

Scoil Naomh Eoin

Killenard, Portarlinton, Co. Laois, R32 F782.

Tel: 057 8626217

Email: office@naomheoin.ie

www.killenardschool.weebly.com



Principal: Stephen Donovan
Deputy Principal: Anne T. Hillery

Critical Incident Policy

Introduction:

The Board of Management through the Principal, the Staff and the Parents Association has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan. It has also established a Critical Incidents Management Team (C.I.M.T.) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

What is a Critical Incident?

Scoil Naomh Eoin recognises a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school".

Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Types of incidents might include:

- ***The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide or other unexpected death.***
- ***An intrusion into the school.***
- ***An accident/tragedy involving members of the school community.***
- ***An accident/tragedy in the wider school community.***
- ***Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc***
- ***The disappearance of a member of the school community.***
- ***An accident involving members of the school community.***
- ***Major illness/outbreak of disease***
- ***Confirmed case of Covid-19***
- ***Unexpected evacuation of the school. (e.g. bomb threat)***

Aims

Recognising that the key of managing critical incidents is planning, Scoil Naomh Eoin has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying Plan. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have put systems in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of an incident. These include measure to address both the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.

Physical safety:

- ***Regular fire drills occur***
- ***Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked***
- ***Health & Safety Audit – Risk Assessment as per Allianz guidelines***
- ***An Electronic Entry system is in place.***
- ***Covid-19***
 - ***Social Distancing***
 - ***Provision of PPE***
 - ***Covid-19 Risk Assessment***
 - ***Cleaning Checklists & Schedules***
 - ***Staggered Opening & Closing Times***
 - ***Zoned Yards for each Class Bubble***

Psychological safety

Scoil Naomh Eoin aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for same:

- ***Circular 0023/2010 SPHE – Best Practice Guidelines for Primary Schools has been circulated to all teachers. SPHE programmes are included in the curriculum to address issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking, decision making, and alcohol and drug prevention.***
- ***A Child safeguarding Statement and accompanying Risk Assessment is in place in accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements***
- ***Our Anti Bullying Policy is reviewed yearly.***

- ***The Staff is informed of difficulties affecting individual students and is aware and vigilant to their needs.***
- ***The school has developed links with outside agencies, which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students. e.g. NEPS, GARDAÍ, LOCAL AREA COMMUNITY DOCTOR, TUSLA, HSE, SOCIAL SERVICES. Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in light of criteria regarding student safety, the appropriateness of the content and the expertise of the providers.***
- ***Staff has been made aware of the Employee Assistance Scheme delivered by Spectrum Life (see Appendix 3 Contacts)***

Critical Incident Management Team (C.I.M.T.)

Scoil Naomh Eoin has set up a CI Management Team in line with best practice and will maintain this team in future. The members of the team will retain their roles for at least two school years. The members of the team will meet once a year to review and update the plan. Each member of the team will have a Ready-to-Go Pack with relevant materials to be used in the event of an incident.

Roles: Key roles have been identified and assigned. The C.I.M.T. includes:

- Team Leader: Principal
- Staff Liaison: Deputy Principal
- Student Liaison: Assistant Principal
- Community Liaison: Principal + Chaplain
- Parent Liaison: Principal + Chairperson
- Media Liaison: Principal + Chairperson
- Admin./Records: Secretary

Team Leader:

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Coordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the Board of Management and Department of Education and Skills
- Liaises with the affected or bereaved family/staff member
- Liaises with the outside agencies eg. N.E.P.S, Gardaí, Túsła etc.
- Outlines the routine for the day.

*In the absence of the team leader the Deputy Principal will assume the role.

Staff Liaison:

- Visits the affected or bereaved family with the team leader.
- Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known.

- Gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings.
 - Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.
 - Provides relevant materials to staff.
- *In the absence of the Deputy Principal the Assistant Principal will assume the role.

Student Liaison:

- Advises staff on the identification of vulnerable students.
 - Provides relevant materials for students.
 - Sets up a “quiet room” where necessary.
- *In the absence of the Assistant Principal the next most senior staff member will assume the role.

Community Liaison:

- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies.

Parent Liaison

- Meets with individual parents.
- Provides relevant materials for parents.

Media Liaison – Principal + Chairperson

- Responsibility for considering issues that may arise/how they might be responded to.
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the Communications Section in the DES.

Media Briefing:

- Designate a spokesperson.
- Prepare a brief statement.
- Gather accurate information.
- Protect the family’s privacy.

Administrative Tasks - Secretary

- Maintenance of up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - ❑ Parents or guardians/Teachers
 - ❑ Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.
- The school secretary has a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending texts/ notices on Aladdin, letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep detailed records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.

Letter to Parents

The Principal will prepare a brief, written statement to include:

- The sympathy of the school community for the affected/bereaved family
- Positive information or comments about the deceased/injured persons(s)
- The facts of the incident
- What has been done
- What is going to be done

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The school has 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 see to ensure that pupils do so also. [For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used without the consent of the family involved or until it has been established categorically that the person's death was a result of suicide. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead.

Critical Incident Room

In the event of a critical incident, the school hall (to allow for social distancing) will be the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

Development and communication of this policy and plan

All staff will be consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation/revision or review of this policy. Parent representatives will also be consulted and asked for their comments.

The policy is available on the staff-shared network.

All new, temporary staff and non-casual substitutes will be informed of the details of the policy by the school Mentor.

All parents will be able to access this policy via the school office.

Implementation Date

This Policy was presented to the Board of Management for approval and adoption in September 2020 and implemented with immediate effect.

Ratification & Communication

The BOM officially ratified this policy on the 29th September 2020.

All parents will be able to access this policy via the office following ratification and thereafter prior to enrolment.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed: Deirdre Doyle
Chairperson

Date: 29/09/20

Appendix 1: Procedures for suspected/confirmed case of Covid-19

Guidance for the re-opening of educational facilities has been provided across a range of forums including:

1. The Department of Education 'Roadmap for the full return to school'
2. The HSE / HPSC Covid-19 'Interim Recommendations for the re-opening of schools and educational facilities'
3. The HSE / HPSC Covid-19 'Infection Prevention and Control guidance for Early learning and care and School Age childcare settings during the Covid-19 pandemic'

The above guidance provides robust advice to educational facilities on prevention and awareness measures necessary and recommended for the safety of staff and pupils in relation to Covid-19.

Implementation of these measures will minimise the risks for all pupils and staff with respect of SarsCoV-2 infection.

Dealing with a suspected Case of Covid 19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any [symptoms of COVID-19](#). The following outlines how a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

- A designated isolation area has been set up in the former First Aid Room.
- Further Isolation cubicles are along to corridor in front of the PE hall.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- if the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
- isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.

The isolation route is the most direct route from the classroom the patient is in, to the next available isolation room or cubicle.

The person will be accompanied by one of the following members of staff; (In the order)

1. Principal
 2. Deputy Principal
 3. Member of SET team assigned to class group
- The isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2 metres away from others in the room
 - if it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin
 - A mask will be provided for the person presenting with symptoms. He or she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises- *disposable masks are in the first of the high presses in the serving area at side of the hall.*
 - assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
 - facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided
 - if the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
 - if they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect
 - carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
 - arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The parents / legal guardian of the sick child should contact their GP as usual, to discuss clinical concerns. If it is determined by the GP that the child/pupil requires to be tested for Covid-19, any other household contacts should be removed from the school setting.

Schools do not need to inform parents that a pupil or teacher has been removed due to their symptoms. Other pupils or staff do not need to be removed from class. HSE Departments of Public Health will take action if the person has confirmed Covid-19 infection on testing, which will include HSE advice and guidance on communication to school pupils and staff where needed.

Dealing with a Confirmed Case of Covid-19

- If the school is contacted by Public Health about a confirmed case of Covid-19 in Scoil Naomh Eoin the Principal will inform the Department of Education at the following email address Covid19_alert@education.gov.ie. The Department will contact you to provide support in these instances.
- The Medical Officer of Health (Consultant in Public Health Medicine, MOH), and teams will liaise directly with the school and inform them of the confirmed case as necessary; will undertake a Public Health Risk Assessment to inform any further actions and recommendations by the Medical Officer of Health.
- The MOH has statutory responsibility (Appendix 2) under the Infectious Diseases regulations, 1981, as amended to investigate and manage infectious disease sources
- To inform the public health risk assessment and to manage cases and outbreaks and identify relevant contacts, the school has prepared a summary outlining the below ready to give to the Medical Officer of Health as part of the statutory investigation and management of Covid-19. This includes:
 - A brief description of the school (type, numbers of staff and students and special features)
 - A list of staff and students with appropriate contact telephone numbers
 - A broad description of classrooms
 - An outline of staff and students movements around the school, between lessons and breaks
 - A list of 'pods' and 'bubbles', Teachers will inform the office if there has been any change to 'pods' and list is updated as necessary
- The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19

is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

Consideration of the need for full, or partial, educational facility closure

If there are concerns regarding the need for closure, or partial closure, of an educational facility, these will be discussed by the MOH in conjunction with the educational facility, and as part of local outbreak control teams within the Departments of Public Health. Any decision to close, or partially close, an educational facility will be based on the best approach to control the spread of Covid-19 and allow opportunity to remove the conditions favourable to such infection, as deemed necessary and appropriate by the MOH. In the evaluation of the need for closure of any educational facility affected by any outbreak of infectious disease, the standard Public Health approach is to utilise a Risk Assessment model.

This enables the most accurate and effective determination of the likely health impacts of a range of possible interventions, ranging from exclusion and testing of a small group or 'pod' of pupils, up to and including closure of an affected facility.

The actual criteria used by an MOH, may be modified in the light of local conditions or specific local information, which informs the Public Health Risk Assessment (PHRA) required to provide for sensible and safe decisions regarding closure and, by extension, reopening of an educational facility. There are marked differences in educational facilities spanning age (from 5-18 years), and the behavioural and medical needs of pupils attending the educational facilities. Establishing these facts will focus the PHRA undertaken by the MOH and their teams.

It is unlikely that a single issue (or a single case of Covid19) would automatically lead to a decision to close an educational facility, although multiple cases across the facility setting will increase the likelihood of school closure.

Public Health Risk Assessment (PHRA) Regional Departments of Public Health will undertake a PHRA to explore the following:

- unique information and factors relevant to that particular educational facility and its infrastructure, with regard to infection transmission
- interactions of the community of pupils and teachers both within the school and how they interlink within the wider community

- patterns of infection within the wider local community and
- general community infection rates in the regions serviced by the educational facility

This information will inform the decisions regarding the need for full, or partial, closure of any educational establishment, or any control measures to be immediately implemented, short of actual closure.

A range of issues (e.g. multiple cases in different classes) may lead the Medical Officer of Health, in conjunction with any relevant Outbreak Control Team (OCT), to decide that maintaining an open facility will present ongoing risk to staff, pupils and the wider community above which that is acceptable. Also keeping a school open may not allow for the adequate control of the spread of infection or adequate removal of the conditions favourable to infection.

Criteria for closure (Full or partial) Criteria to be ordinarily considered with regard to any potential outbreak and educational facility closure, or partial facility closure, include but are not limited to:

1. Evidence or clear concern that spread within the school is the primary driver of cases, or suspect cases, notified. This is as opposed to spread of infection externally within the community setting. (e.g. within households where children / teachers live etc)
2. The numbers of, or rate of increase of, Covid-19 detected cases amongst staff / pupils is concerning.
3. The number and complexity of staff and pupil family units and structures within the educational facility setting amongst those as either cases, contacts or suspected cases e.g. teacher with several children / close cousins in the educational facility all across different years.
4. The severity of cases (e.g. hospitalised) amongst children / staff is atypical and giving rise to concern e.g. several hospitalisations amongst children who would be pre-morbidly well.
5. Physical structure or layout of school which limits the range or adequacy for any increased recommended prevention measures e.g. further social distancing implementation within pods or groups, more specific recommendations relating to hygiene or cleaning measures.
6. Age group or ability of students e.g. if it is an educational facility or unit caring and educating pupils with specific medical or behavioural needs. This may compromise the ability for staff and pupils to realistically

comply effectively with requirements for symptom awareness, and disease transmission prevention recommendations during an outbreak.

7. Inability to undertake enhanced infection, prevention and control measures as might be recommended from identification of transmission risks within the setting of concern e.g. due to nature of toys or equipment required, particularly for educational facilities or units for children with behavioural or physical needs and limitations.

8. Concerns regarding engagement with public health medical teams of senior personnel within the educational facility or system, with regard to their understanding of, or commitment to, implementing sufficient risk mitigation and infection prevention and control measures as identified as necessary for the particular educational setting, in light of confirmed or suspect cases of Covid-19

9. Evidence that the pupils (and families) / teachers are not adequately participating in recommended control measures e.g. not reporting and excluding children with mild symptoms; re-enforcing training and implementation of social distancing and hygiene measures across the continuum of school and home etc.

10. Any evidence that significant spread in wider local community can be shown, or be highly suspected of being linked or intertwined with the educational facility setting.

11. Results from any swabbing recommendations identified a large number/high proportion of asymptomatic cases, particularly amongst groupings or pods not previously considered to be at high risk of infection transmission.

12. Inability of the educational facility to safely operate as per e.g. legal requirements for staff : pupil ratios if partial closure was being considered.

In all Public Health investigations, in which closure of an educational facility affected by any infectious disease outbreak is being considered, the criteria guiding closure will broadly provide the criteria for reopening. However, outbreaks are dynamic, and in the course of the investigation new risks may be identified and therefore new parameters required to be included for criteria to re-open or allow for full staff / pupil return.

A list of the agreed criteria for closure (involving for example, high levels of disease, the requirement of decontamination to a level that meets with the approval of the MOH, (OCT), the compliance of management and staff etc), will form the basis for the criteria to guide reopening. It would only be when all these criteria, and any additional identified in the process of

investigation have been satisfied, that a decision on reopening, or full return of staff / pupils would be made by the MOH. As a result, each educational facility Covid-19 outbreak will be assessed on an individual basis and a unique decision made as to whether it is safe for the facility to remain fully or partially open, or whether closure is necessary.

It should be noted that Medical Officers of Health and their teams do not have powers of inspection.

Appendix 2 – Legislative role of the Medical Officer of Health

Infectious Disease regulations The Infectious Diseases Regulations (S.I. No. 390 of 1981) confer a general power on the Medical Officer for Health (MOH) to “take steps...for preventing the spread of [an]infection” where the MOH is aware of a suspected case of infection or a probable source of infection. The 1981 Regulations were amended by S.I. No 53 of 2020, to include COVID-19. Article 11 of S.I. No. 390 provides that:

“On becoming aware, whether from a notification or intimation under these Regulations or otherwise, of a case or a suspected case of an infectious disease or of a probable source of infection with such disease, a medical officer of health, or a health officer on the advice of a medical officer of health, shall make such enquiries and take such steps as are necessary or desirable for investigating the nature and source of such infection, for preventing the spread of such infection and for removing conditions favourable to such infection.”

This power may be enforceable by the risk of criminal liability under Article 19:

“19. A person who refuses to comply with a requirement or direction given or a request for information made in pursuance of any of the provisions of these Regulations shall be guilty of a contravention of these Regulations.”

After investigating the outbreak and having put in place the necessary prevention measures, the MOH may assess the risk to staff, pupils or the wider community continues. In that case the use of Infectious Diseases regulations may need to be exercised. If a recommendation to close, or partially close an educational facility based on criteria and powers in S.I. No. 390 of 1981, the reasons for closure should be explained and the actions required or conditions to re-open.

In practice, actions by the MOH are usually considered in the context of an OCT. Experience from other settings shows that closures usually result when implementation of a set of preventive actions is not sufficient to control an outbreak and consensus is reached on the need for closure.

Appendix 3: Emergency Contact List

(to be displayed in staff-room, Principals & Secretary's office etc.)

OUTSIDE AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Department of Public Health Office Contact Details (Covid-19 Advice/Case)	0579359891
GARDA	PORTLAOISE 057 8674100 (24HR) PORTARLINGTON 057 8623112
HOSPITAL	PORTLAOISE 057 8621364
FIRE BRIGADE	057 8664000
AMBULANCE	057 8621364
LOCAL GPS	MEDICENTRE 057 8623138 KILNACOURT 0578623333 STATION ROAD 057 8642772
HEALTH BOARD/FAMILY CENTRE	PORTLAOISE 057 8621135
INSPECTORATE	01 8896553
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST	HEAD OFFICE: 01 8892700
DES COMMUNICATIONS	ATHLONE 090 648 3600 DUBLIN 01 889 6400 TULLAMORE 057 932 4300
INTO	01 8047700
PARISH PRIEST/CHAPLAIN	PARISH OFFICE: 057 8643004
Spectrum Life Employee Wellbeing	1800 411 057

Appendix 4: Schedule of tasks in the Event of a Critical Incident.

DAY 1 TASKS:

- GATHER ACCURATE INFORMATION (Who/What/When Where)
- CONVENE A C.I.M.T. MEETING (Specify time and place clearly)
- CONTACT APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
- ARRANGE SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS
- HOLD STAFF MEETING
- ORGANISE TIMETABLE FOR THE DAY
- INFORM PARENTS
- INFORM STUDENTS (Close friends and students with special educational needs may need to be told separately)
- COMPILE A LIST OF VULNERABLE STUDENTS
- MAKE CONTACT WITH THE BEREAVED FAMILY PREPARE AND AGREE MEDIA STATEMENT
- DEAL WITH THE MEDIA
- HOLD END OF DAY STAFF BRIEFING

DAY 2 TASKS:

- CONVENE A C.I.M.T. MEETING AND REVIEW THE EVENTS OF THE FIRST 24 HOURS
- MEET EXTERNAL AGENCIES
- MEET WHOLE STAFF
- ARRANGE SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL/GROUPS OF STUDENTS, PARENTS ETC.

TASKS WITHIN THE FIRST 72 HOURS

- LIAISE WITH FAMILY RE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS/MEMORIAL SERVICE
- AGREE ON ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION AT FUNERAL SERVICE ETC
- MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT SCHOOL CLOSURE

LONGER TERM ACTIONS BEYOND 72 HOURS

- MONITOR STUDENTS FOR SIGNS OF CONTINUING STRESS
- LIAISE WITH AGENCIES REGARDING REFERRALS
- PLAN FOR RETURN OF BEREAVED STUDENT/S PLAN FOR GIVING 'MEMORY BOX' TO BEREAVED FAMILY
- DECIDE ON APPROPRIATE WAYS TO DEAL WITH MEMORIALS / ANNIVERSARIES
- EVALUATE RESPONSE TO INCIDENT AND AMEND CI PLAN APPROPRIATELY FORMALISE PLAN FOR FUTURE
- INFORM NEW STAFF

- MAKE CONTACT WITH RAINBOWS

Appendix 5: Letters to Parents

Sample Letter Confirmed case of Covid-19

Scoil Naomh Eoin

Killenard, Portarlington, Co. Laois, R32 F782.

Tel: 057 8626217

Email: office@naomheoin.ie

www.killenardschool.weebly.com



Principal: Stephen Donovan

Deputy Principal: Anne T. Hillery

Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian(s),

Please find attached a letter from the HSE in relation to a confirmed case of COVID-19 at Scoil Naomh Eoin.

Please note that all close contacts have been notified at this point. If you have not been contacted by the HSE, your child is not deemed a close contact and can continue to attend school as normal.

Please remind your child about the importance of regular hand hygiene throughout the school day and the need to continue to observe good respiratory etiquette when they sneeze or cough.

Le gach dea-ghuí,
Stephen Donovan

Principal

Sample Letter for Sudden Death or Serious Injury

Scoil Naomh Eoin

Killenard, Portarlington, Co. Laois, R32 F782.

Tel: 057 8626217

Email: office@naomheoin.ie

www.killenardschool.weebly.com



Principal: Stephen Donovan

Deputy Principal: Anne T. Hillery

Dear Parents,

The school has experienced (the sudden death, accidental injury, etc.) of **Name of student(s)/Staff member**. We are deeply saddened by the deaths/events. Our thoughts are with **(family name)**.

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. (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 him/her to express feelings. All children are different and will express their feelings in different ways. It is not uncommon for children to have difficulty concentrating or 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 reaction. Over the course of the coming days, 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. 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 reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive and careful about what they post.

If you would like further advice you may contact the following people at the school. **(Details)**.

Le gach dea-ghuí,
Stephen Donovan
Principal

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SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS: VIOLENT DEATH

Dear Parents,

I am writing to inform you about a very sad event that has happened. A child/young person from the neighbourhood, who is the brother of _____, a student here at school, was killed as a result of (a violent attack, violent incident in the street etc.) earlier this week. We are all profoundly saddened by his death.

We have shared this information and have had discussions with all of our students so that they know what has happened. School staff members have been available for students on an ongoing basis today. Other support personnel (including psychologists etc., according to actual arrangements) are available to advise staff in their support of students.

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.

In these times, young people tend to turn to social media to see what others are saying, or to find out more. While social media can be of great consolation, we would urge you to reinforce the need to be extremely sensitive around what your son/daughter might post to others.

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

Le meas,
Stephen Donovan

Appendix 6: CONSENT FOR INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS

Dear Parents,

Following the recent (tragedy, death of x) we have arranged professional support for students in school who need particular help. (x...) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to children, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your son/daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with the x.... If you would like your child to receive this support please sign the attached permission slip and return to the school by

If you would like further information on the above or to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip or telephone the school.

Principal

.....

I consent to having our daughter/son met by

I understand that my daughter/son may meet x.... in an individual or group session depending on the arrangements which are thought to be most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____

I would like my daughter/sonto avail of the support being offered by x.....

Signed: _____

Appendix 7: SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MEDIA

Resource for schools: R4 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 (Name) and I am the principal of Scoil Naomh Eoin, Killenard. We learned this morning of the death of (one of our students or Name of student). This is a terrible tragedy for _____ family (ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with (Name) family and friends.

Name of student/students was a (eg. 1st class pupil) 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 has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and (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