

Scoil Uí Mhuirí

Critical Incident Management Plan 2022

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## ***Introduction***

The key to managing a critical incident is planning. Schools are strongly advised to develop a policy in relation to critical incident response. NEPS also encourages schools to develop a Critical Incident Management Plan, outlining who will do what in the event of a tragedy.

Scoil Uí Mhuirí aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. In keeping with our School Mission Statement, the Board of Management is committed to the care of staff and students in our school. This policy refers to the response taken by this school should a Critical Incident occur. As each Critical Incident will require the school to respond in a manner appropriate to that particular incident at that time, this CIMP is intended to serve as a general outline of procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident occurring. The Board of Management, through Ms Úna Kirk, 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](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie) including:

- ✓ Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for School (NEPS Publication 2016)
- ✓ Well-Being in Post Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)
- ✓ Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group 2002)
- ✓ Suicide Prevention in the Community – A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)

## ***Definition of a “Critical Incident”***

The staff and management of Scoil Uí Mhuirí recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and/or disrupts the running of the school and/or attracts public/media attention on the school. Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of the local community.

*Types of incidents might include:*

- ✓ The death of a member of the school community through natural causes such as illness, an accident, by a deliberate act of violence or by suicide
- ✓ A serious accident involving pupils or staff either onsite or offsite
- ✓ The disappearance of a member of the school community
- ✓ A fire or explosion in the school

- ✓ Serious damage to the school through flooding or vandalism
- ✓ An intrusion into the school
- ✓ Threats of harm to students, personnel and/or facilities
- ✓ Outbreak of a communicable illness or disease
- ✓ Serious accident or tragedy in the wider community
- ✓ Use of weapons or explosives in or near the school
- ✓ Civil disturbances including terrorism

### ***Aim of the CIMP***

The aim of this 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***

At Scoil Uí Mhuirí we have put systems in place to help 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:***

Scoil Uí Mhuirí has developed a Health and Safety Policy and the following are examples of other measures taken regarding ensuring physical safety of members of the school community:

- ✓ Evacuation plan developed
- ✓ Regular fire drills occur followed up by review and evaluation
- ✓ Regular Health and Safety audits
- ✓ Fire exits and extinguishers regularly checked
- ✓ Supervision in the early morning, break time, lunchtime and after school
- ✓ Sign in/Sign out systems for students at main reception area

#### ***Psychological Safety:***

The management and staff at Scoil Uí Mhuirí 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.

*Examples at Scoil Uí Mhuirí include:*

- ✓ Two full time Guidance Counsellors (currently only one employed)

- ✓ SCP Project Worker
- ✓ Home School Community Liaison Officer
- ✓ Dedicated co-ordinators of Le Cheile, Autism classes
- ✓ Year Head system
- ✓ 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 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)
- ✓ Social Skills Development groups organised by the SEN Department
- ✓ SPHE is integrated into the work of the school. It addresses issues such as communication skills; grief and loss, bullying; resilience and prevention of drug and alcohol misuse
- ✓ Anti - Bullying Policy and Anti Bullying Co-ordinator
- ✓ Staff access to training for SPHE
- ✓ Staff training and awareness of the Child Protection Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- ✓ Range of themed weeks over the course of the school year including Positive Mental Health Week, and Anti Bullying Week
- ✓ Staff training around positive mental health, suicide awareness, eating disorders and depression etc.
- ✓ Availability of booklets, resources and information on difficulties affecting post primary students available within the school
- ✓ Development of links with a range of external agencies
- ✓ Regular updates and reminders to students and staff regarding accessing support for themselves
- ✓ Series of talks for parents organised in partnership with the Parents Association around specific topics including Wellbeing and Appropriate use of Social Media
- ✓ Collaboration with Dunleer Community Development Board on promoting positive mental health in the local community and beyond
- ✓ 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 Circular 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)
- ✓ Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or support teacher), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency

### ***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. 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:** Ms Úna Kirk

#### **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

**Garda liaison:** Ms Úna Kirk

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

**Staff liaison:** Mr Daniel Dennehy

#### **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:** Mr Daniel Dennehy/Relevant Year Head

#### **Role**

- ✓ At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- ✓ 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:** HSLCO Miriam Howard

**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:** HSLCO Miriam Howard/Relevant Year Head/ Guidance

**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:** Ms Úna Kirk/Chief Executive

**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:** School 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**

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.

School 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 Scoil Ui Mhuiri 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.

<b>Critical Incident Rooms</b>	
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
Guidance and TBC Designated Areas	Meetings with students
A1	Meetings with parents
Office	Meetings with media
Guidance and Office	Individual sessions with students
TBC	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 Principal/Deputy Principal. The plan will be updated annually in September.

<b>Critical Incident Management Team</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Team leader:</b>	Ms Úna Kirk	041 6851344
<b>Garda liaison</b>	Ms Úna Kirk	041 6851344
<b>Staff liaison</b>	Mr Daniel Dennehy	041 6851344
<b>Student liaison</b>	Mr Daniel Dennehy/Relevant Year Head	041 6851344
<b>Community liaison</b>	HSLCO Miriam Howard	041 6851344
<b>Parent liaison</b>	HSLCO Miriam Howard/Relevant Year Head/Guidance	041 6851344
<b>Media liaison</b>	Ms Úna Kirk/Chief Executive	041 6851344
<b>Administrator</b>	School Secretary	041 6851344

## Short term actions – Day 1

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Gather accurate information</b>	Team Leader
<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	Team Leader
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	Team Leader
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	HSLCO
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	Deputy Principal, Year Head
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	All staff
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	Management Team
<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Other
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	Year Head, Guidance Counsellor
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	Team Leader, Chief Executive
<b>Inform parents</b>	Team Leader
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	Team Leader

## 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	Team leader
Meet whole staff	Staff Liaison
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Staff Liaison, Student Liaison
Visit the injured	Team Leader and TBC
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Team Leader, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Management Team
Make decisions about school closure	BOM/Chief Executive

## Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	HSLCO, Guidance Counsellor
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Guidance Department, Year Heads, Care Team
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Guidance Department, Year Head, Tutor
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM, Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff, BOM