

# **Critical Incident Management Plan**



"Live as free people"

**St Peter's**

**Reviewed April 2024**

## **INTRODUCTION**

St. Peter's aim is to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. 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.

## **DEFINITION**

A critical incident is 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

## **PERSONNEL**

In order to provide a coherent Critical Incident Management Plan a team is in place. The team will maintain all necessary administration services during an incident and ensure all necessary information is available (including school trips and tours). The current members of the CIMT are:

Tony McSweeney (Principal)  
Blaid Quane (Deputy Principal)  
Maeve McGovern (Chaplain)  
Siobhan Murphy (Guidance)  
Frances Clarke (Teacher)  
Leonie Wallace (Teacher)  
Edel Stuart (Office Staff)

Year Heads, while not necessarily part of the team are central to managing the incident.

## **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.

## **Prevention**

We have 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 Systems**

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school
- Main school doors locked during class time
- Staff awareness of supervisory roles and responsibilities
- Access to school phone by all students
- Ease of contact by parents through school office

### **Psychological safety**

The management aims 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.

- Well-being at Junior Cycle and SPHE at Senior Cycle 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; self-esteem; 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 and Well-being
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures.
- Whole staff training on student mental health; signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety; and the importance of being 'one significant adult' for students.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – CAHMS, NEPS and TÚLSA
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, the expertise of the providers and Garda Vetting procedures.
- The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- There is a formal pastoral care system in place in the school.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. Guidance Counsellor, DP or Chaplain), 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
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.
- Students' photographs are on Vsware.
- Re-registration forms will be checked to ensure correct details are on the school administration system.

#### **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 team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. 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: T.McSweeney, Principal**

##### **Role**

- Establish facts: the names of those involved and the nature of the incident
- Alert team members to the crisis and convene a meeting to coordinate the tasks.
- Establish contact with the Gardaí if necessary.
- Decide if and when school should open (if outside school time).
- Inform and liaise with BOM, DES and SEC.
- Liaise with the bereaved family.
- Provide administrator with script to deal with phone enquiries
- Consider if a text message needs to be sent to the parent body and content of this.
- Consider if a letter needs to be sent via Vsware to the parent body and content of this.
- Prepare statement with Deputy Principal with details of what staff should tell students.
- Draw up a press statement, if required.
- Decide if a parent meeting should happen.

*(Note – In the absence of the Principal, Blaid Quane, Deputy Principal, will do the above).*

#### **Staff Contact Personnel: Frances Clarke / Leonie Wallace**

##### **Role**

- Ensure list of staff contact numbers is up-to-date.
- Inform each member of staff in person. If outside school time, telephone rather than text. If they are not available leave a message to call you back

#### **Staff Liaison – Blaid Quane, Deputy Principal**

##### **Role**

- Prepare statement with Principal with details of what staff should tell students.
- Hold a staff meeting at a designated time. Outline the facts as known and routine for day.
- Give staff time to digest the news, ask questions and compose themselves.
- Impress on staff the need for consistency in what is said to students.

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- A specific class period will be designated for subject teachers to inform students of the critical incident, or, acknowledge it has happened.
- Remind staff that students will take their reactions from them. If the staff are calm, students will be calm.
- Give staff guidance on how to proceed for the rest of the day. Highlight that classes will take place and they should encourage students to work on material suitable for that day. The routine may be comforting. Suitable class plans will be followed. Teachers will be sensitive to topics or games such as 'hangman'.
- Remind staff of the importance of taking a roll in each class – administrator will be monitoring attendance in each class period.
- Give each year group team time to identify and discuss vulnerable students.
- Be mindful of staff who have had a recent bereavement or who may get particularly upset. Make individual contact with them and advise on the availability and number of "Spectrum Life" 1800 411057 (wellbeing and counselling for teachers) -.
- Hold a staff meeting at the end of the day to review events.
- Arrange extra supervision by Year Heads in particular corridors/school yard/near toilets/near the affected year group.

### **Student Liaison: Siobhan Murphy, Guidance Counsellor M.McGovern Chaplain.**

#### **Role**

- Coordinate information about certain students, the year group teams have identified as being of concern.
- Ensure this is disseminated to all relevant staff so they can be extra mindful of these students.
- Check in with these students or appoint Year Heads to do so and maintain a record of same
- Set up and arrange supervision of 'quiet' room (D05). This is the space available for teachers to refer any students they believe need "time out" during the day. A sign in/sign out book will operate to ensure we know where all students are.
- Students who wish to go home must be collected by their parents/guardians. There is to be no exception to this.
- Consider holding private meetings with close friends of the deceased - If the death was suicide, and IF the family have given permission to inform others that it was a suicide, this should only be done in these small groups.
- Organise prayer service for affected year groups –the year itself, and possibly the year above or below.
- Consider if students with special needs may need an altered method of delivery of the news – AEN coordinator will meet these students.
- In the aftermath, decide on a point of closure and how that will happen to facilitate a 'moving on' from the event.

### **Student contact personnel:**

#### **Subject Teachers**

##### **Role**

- Use the lesson template to give the news, or to acknowledge what has happened, to the class you are timetabled for at the designated time.
- Run the lesson with every class group. Therefore, all students hear the correct information and in a controlled way. Use age appropriate language.
- Before the lesson ends give students details of the plan for the day. It is more appropriate to resume classes (for structure rather than academic reasons).
- A prayer service may take place at a set time for certain year groups - give details if this applies
- This may be followed by an informal activity such as food in the Home Economics if the team consider it appropriate - give details if this applies
- Bear the following in mind:
  - Teenagers need to have whatever information is available to dispel mistruths or speculation.
  - Keep to the discussed and agreed text and subject matter of the class.
  - Ground oneself in advance of the class.
  - Allow students ask questions and if the answer is not known state this.
  - If the cause of death is genuinely not known, let students know that it is not known.

- Remind students to look out for each other.
- **The following phrases should not be used:** Commit suicide; suicide victim; or a successful suicide attempt. **Instead use phrases like:** Died by suicide, took one's own life, tragic death and sudden death.
- Do not give the deceased exaggerated attention in death. Be careful not to glamorise their 'state of peace'. Shift the conversation to *the students own* reaction to what has happened.

### **Year Heads**

#### **Role**

- If some students are particularly upset after the class or through the day, phone their parents to come and collect them.
- Watch out for the students identified as vulnerable - refer to chaplain or guidance counsellor and decide who will check in with them.
- Supervise an area appointed by the Deputy Principal.

### **Administrator –Edel Stuart**

#### **Role**

- Deal with phone enquiries using an agreed script – note those that require a response to.
- Remove parents of deceased from text system/e-mail/postal address file.
- Send out any texts prepared by the team leader.
- For each class period check VS ware to monitor student attendance during the day, including those in library (quiet room)
- Photocopy materials needed.

#### **On-going**

- Maintain up to date telephone numbers of parents or guardians and staff.
- Ensure that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation.

### **Parent Liaison –Leonie Wallace**

#### **Role**

- Check with team leader if a letter should be sent via VS ware to the whole parent body
- Arrange parents meeting if decided on by team leader and set up room.
- Consider if the wake and funeral details need to be communicated to the parents.
- Communicate to parents that they are responsible for their child if he/she is attending the funeral. They will not be signed out with a note. Parents must collect their child.

### **Bereaved family liaison: Blaid Quane, Deputy Principal Maeve McGovern Chaplain**

#### **Role**

- In the event of the family wishing the school to be involved with the funeral, discuss the areas and what they want e.g. a guard of honour, readings, bringing up symbols/gifts and music.

### **Community/agency liaison – Frances Clarke**

#### **Role**

- Consult with outside agencies (NEPS/Pieta House/Samaritans)
- Check credentials of individuals offering support
- Establish the service they will provide to students.
- Establish the service they will provide to staff – Request advice and training to enable staff support students.
- Decide with Guidance counsellor if support from other schools is required and arrange same
- Coordinate the involvement of all outside agencies and support.
- Liaise with agencies regarding onward referral.
- Update team members on the involvement of external support

#### **On-going**

- Maintains up to date list of contact numbers of external agencies

### M. Critical Incident Management Plan

**Notes:**

**Advance Preparation: Principal and Deputy Principal Role**

- Consider issues that may arise in terms of the media and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc)

**Record keeping throughout incident by each Team Member**

- Keep records of phone calls made and received, letters/texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.

<b>Critical Incident Rooms</b>	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
<b>Room Name:</b>	<b>Designated Purpose:</b>
Staffroom	Staff meeting
Classrooms	Meetings with students
Chaplains Office Guidance Counsellor Office	Individual or small group sessions with students
Fr. Collins Room	Available for outside agencies
D02	Available for outside agencies
C01	Available for outside agencies
Book/Uniform Room	Available for outside agencies
D05	Quiet room
Library	Meeting with parents
B06	Preparing and serving of food if required
Library	Prayer service

**EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST 2023/24**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>CONTACT NUMBER</b>
<b>Gardaí</b>	021 4841001
<b>Hospital</b>	CUH: 021 4922000 South Infirmary: 021 4926100 Mercy: 021 4271971
<b>Fire Brigade</b>	021 4966333
<b>Local GP</b>	Dr Cormac O'Dubhghaill 021 4841895 / 086 0781721
<b>HSE Primary Care Team / Primary Care Centre / Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention</b>	St. Finbarr's 021 4965511
<b>CAMHS</b>	021 4233102
<b>NEPS</b>	Cork: 0761 108466 National: 01 8892700
<b>DES</b>	Dublin: 01 8896400 Tullamore: 057 9324300 Athlone: 090 6483600
<b>Parish Priest / Clergy</b>	Fr. Sean O'Sullivan 021 4863267
<b>State Exams Commission</b>	0906442700
<b>Employee Assistance Service - Inspire</b>	1800 411 057