



Critical Incident Plan/Policy

Policy reviewed by Board of Management: 18th September 2023

**School Patron: The Right Rev. Dr. Paul Colton,
Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross**
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Roll number: 14726C
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Chairperson: Mr Daniel Emerson
Principal: Ms Jill Horan

Critical Incident Management Policy

St. Multose National School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. At *St. Multose Church of Ireland N.S.*, we endeavour to create a well-functioning, happy and safe environment which promotes the dignity and the individuality of every pupil enabling them to reach their full potential. We aim to educate the whole child in a Christian atmosphere in partnership with parents/guardians and the wider community. The Board of Management, through the principal, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Review and Research

The 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 (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *St. Multose N.S.* recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school". Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include:

- *The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death*
- *An intrusion into the school*
- *An accident involving members of the school community*
- *An accident/tragedy in the wider community*
- *Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*

Aim

The aim of the CIMP is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

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
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Front and back gate locked during school hours
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the playground regularly discussed with pupils during assembly

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *St. Multose National School* 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) / Wellbeing 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 / Wellbeing
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/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 some are trained in interventions for suicidal students
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – list these agencies
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers. See DES Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary) or 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)

- 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 using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published on 2007 for primary schools and 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. 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 summary of this support is set out in R 23)*
- 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. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder (blue folder stored on the bookshelf in the school 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.

Team leader: Principal

Role

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family

(Note - It is important to consider who will take the lead in the absence of the team leader.)

Garda liaison: Principal

Role

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

Staff liaison: Principal

Role

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison - Deputy Principal

Role

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison - APIL Post

Role

- 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
- Liaises 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 - Deputy Principal

Role

- 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

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)

Administrator - Secretary

Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or 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

Record keeping - Secretary

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

The secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of St. Multose National School 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:
Staff Room	Main room for meeting staff
Classrooms	Meetings with students
Classrooms	Meetings with parents
School gate	Meetings with media
Support Rooms	Individual sessions with students
School Office	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. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the **Deputy Principal**. The plan will be updated annually in September and in November every four years/ when the new Board of Management is elected.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Principal	021 4774106
Garda liaison	Principal	021 4774106
Staff liaison	Principal	021 4774106
Student liaison	Deputy Principal	021 4774106
Community liaison	APII Post Holder	021 4774106
Parent liaison	Deputy Principal	021 4774106
Media liaison	Principal	021 4774106
Administrator	School Secretary	021 4774106

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	
Who, what, when, where?	
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	
Contact external agencies	
Arrange supervision for students	
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	
Compile a list of vulnerable students	
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	
Inform parents	
Hold end of day staff briefing	

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

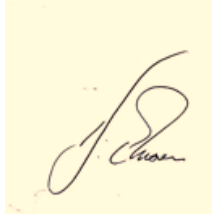
Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	
Visit the injured	
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda (Kinsale)	+353214779250
Fire Brigade	021 4773683
Hospital (CUH)	(021) 492 2000
Fire Brigade (Kinsale)	112 / 999
Local GPs (Kinsale Medical / over Supervalu)	+353 21 477 2253
HSE	1800 700 700 / 00 353 1 240 8787 / 1850 241850
Community Care Team	021 4923493
Child and Family Centre	021 4923493
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	1800 700 700/ 00 353 1 240 8787 / 021 4540240
School Inspector	Kay Foley: Foley, Kay Kay_Foley@education.gov.ie 021 4275912
NEPS Psychologist	Mary Atkins 087 6501601
INTO	Telephone: (01) 804 7700 Telephone queries are taken from 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday.
Clergy	Reverend Eugene Kinsale Rectory 021 4772220 Canon Denis McCarthy / Bandon (023) 884 1259
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
Inspire Workplaces (staff support)	1800817433

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'J. Chan'.

Signed

Date: 18th September 2023

Chairperson of the Board of Management