



BELMAYNE
— E.T.S.S. —

Belmayne Educate Together Secondary School

Roll Number 68346 T

Belmayne Avenue,
Belmayne
Dublin 13

**Critical Incident Policy
2020 - 2023**

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Introduction

Every school faces the real prospect of having to respond, at short or no notice, to crises of various types. While critical incidents of their very nature tend to occur without warning and at any time day or night, this set of guidelines provides advice for those whose task it is to manage such incidents. However, we are being more advisory than prescriptive - since each crisis will demand a different set of responses.

This document outlines our management plan for a critical incident in Belmayne ETSS and is based on the NEPS school plan template (DES, 2015a) and the NEPS **Responding to Critical Incidents during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from COVID-19**. The staff and management of Belmayne ETSS recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school” (DES, 2015b).

Types of incidents may include (but are not limited to):

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death. The term ‘suicide’ will not be used without the consent of the family involved or until it has been established categorically that a person’s death was as the result of suicide. The terms ‘tragic death’ or ‘sudden death’ shall 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.
- An intrusion into the school
- An accident involving members of the school community
- A major accident/tragedy/natural disaster in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- A major accident locally or abroad etc.

If the crisis is one that affects the whole school community, then the Critical Incident Plan is put into action. This ensures that best practice is followed in offering emotional, spiritual, and psychological support to all those affected by the tragedy at a critical time in the life of the school.

The aim of our Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)

The aim of the CIMP is to help Belmayne ETSS school management and staff

- to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident
- to enable us to maintain a sense of control
- to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff
- to help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited
- to enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

The creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

Belmayne ETSS is a co-educational, post primary school, which opened in September 2019. We have put systems and supports in place to help prioritise wellbeing and to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of everyday events. These include measures to address the physical, emotional and psychological safety of the school community, and include (but are not limited to) the following:

Pastoral Supports

- Tutor System/ Student Support team
- Fire safety, drills, evacuation procedures.
- Supervision of students outside class times (before & after school, break, lunch).
- Wellbeing programme.
- A number of staff trained in the Friends First Youth programme.
- School policy for Child Protection & Safeguarding Statement in place and will be reviewed annually. Staff and students are familiar with the procedures and the name of the DLP and DDLP
- Anti-Bullying Policy in place.

- Referral systems for students identified as being at risk – student support team. Liaise with staff informing them of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves (<https://www.spectrum.life/>) on induction in the Teacher Handbook.
- Resources and training available to staff on the difficulties affecting students at post-primary level available including mental health, depression, anxiety and suicide awareness (e.g. HSE training – Assist/ NBSS CPD/ Restorative Practice Facilitation and Mediation/ Safe Care/ Pieta House).
- Links made with external agencies as appropriate and visitors/speakers to school considered in line with circular 0023/2010

Environmental Supports

- Security of school grounds, buildings during school hours
- Students leaving the building during the day must be signed out.
- Visitors are to sign in at the school office and are issued with a visitor’s badge.
- For the 2020/2021 academic year visitors to the school have been restricted to prevent the introduction or spread of Covid 19.

Managing a Critical Incident

A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team are selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. It is school policy to have several key personnel involved to respond effectively to a critical incident and to provide leadership in the implementation of the plan.

The team will comprise the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and other teachers concerned (i.e. Tutor of the affected group). The names of the CIMT are outlined below.

The members of the core team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan.

These roles are outlined further in Appendix A. The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will be contacted via text should a critical incident occur and will contact other external personnel as needed. See phone numbers listed below.

Critical Incident Management Team (contact details not included in public document)

Role	Name	Mobile
Team Leader	Ashling Kenevey	
Principal	Ashling Kenevey	
Deputy Principal/ Staff Liaison	Fiona Whitney	
Main Student Liaison	GC - Janice Horgan	
Student Liaison 1 st Years	Tutor - Roisin Duffy Tutor - Emma Burrows Year Lead – Rosa Devine	
Student Liaison 2 nd Years	Tutor - Niall Daly Tutor - Dan O’Grady Year Lead - Ita Dagger	
Parent Representative	Adrian Skehill	
Community Liaison	Principal Ashling Kenevey BOM Chairperson Kristina Ryan	
Media Liaison	Ashling Kenevey	
Administrator	Paula Knowd	

Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters, emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used. The school secretary 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 Belmayne ETSS have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that students do so also.

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

- All members of the BOM were consulted and their views canvassed in review of this policy and management plan.
- Parent nominees on the BOM were consulted.
- The Belmayne ETSS ratified policy and management plan in relation to responding to critical incidents will be presented to all staff on induction and will be available on the staff drive.
- Each member of the critical incident team will have a personal copy of the plan
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal/DP as part of Induction
- The plan will be updated annually, ideally in Sept- Oct of a new school year.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident occurring

Hearing the News – Once a critical incident comes to the attention of a member of the school community, he/she should, where possible and practical, inform the Principal. It may be necessary to call one or other of the emergency services in the first instance.

Establish the Facts – Before taking any action it is crucial that the school has the correct information regarding the crisis. Therefore, it is important that the Principal and appropriate staff gather to establish the facts as soon as practically possible.

Management to Convene a Meeting of the Critical Incident Team – Once the facts of the crisis have been established, a meeting of available members of the Critical Incident Team should be called forthwith. This group will need to agree an immediate plan of action, which may include outlining the facts, contacting relevant agencies (Emergency Services, Health Personnel, BOM, etc.), preparing a written statement liaising with the media and outside agencies and assigning roles to team members and other staff members as the incident requires. Provision for appropriate and relevant counselling services will also be made.

Staff Meeting – The Principal will meet with the staff to address some key issues such as:

- Facts of the Incident verified by Gardai/Emergency services/Family
- Convey a plan of action/information for staff about which outside agencies have been contacted or are involved and the supports that are in place for both students and staff. Needs of any staff member need to be acknowledged.
- How students are to be informed.
- How the school will communicate with the media through liaison teams only.
- Identify students particularly affected.
- Agree the common response when dealing with the public.
- Teacher support will be sought to provide supervision on an ad hoc basis when necessary.
- Visits to affected families organised.
- When normal school or agreed school practices should continue/resume

Office Procedure – An agreed statement is to be issued when responding to phone enquiries. Further enquiries are to be directed to the Principal or other members of the critical incident team. Numbers should be available for pupils, parents, guardians, staff and all emergency support services. It is important to maintain a log of events, letter(s) to parents, telephone calls made and received.

Room Allocation – If in school students should follow the normal class timetable in so far as possible. Where needed the critical incident team may assign a room to outside agencies e.g. counselling service/school psychologist. A room will be available for staff/students who wish to have a quiet area for reflection. A supervised area or support room can be available to facilitate meeting with concerned parents.

Critical incident rooms

In the event of a critical incident,

- Staffroom will be the main room used to meet the staff
- Classroom 1 will be used for meetings with students
- Room 3 will be used for meetings with parents
- Room 2 will be used for meetings with media
- Wellbeing room will be used for meetings with individual students

After Incident – The Principal with the assistance of the CIMT will prepare a report for the BOM and DES. Counselling of those affected will continue as needed. The school will offer any appropriate requested assistance to the family.

Long Term – The critical incident team should meet as soon as possible to review the procedures followed, consult with the school community and amend the policy as deemed necessary.

Day 1: Short Term Actions (Leadership Team, CIMT)

Task	Name	Completed
Confirm the incident has occurred.	Principal	
Make contact with family, gather accurate information from family or Gardaí. (who, what, when, where?)	Principal	
Express sympathy to family, assure them of school's support, ascertain if name is in public domain, ensure family know who contact person in school is.	Principal	
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly.	Principal	
Notify BoM	Principal	
Contact external agencies if support needed –Pieta House/ HSE	Deputy Principal & GC	
Set up CIMT room in school, distribute key tasks, prepare guidelines & procedures for teachers	Principal, CIMT	
Send text for staff to report to the staff room when they arrive. Plan and hold a brief staff meeting (teaching and non- teaching staff), make a note of any absences/late arrivals to ensure all staff know.	Deputy Principal	
Prepare an announcement for staff/students, distribute procedures to Tutor in breaking the news.	Appendix C	
Have guidelines for staff in dealing with students in distress i.e. information on grief responses, identifying those with need of counselling and support	Appendix C	
Ensure that Guidance Counsellor / Year leaders / Tutors are freed from all other commitments for the day if possible. (CIMT)	Deputy Principal	
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately).	Tutor/SNA	
Ensure a quiet place is available for staff/ students	Deputy Principal	
Organise timetable / routine for the day (Adhering to the normal school routine is important, if this is possible).	Deputy Principal	

Class teachers to take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted i.e. list of friends or any other relevant information and report to the school office.	Tutors	
Outline services available to affected students during the first hours	Principal	
Organise an Assembly, once all students have been notified	Deputy Principal/ Tutor	
CIMT outline schedule for the day and the support available, location of crisis response room.	Principal / Deputy Principal CIMT	
Open the school if tragedy occurs on weekend or during holidays	Principal /Deputy Principal	
Arrange a process for dealing with telephone enquiries from family members and have a dedicated extension/teacher/staff member to answer queries (student name not to be given out).	CIMT, Admin staff	
Take time with the most affected students in Well being Room – Create Rota so an individual teacher is not overwhelmed	CIMT	
Contact parents where some students request to go home – Rota of teachers & a log of students allowed home. Students only released into direct care of a parent or nominated adult	Admin Staff/SNA Team	
Prepare and agree to a written and oral response to enquiries, prepare a media statement (discourage staff/student from dealing with the media).	CIMT/ Appendix	
Inform parents / draft letter to parents.	CIMT/ Appendix /Admin	
Meet and support any distressed parents and staff. Parents should only be met in small groups	Available Team Members	
Liaise with local organisations/schools / clergy if necessary.	Principal /Deputy Principal/	
Set up a Book of Condolences /Memory Book	Tutor	
Contact / visit the bereaved family, consult with family on school involvement in funeral/ceremony (family wishes to be respected).	Principal	
Plan and hold end of day staff briefing.	CIMT/ Principal	

Day 2 and following days: Medium Term Actions

Task	Name	Completed
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of Day 1	Principal/ CIMT	
Compile a list of vulnerable students. Students not coping referred for counselling on an individual basis.	CIMT	
Arrange additional support for students, staff, parents. Contact additional counsellors should the need arise.	CIMT /GC	
Meet whole staff	All Staff	
Meet external agencies if required	Principal	
Make decisions on who should attend the funeral/ceremony, agree if school should remain open on the day (if possible school should remain open). Clarify arrangements for staff/students regarding attendance and participation in accordance with parents' wishes and school management decisions.	CIMT	
Facilitation of student / staff responses, e.g. sympathy cards, flowers, book of condolences, etc in the context of the religious beliefs of the bereaved family.	Deputy Principal	

Possible memorial within the school – as guided by advice from National Educational Psychological Service and religious leaders.	Principal	
Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary.	Deputy Principal	
Plan for the reintegration of students and staff, e.g. siblings, close relatives, etc. Planning for the reintegration of students should take place as soon as possible following a critical incident.	CIMT	
CIMT meets to plan critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) responses (with relevant teachers).	CIMT	

Follow up: beyond 72 hours

Task	Name	Completed
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Tutor, Teachers, SNA's	
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	CIMT	
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	CIMT	
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BoM / Staff, Parents, Students	
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff / BoM	

Long Term Considerations for the School

- Take note of anniversaries and be aware that some staff / students may be particularly sensitive at these times.
- If, over a prolonged period, a student continues to display the following, he/she may need continued support. Communication with family is essential. Be mindful of:
 1. Uncharacteristic behaviour
 2. Deterioration in academic performance
 3. Physical symptoms — e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness
 4. Inappropriate emotional reactions
 5. Increased absenteeism.
- Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Policy appropriately.
 1. What went well?
 2. Where were the challenges?
 3. What was most/least helpful?
 4. Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made and followed up on?
- New staff to be informed about Critical Incident Policy
 1. Ensure that new staff are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.
 2. Ensure new staff are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way.
 3. When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school, the Principal should brief the Principal of the new school.
- Update and amend school records.

Emergency Contact List (to be displayed in staff room, school office, Principal's office etc.)

Agency	Contact Numbers
Garda	Coolock: 01 6664200
Hospital	Emergency 999 / Beaumont Hospital 01 8093000

Fire Brigade	Emergency 999/ Kilbarrack Fire Station 01 8481704
Local GPs	Raheny Medical Centric Health 01 9031300 The Meridan Clinic 01 8770818 Grange Clinic 01 8480033
HSE / CAMHS	CAMHS via GP or 018796800 HSE 012408720
National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) Head office Kevin Keane - NEPS assigned psychologist	018892700 087 7403 144
Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Dublin office	(01) 771 8500
Pieta House (Dublin North)	(01) 8831000
DES Inspectorate	01 889 6400 / 01 889 6553
TUI	01 492 2588
Clergy	Catholic - Church of the Holy Trinity 01 8479822 Muslim - Islamic Center Clongriffin 0858723600 Protestant - St John the Evangelist 01 8512459 Hindu - Dublin Krishna Temple 0862120452
State Exams Commission	090 6442851
Employee Assistance Service (Care call)	1800 411 057

*****This list is not exhaustive and may be subject to change as services become est. or discontinue in the area. It was accurate at the time of ratification – 18/08/2020***

Critical Incident at Weekend/School Holiday

Task	Who
If it is the death of a colleague the system of informing staff is via the texting service	Principal/ Deputy Principal
If it is the death of a student, The Critical Incident Management Team needs to be informed immediately. Other staff can be informed later.	Principal
Whoever first hears the news to contact the Principal	All
Contact Board of Management	Principal
Similar procedures will be followed if a critical incident occurs during school holidays or while a group of staff and students are away on a school trip. If an incident occurs on a school trip contact details for all staff and students on the trip should be with the office	

Suicide as a Critical Incident

Great care should be taken in the use of the term 'suicide'. It should not be used until it has been established with a good degree of certainty that the death was because of suicide. Families may be very sensitive about the use of the term. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead.

Suicide Prevention

Belmayne ETSS has a role and responsibility in the prevention and management of suicidal behaviour among its students. We feel that delivering programmes focused directly on raising student awareness of suicide may appear

desirable, but they may carry the risk of increasing suicidal behaviour among young people through normalising it as a legitimate response to adolescent stress.

The school aims to:

- Promote positive mental health rather than the prevention of mental health problems
- Focus on enhancing generic social competences - coping skills, good peer relationships, self-efficiency
- Implement primary prevention programmes for all students within the context of the school's Wellbeing provision
- Build awareness amongst key school staff and parents, through inservice and invited speakers, of the difficulties faced by some young people who have multiple problems of personal adjustment and life stress
- Implement targeted interventions for pupils who need help to overcome difficulties and manage their distress
- Have a clear procedure for the referral of distressed or at risk students, initially to the guidance counsellor (when appointed)/ Deputy principal , and where necessary to the local health services
- Develop procedures for ensuring the coordinated, supportive return of students to school after treatment for suicidal behaviour. Such procedures should provide the necessary information and guidance to school personnel before the adolescent returns to school (only on a need-to-know basis)
- The school will seek guidance from any outside agencies who are providing counselling and/or therapy to students under risk

Proposed steps to follow when concerns are raised

- Concern is reported to Tutor/ Yearhead /deputy principal/principal/DLP.
- A meeting takes place with the DP and the student.
- Parents are informed of concerns, feedback is given to the original source of the referral and a plan is drawn up for monitoring the student.
- Where a concern is confirmed, the DP reports to the Principal, and may seek a consultation with NEPS or with local Mental Health services
- The Principal informs parents or caregivers right away
- A management plan appropriate to the level of risk is put in place, including onward referral to the family GP.

Responding to attempted Suicide

Advice should be sought from the mental health professionals caring for the young person as they may be able to provide considerable assistance. A support plan should be developed and approved.

The following parties should be consulted when devising the plan;

- the student
- the family
- mental health professionals.

When meeting with the student's family, critical areas for sensitive discussion are:

- The information to be provided to various sections of the school community
- The support plan for the student's return to school
- The support for any siblings in the school
- Liaison with the mental health professional

Guidance for school staff where a student has died from suicide/suspected suicide.

- Consult with the family regarding the appropriate support from the school.
- Give the facts as agreed with the bereaved family.
- Inform close friends and relatives separately.
- Create safe and supportive spaces for the students where they can share their reactions and feelings.
- Advise the students of the support that is available to them.
- Give handout Appendix 2 - "Grief after Suicide or Suspected Suicide".

Note on care of students following a funeral:

It is important following the funeral of a student who has died by suicide that students and parents are encouraged to come back to the school for support. The school may consider providing tea and coffee as this is a particularly vulnerable time for students. Encouraging students to return to the school until the usual finishing time can provide a much-needed routine.

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

Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of Other Faiths in Catholic Secondary schools, Joint Managerial Body

Draft Media Statement

My name is (Principal Name) and I am the Principal of Belmayne School. 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.

General Letter to Parents A

Dear Parents

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

Best Regards

Principal's Signature

General Letter to Parents B

Dear Parents

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.

Best Regards,

Principal

Muslim Death

It is with profound sadness that the Board of Management, Staff and Students of Belmayne have learned of the death of**Name**

Name.....was a valued member of our school community and we will be holding a memorial to him/her in the coming days.

Name..... was a Muslim student and following that tradition the funeral takes place almost immediately in the mosque in Location

We have contacted the mosque and while students may attend the service female students will not be able to take part in the service or attend the burial in accordance with Muslim tradition. As we are a multi denominational school we wish to respect the faith of all our students and therefore request that our female students wait to express their sympathy at our school memorial service. We will be inviting **Name**..... family to attend our memorial service here in school and this will give all our students an opportunity to express their sympathy to the family.

I allow my son to attend the funeral.

Parents/guardians signature _____

Information Sheet for Parents

Common Reactions on Hearing Traumatic News

As you are the natural support for your child you may find that he/she will want to discuss some feelings and thoughts with you. You can help by listening carefully, restating what you hear them say so they know you are really listening. You should tell them that it is ok to feel the way they do, that people react in many ways and that they should talk rather than become withdrawn and silent. You may also find that your child will look for comfort and support from their friends, this is a natural reaction from an adolescent. Grief can affect one physically as well as emotionally and these and other symptoms may be part of a grief reaction. If they persist, consult a doctor for a check-up. The length for the grieving period varies from individual to individual. If your child remains very distressed after six weeks or so, he/she may need additional support.

Emotional and Physical		Mental and Behavioural
Shock	Emotional outbursts	Confusion
Fear	Overwhelmed	Blame
Guilt	Nausea	Poor concentration
Grief	Fainting	Disorientation
Tears	Pain	Withdrawn
Panic	Dizziness	Restlessness
Denial	Weakness	Let down
Anxiety	Palpitations	Uncertainty
Depression	Breathing difficulties	
Anger	Silence	

School Programmes to tackle issues of Mental Health, Stress and Suicide

There are several programmes within Belmayne ETSS that provide information on personal health issues and allow students an outlet for discussion of problems that may be causing distress. Our school wellbeing programme includes Tutor Time activities, Friends for Life Programme, Wellbeing Warrior Club, Amber Committee, SPHE classes and Ethical Education classes.

Support for teachers: Turas le Cheile
 National Educational Psychological Service
 Spectrum Life / Care Call - 1800 411 057

Support Documents and Guidelines

Department of Education and Skills (2015a), Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools.

Department of Education and Skills (2015b), Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools.

Department of Education and Skills, (2014). Student support teams in post-primary schools, A guide to establishing a team or reviewing an existing team.

Department of Education and Skills, (2013). Wellbeing in post-primary schools, Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention.

Department of Education and Skills (2010). Circular 0023/2010: Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) & Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools

Health Service Executive (2011), Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide

IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002), Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines

Appendix A - Roles and Responsibilities

Team Leader (Principal)	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting Coordinates the tasks of the team Liases with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC Liases with the bereaved family
Garda Liaison	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liases with the Gardaí Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared
Staff Liaison	Deputy Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 contacts them individually Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.
Student liaison	Tutors Guidance Counsellor SENCO SNA Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff members refer students, who they are concerned about, to the Student Support Team Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately) Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder) Maintains student contact records (office). Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed
Community / Agency Liaison	Principal	<p>Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of Key parents, such as members of the Parents Council, Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liases with agencies in the community for support and onward referral Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support Coordinates the involvement of these agencies Reminds agency staff to wear name badges Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies
Parent Liaison	Principal, Parent Nominee on BoM Admin staff-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation Sets up room for meetings with parents Maintains a record of parents seen Meets with individual parents Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)
Media liaison	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)
Administrator	Admin Staff –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of Parents/Guardians – Teachers/ Emergency services Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to 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

Appendix B - Contacting Staff

If the critical incident occurs during term time the steps outlined above in the CIMP will be followed.

If the critical incident occurs over the weekend/holidays:

Task	Name	Completed
In the case of the death of a student, The Critical Incident Management Team will be informed immediately. Other staff will be informed later.	Principal/ CIMT	
In the case of the death of a colleague, staff will be informed by call/text.	Principal / Deputy Principal	
Whoever hears the news first is to contact the Principal or Deputy Principal	All	
Contact Board of Management	Principal	

Appendix C - Breaking Bad News to Students: Guidelines for Class Teachers

Task	Resource
The Class of the student who has been involved in a critical incident should be the first to be told, with school counsellor (when appointed) Tutor and Year Head present.	Guidance Counsellor/Principal
Other classes to be told by their Tutor or class teachers	
Not every class is going to be traumatized, some students may not even know student/ staff involved-but it is important to acknowledge the trauma for the whole school community	
Tell the class you have sad news and it is difficult for you to do this	
Let them know the name of the person the news is about	Staff meeting
<i>Let them know the facts, as you know them. (It is important to prevent rumors through misinformation) It is also important that students know that it is not appropriate for them to speak to the media about what has happened. If they are asked they should say they have nothing to say.</i>	Staff meeting
Only if the tragedy is confirmed as a suicide by the family, can it be relayed as such to students	
Encourage questions	
<i>Let the class know of common reactions to tragic news (SEE Attached)</i>	Teachers Pack
Expect tears and outbursts/ silence/ withdrawal- Inform students that support will be available during the day	
Don't allow a student to leave the classroom alone in a distressed state	CIMT
Students <i>must be supervised</i> within the building while in a distressed state and should go to the designated room for students.	Have a supervised and assigned space
Let them know that you will support them	

Let them know who else is available to support them	
If a student is suspected as being at risk the Principal should be notified immediately	Crisis-Response Team/Teachers Pack
Be attentive to identifying those who are not coping well with the news – Referral of students for individual attention	Year leader/ SENCO
Let them know where the CIMT will be (possibly base classroom/ resource area)	Tutors
Don't be afraid to let them know that you are also upset by the news	
Allow them time(limited) to mingle and talk to one another in groups (avoid hysteria)	
Explain how they can support one another	
You may need to remind students again who is there to help, as little information is assimilated once in shock	
A short period of silence/thought for those involved in the incident may be appropriate	
Inform students that Year Leader/Tutor will keep them up to date	
Some students may be able to continue and go to class	
Some will need to stay with the CIMT for the morning	
Encourage students to stay in school to support their friends	
Some students, who may need to go home, may do so in consultation with the Deputy Principal and only if a family member can come and collect them. Students must sign out in the office	
Those who go to class may not be able to concentrate on the work of the class	
Subject teachers will need to make allowances for them to talk in groups as the need arises	

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

Day 1: Action Plan for Critical Incident Management Team.

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 and agree an Action Plan.
- Contact appropriate agencies, e.g. Board of Management etc.
- Decide who needs to be contacted directly: - staff/students/parents/others and by what means: - phone/email/text/letter/website notice.
- Identify vulnerable students 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.

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
- Distribute resource 'For parents sharing sad news with their child

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.

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.

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.
- Belmanyne Management team will facilitate 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.

Medium Term and Follow Up Actions

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.

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
- 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.

Appendix E: 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'

Appendix F: 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.

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'

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'

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)

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____