up Actions

f) Review

- Convene a further Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) meeting virtually to review what has been done and to identify new tasks needed.
- Update staff virtually on any new information.

g) Continue to provide support

- 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](#), practising yoga, 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 more helpful thoughts (e.g. - 'That car was unsafe, but not all cars are unsafe').
- Encourage them to identify positive, self-soothing strategies with prompts such as 'What will help?' or 'What can I do now?' For further resources, see 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 distress (R14).

h) Follow Up Actions: (See Guidelines Section 6, Pg. 30)

- Discuss and review the status of any student referrals made to outside agencies.
- Prepare for how your school might support all students and staff when schools reopen, in particular those who have been bereaved.
- Evaluate your school's response to the critical incident and amend your Critical Incident Management Policy, as appropriate.

* Section 5&6 : Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

Resources

Below is a sample of online resources to support young people who have experienced loss and grief. These resources are intended to complement NEPS' existing publication *'Responding to Critical Incidents-NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools'*.

a) **Coronavirus and Bereavement**

[The Irish Hospice Foundation](#) have developed practical and easily accessible materials for the Irish context, and include resources and supports available from organisations such as the HSE, DES and websites such as RIP.ie. There are also topic specific resources addressing issues such as *'Planning a funeral in exceptional times'*, *'Grieving in exceptional times'* and *'Helping children grieve during COVID-19 restrictions'*

[Winston's Wish](#) is a British childhood bereavement charity with a very comprehensive website. Their COVID-19 page has useful resources, such as *'How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible'*, *'Telling a child someone has died from coronavirus'* and *'Managing grief in isolation'*

b) **General Bereavement**

[Rainbows](#) is a free, voluntary service that supports children and young people with separation and bereavement. Support programmes for children and young people at both primary and post-primary level are available for students three months (minimum) after the experience of a loss. Further information and resources are available at their website.

[Barnardos](#) provide wide-ranging services to families, including support around bereavement. There is a downloadable e-book and links to various services available on their website.

[The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network](#) is a member organisation where families, professionals and schools can obtain information, guidance and support from various professionals. In addition to resources and supports, courses are available for professionals to develop their skillset in supporting bereavement.

c) **Suicide and Bereavement**

The [National Office for Suicide Prevention \(NOSP\)](#) is the body responsible for co-ordination and implementation of the national strategy for suicide prevention. As well as general information and resources, the site includes details on regional contacts for Suicide Resource Officers/Samaritans etc., details of various training programmes, and how professionals can access 'Urgent Help' at times of crisis.

[Headspace](#) is an Australian organisation for youth mental health. Their website has very practical materials for supporting those who have lost a loved one through suicide.

d) **SEN and Bereavement**

[Mencap](#) have materials for explain loss and death to people with learning disabilities and includes literature for specific aspects such as *'What can I do to feel better'* and *'Going to a funeral'*

Resources: For parents sharing sad news with their child

The following NEPS resources may be helpful for parents:

[*Children's Understanding and Reaction to Death \(R6\)*](#)

[*Stages of Grief \(R7\)*](#)

[*How to cope when something terrible happens \(R8\)*](#)

[*Reactions to a Critical Incident*](#)

[*Ways To Help Your Child Through This Difficult Time \(R12\)*](#).

Other Recommended Resources

[**Barnardos**](#) provide a wide-ranging service to families including support around bereavement. Downloadable e-books both parents and children are available on their website as well as links to various services. A national [telephone support service for parents](#) is available in response to the challenges they are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Freephone **1800 910 123** (from 10am to 2pm, Monday to Friday). Barnardos also provide a [children's bereavement helpline service](#), for members of the public seeking information and support in relation to bereavement. Telephone **01 473 2110** (from 10am to 12pm, Monday to Thursday)

[**The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network**](#) is a member organisation where families, professionals and schools can obtain information, guidance and support from various professionals. In addition to resources and supports, courses are available for professionals to develop their skillset in supporting bereavement.

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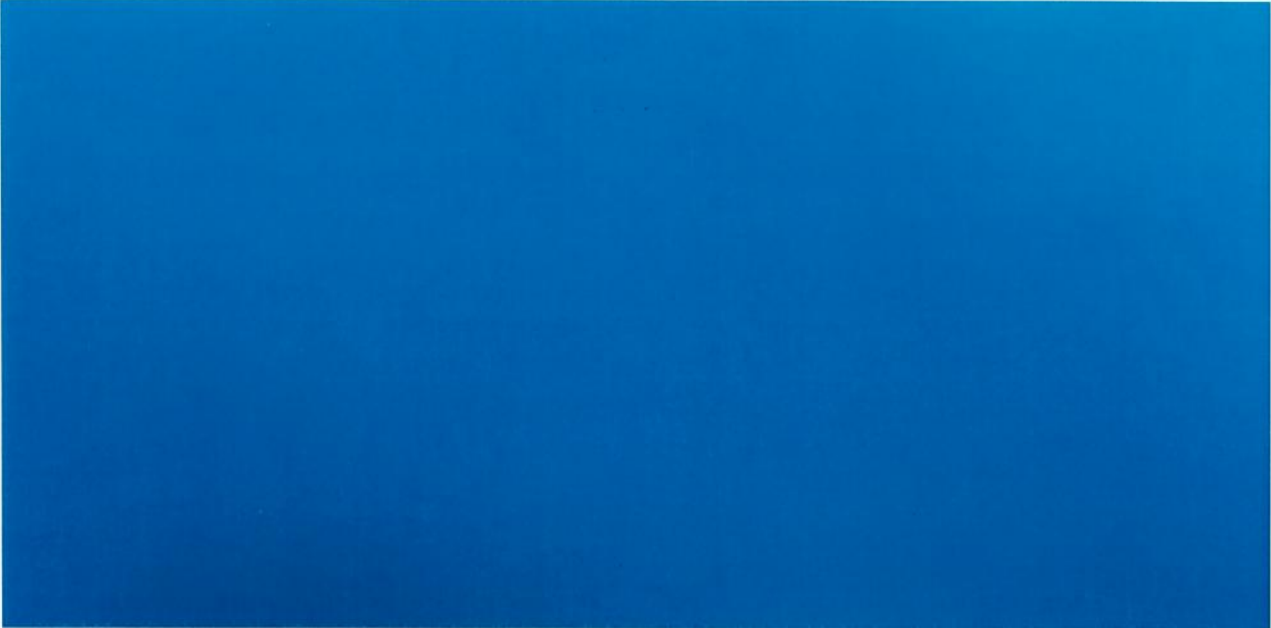
[**Mencap**](#) have materials for explain loss and death to people with learning disabilities and includes literature for specific aspects such as '[What can I do to feel better](#)' and '[Going to a funeral](#)'

Supports for younger people

[**Childline \(ISPCC\)**](#) is Ireland's 24-hour national listening service for young people up to the age of 18. Freephone **1800 666 666** (any time, day or night).

Text **50101** (from 10am to 4pm every day). Chat online at www.childline.ie (from 10am to 4pm every day).

The [**YourMentalHealth.ie**](#) website has information on all mental health supports and services available nationally & locally from the HSE and its funded partners. You can also call the freephone *YourMentalHealth Information Line* to find supports and services: **1800 111 888** (any time, day or night).



NEPS respond to critical incidents on request from affected schools.

School authorities seeking support should contact their [local NEPS office](#) during working hours, Monday – Friday.