

# CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

North Monastery Coeducational  
Secondary School



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.

Additional guidance is contained in Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016) R19-21 P.79-90.

North Monastery Coeducational Secondary School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

Mission Statement:

Inspired by the vision of Edmund Rice, the North Monastery Coeducational Secondary School, in its proud tradition, is committed in partnership with parents, to enabling all members of the school community to achieve their full potential in a caring environment where mutual respect, good order, discipline and positive self-esteem are the values which guide us in our teaching and learning community.

The Board of Management, through *Jim Boyle, Principal*, has reviewed 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 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)

## **Define what you mean by the term ‘critical incident’**

The staff and management of *North Monastery Coeducational Secondary School* 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
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard
- Rules of the yard – specific areas for year groups and times allocated for breaks

### **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of *North Monastery Coeducational Secondary 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) 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
- Books and 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/contact with a range of external agencies – NEPS, Pieta House, Jigsaw
- 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 0023/2010 (Post-Primary) Child Safeguarding Statement 2018
- 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 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)
- 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. *(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. 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:** *Jim Boyle*

#### **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

*(In the absence of the team leader, Jason Barry, Deputy Principal, will act as Team Leader)*

**Garda liaison:** *Finn Ó Murchú, Jim Boyle, Jason Barry, Karen Cronin*

#### **Role**

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

**Staff liaison** *Jim Boyle, Jeanne Cronin, Karen Cronin, Edel O'Regan*

#### **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:** *Karen Cronin, Edel O'Regan, Kieran Ruby*

**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:** *Jim Boyle, Jason Barry, Kieran Ruby*

**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:** *Jim Boyle, Karen Cronin, Edel O'Regan, Kieran Ruby*

**Role**

- Visits the bereaved family as or 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:** *Finn Ó Murchú, Jim Boyle*

**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)

- Monitor social media and school website

**Administrator:** *Jeanne Cronin*

**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:** *CIMT members*

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.

*Jeanne Cronin* 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 *North Monastery Coeducational Secondary 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:
<i>Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Library</i>	Meetings with students
<i>BfL Room</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>HSCL Room</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Guidance Counsellors Offices</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Principal’s Office</i>	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 Jim Boyle.

The plan will be updated annually in March

<b>Critical Incident Management Team</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Team leader:</b>	<i>Jim Boyle</i>	
<b>Garda liaison</b>	<i>Finn Ó Murchú Jim Boyle Jason Barry Karen Cronin</i>	
<b>Staff liaison</b>	<i>Jim Boyle Jeanne Cronin Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan</i>	
<b>Student liaison</b>	<i>Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan Kieran Ruby</i>	
<b>Community liaison</b>	<i>Jim Boyle Jason Barry Kieran Ruby</i>	
<b>Parent liaison</b>	<i>Jim Boyle Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan Kieran Ruby</i>	
<b>Media liaison</b>	<i>Finn Ó Murchú Jim Boyle Jason Barry</i>	
<b>Administrator</b>	<i>Jeanne Cronin</i>	

### **Short term actions – Day 1**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Gather accurate information</b>	Relevant staff and witnesses
<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	Jim Boyle
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	Jim Boyle Jason Barry
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	Jim Boyle Jason Barry
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	Jason Barry
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	<b>All staff</b> <b>Jim Boyle/Jason Barry</b>
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	Jim Boyle Jason Barry

<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	Relevant staff members
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan Nicola Cambridge
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	Finn Ó Murchú Jim Boyle
<b>Inform parents</b>	Jim Boyle Kieran Ruby
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	Jim Boyle

## Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader Jim Boyle
Meet external agencies	Jim Boyle Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan Kieran Ruby
Meet whole staff	Jim Boyle Finn Ó Murchú
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Jim Boyle Jason Barry Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan
Visit the injured	Jim Boyle Kieran Ruby
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Jim Boyle
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Jim Boyle Finn Ó Murchú
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

## Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan Kieran Ruby
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Jim Boyle Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan Kieran Ruby
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Jim Boyle Jason Barry
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Class Tutor Year Head Karen Cronin Edel O'Regan
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
Gurrabraher Garda Station Watercourse Road Garda Station	021 494 6200 021 455 8260
CUH Mercy St Mary's Orthopaedic	021 492 2000 021 427 1971 021 492 6900
Fire Brigade	999/112
Medicare, Cathedral Road	021 430 55 44
Southdoc, Blackpool	1850 33 59 99
DES	090 648 3600
ERST	01 289 7511
JMB	01 283 8255
State Examinations Commission	090 644 2700
NEPS Psychologist	021 453 6358 0761 108450
CAMHS- North Lee CAMHS- South Lee	021 492 7821 021 435 7447
ASTI TUI	1850 418 400 01 492 2588
Clergy	
Barnardos	021 425 1727
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

# EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
The Samaritans	1850 60 90 90
Childline	1800 66 66 66
ParentLine	1890 92 72 77
Mental Health Ireland	01 284 1166
Aware	1800 80 48 48
Pieta House	021 434 1400 1800 247 247
Grow(Mental Health Support and Recovery)	1890 474 474
Bodywhys(Eating Disorders Association)	1890 200 444
Rainbows	01 473 4175
HSE Duty Social Worker North Lee HSE Duty Social Worker South Lee	021 492 7000 021 492 3001
EAS	1800 411 057
Medmark	1890 235 711
Jigsaw	021 245 2500
Employee Assistance Service/Inspire Workplace Services	1800 411 057