

Scoil Uí Mhuirí

Critical Incident Management Plan 2024

Adopted: 30th of March 2023

Review due: September 2026



Core Values

Be Respectful

Be Responsible

Be Cooperative

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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 and 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

- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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 and Ms Anna McCready

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/Ms Anna McCready/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 were 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 school's 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 Uí Mhuirí 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
Guidance and TBC Designated Areas	Meetings with students
A1	Meetings with parents
Office	Meetings with media
Guidance and Office	Individual sessions with students
A1	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.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Ms Úna Kirk	041 6851344
Garda liaison	Ms Úna Kirk	041 6851344
Staff liaison	Mr Daniel Dennehy/Ms Anna McCready	041 6851344
Student liaison	Mr Daniel Dennehy/Ms Anna McCready/Relevant Year Head	041 6851344
Community liaison	HSLCO Miriam Howard	041 6851344
Parent liaison	HSLCO Miriam Howard/Relevant Year Head/Guidance	041 6851344
Media liaison	Ms Úna Kirk/Chief Executive	041 6851344
Guidance Counsellors	Aiden Matthews and Ciara Morrisson Reilly	041 6851344
SCP	Niamh Grimes	087-2142660
Le Cheile Coordinators	Ciara Harvey, Niamh Keenan and Orla McGrane	041 6851344
School Caretaker	Shane Sweeney	041 6851344
Administrators	Audrey Dorian and Christina White	041 6851344
Assistant Principals		
Year Head (1st Yr)	Nicola Reilly	041 6851344
Year Head (2nd Yr)	Emily Gaughran	041 6851344
Year Head (3rd Yr)	Melissa Clarke	041 6851344
Year Head (TY)	Miriam Howard	041 6851344
Year Head (5th Yr)	Pamela Mulroy	041 6851344
Year Head (6th Yr)	Martina Farrell	041 6851344
Exams Secretary	Therese Clinton	041 6851344
Bí Cineálta Lead	Nicola Reilly	041 6851344
SNAs		
SNA	Conor Martin	041 6851344
SNA	Debbie Fay	041 6851344
SNA	Caroline Lawlor	041 6851344
SNA	Anita Matthews	041 6851344
SNA	Dearbhla Holland	041 6851344
SNA	Paula Mason	041 6851344
SNA	Emer Fogarty	041 6851344
Emergency Services		
Ambulance	Drogheda	999 or 112
Lourdes Hospital	Drogheda	041 9837601
Louth County Hospital	Dundalk	042 9334701
Garda	Dunleer	041 6851202
Garda	Drogheda	041 9874200

Garda	Dundalk	042 9388440
Garda	Clogherhead	041 9822222
Garda	Ardee	041 6853222
Fire Brigade	Dunleer	999
Fire Brigade	Drogheda	041 9832222
Fire Brigade	Dundalk	042 9334666
Dr O Donoghue	Dunleer	041 6861812

Students Needing Assistance during an Emergency Evacuation

Lily Beth McMahon (1st Year)		
Aaron Kiernan (2 Flora)		
Lucy Callanan (2 Flora)		
Adam Coyle (2 Flora)		
Xavier Santiago Young (2 Flora)		
Cillian Grimes (2 Iris)		
Cynthia Abi Nakhoul (3 Plath)		
Ruby O'Callaghan (3 Plath)		
Finn Lacey (3 Eliot)		
Ryan Reynolds (3 Eliot)		
Mikie Farrell (3 Eliot)		
Ross Kierans (4 Gorm)		
Lily Cairns (4 Gorm)		
Sophie May Lucas (LCA 1)		
Mark Byrne (LCA 1)		
Tymon Glaza (5 th Year)		
Jake Kierans (LCA 1)		

Board of Management Members

John Sheridan	Chairperson	087-7028035
Úna Kirk	Secretary to the Board	041 6851344
John Dorian	BOM Nominee	041 6851344

Andrew McCullough	BOM Nominee	041 6851344
Annette Kelly	BOM Nominee	041 6851344
Frances Kirwan	BOM Nominee	041 6851344
Seán Carey	Teacher Nominee	041 6851344
Nicola Reilly	Teacher Nominee	041 6851344
John O'Connor	Parent Nominee	041 6851344
Catherine McGuinness	Parent Nominee	041 6851344
AnnMarie Forde	LMETB Nominee	041 6851344

Short term actions – Day 1

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

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
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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/all staff
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