

ST. MOGUE'S COLLEGE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN



St. Mogue's College aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. *St. Mogue's College* cherishes its close community spirit and warm and friendly atmosphere. The school has formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students during the normal course of the school day. Occasionally, an incident occurs which is termed 'critical' which cannot be dealt with in the normal way. All partners in the school community -staff, students, parents and members of the wider community, are likely to be seriously affected by it. Such a crisis must be managed in order to provide a sense of continuity and order, while at the same time providing maximum care for the affected parties. This plan offers guidelines – all of which might or might not be followed, as each different crisis will demand a different set of responses.

St. Mogue's College has drawn a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Definition of the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *St. Mogue's College* 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*
- *A serious 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*
- *A traumatic event involving the school*

This list is not exhaustive.

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 affect 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

Plans and procedures are in place to ensure that our school is as safe as possible.

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school
- At break and lunch times teachers are on supervision duty in the school building and in the school grounds.
- The school has a defibrillator located beside reception.
- A safety statement is in force and reviewed regularly

Psychological safety

The management and staff of St. Mogue's College 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) 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
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Resources on difficulties affecting the 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 – School Completion Programme (SCP), Family Focus Resource Centre (FFRC), Bounce Back, NEPS, CAMHS, Department of Education, TUSLA
- Additional supports 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. 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
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves. (Appendix 3)

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 CIMT (Critical Incident Management Team) 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)

The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the plan. Each member of the **team has a dedicated critical incident folder.** This contains a copy of the plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Team leader: Ms. Anne Conaghan

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
- In the case of bereavement liaises with the bereaved family

Garda liaison Ms. Anne Conaghan

Role

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

Staff liaison Ms. Martha Brady

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 Ms Catherine Dwyer/Mrs. Maura Donohoe/Mr. James Flynn

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 Ms. Bernie Browne

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 Mrs. Maura Donohoe/Ms. Bernie Browne

Role

- In the case of bereavement, visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if appropriate.
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school plan
- 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. Anne Conaghan

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 Mrs. Roisin Neary, 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.

Mrs. Roisin Neary, 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 St. Mogue’s College 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
Canteen	Meetings with students
Canteen	Meetings with parents
Principal’s Office	Meetings with media
HSCL Room/Guidance Counsellors Office	Individual sessions with students
HSCL Room	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

Our school’s final 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. The plan has been shared with all stakeholders on our website.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan in their induction course. The plan will be updated annually

Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Ms. Anne Conaghan	049 9523112 087 2968710
Garda liaison	Ms. Anne Conaghan	087 2968710
Staff liaison	Ms. Martha Brady	049 9523112
Student liaison	Ms. Catherine Dwyer Mrs Maura Donohoe Mr James Flynn	049 9523112 087 1250570 049 9523112
Community liaison	Ms. Bernie Browne	049 9523112
Parent liaison	Mrs Maura Donohoe Ms. Bernie Browne	087 1250570 049 9523112
Media liaison	Ms. Anne Conaghan	049 9523112 087 2968710
Administrator	Roisin Neary, school secretary	049 9523112

Short term actions – Day 1

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

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

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

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

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

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda (Ballyconnell Garda Station)	049 9525580
Hospital (Cavan General Hospital)	049 4376000
Fire Brigade	911
Local GPs	049 9522642
HSE	1850 24 1850
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS) (Cavan)	049 4378920
NEPS Cavan	049 4325430
DES	090 6483600
Clergy Fr Sean Maguire (RC) Reverend Capt. Richard Waller (COI)	049 9523103/087 2101540 049 9527852/087 1724715
State Exams Commission	090 644 2744
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Appendix 1 – Sample Media Statement

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 (**EDIT*Name*) and I am the Principal of (**EDIT*Name*) School. We learned this morning of the death of (**EDIT*one of our students or Name of student*). This is a terrible tragedy for the (**EDIT* Family Name*) family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with the (**EDIT* Family Name*) family and friends.

(**EDIT*Name*) was a (**EDIT* e.g. 5th year boy*) 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 have implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and (**EDIT*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.

Appendix 2 – Link to Resources for dealing with Critical Incident

Information from the Department of Education on dealing with critical incidents in schools may be found here:

<https://www.education.ie/en/schools-colleges/services/national-educational-psychological-service-neps/critical-incident.html>

Appendix 3 – Staff Support

Spectrum Life are contracted to provide Employee Assistance Service (EAS) for all CMETB staff.

Contact Information for Spectrum Life

Access the EAS directly:

Teachers and SNAs - Freephone 1800 411 057

All Other Staff - Freephone 1800 814 243

WhatsApp & SMS: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

(standard rates apply)