

Critical Incident Management Plan

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Introduction

Carrigaline Community Special School (CCSS) aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment. The Board of Management (BOM), through the principal, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Context for developing this policy and plan

In drawing up this policy and plan the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has consulted resource documents available to schools on www.gov.ie including:

- *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools* (NEPS 2016)
- *Critical Incident Management Policy Template* (NEPS)

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 return to normality as soon as possible.

Definition of a 'critical incident'

The staff and management of CCSS recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school" (NEPS 2016).

Types of Incidents

Types of incidents might include but are not limited to:

- 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

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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 and regular fire drills are included in all education plans
- Evacuation plan formulated and clearly visible in each room
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Health and Safety Plan
- Pre-opening supervision at drop-off points
- Supervision during all breaks
- Rules of the playground clearly understood
- Appropriate Behaviour Policy
- Induction for new students and staff

Psychological Safety

The management and staff 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.

Some of the measures taken by the school include:

- The SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe programme are integrated into the work of the school. They are addressed in the curriculum by addressing issues such as coping with loss; communication skills; conflict management; help-seeking; bullying; decision-making. Promotion of emotional and mental health is an integral part of this provision
- 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 students are available
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies which may be contacted in the event of a critical incident - NEPS, NCSE etc.
- 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
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member, 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. Employee Assistance Service (EAS): Freephone 1800 411 057. SMS and WhatsApp – Text ‘Hi’ to 087 369 0010

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The CIMT is defined as “a group of individuals from the staff of a school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs” (Mary Schoenfeld, *School Crisis: Response Teams, Lessening the Aftermath*).

The goal of the CIMT:

- To return the school to the pre-incident, normal state as soon as possible
- Reduce the immediate and long-term detrimental impact on students, teachers, and families

Team Leader: Principal (Colm Manley)

Garda Liaison: Deputy Principal (Samantha Rice)

Staff Liaison: Principal (Colm Manley); Teacher (Indira Doonan)

Student Liaison: Class teachers

Parent/Family Liaison: Principal (Colm Manley)

Liaison for CETB Critical Incident Response Protocol: Principal (Colm Manley); Teacher (Chloe Harrington)

BOM Liaison: Amy Buckley – Teacher Nominee to the Board of Management

Outlined below are some of the key responsibilities of the CIMT.

Team Leader

Intervention

- Alerts the team members to the incident and convenes the initial meeting
- Ensures that accuracy of information about incident is checked before being shared
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with School Manager, DES, NEPS, Gardaí and families involved if/when necessary
- Coordinates the involvement of outside agencies
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Postvention

- Ensure provision of ongoing support to staff and students
- Facilitate any appropriate memorial events
- Review plan

Garda Liaison

Intervention

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

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Postvention

- Provide ongoing support where appropriate

Staff Liaison

Intervention

Principal

- Leads meetings to brief staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions
- Outlines the routine for the day
- Keep staff updated as the day progresses

Teacher

- Works with staff to identify vulnerable pupils beyond classmates who may need support
- Is alerted to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support
- Review and evaluate plan

Student Liaison

Intervention

- May co-ordinate information from teachers about students they are concerned about
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff if/when necessary

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable students
- Monitor class affected
- Refer as appropriate
- Review and evaluate plan

Parent/Family Liaison

Intervention

- Co-ordinate contact with families (following first contact by principal)
- Meet with parents when deemed necessary
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen

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Postvention

- Offer to link family with community support groups appropriate
- Review and evaluate plan

Liaison for CETB Critical Incident Response Protocol

Intervention

- 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)
- Consider issues that may arise during an incident e.g., requests for pupils to be interviewed or attempts to do so without permission, photographers on the school premises etc.
- Will coordinate the monitoring of communications relating to the incident
- Records Incident/Situation Details and liaises with CETB to fulfil CETB Critical incident Response Protocol
- Advises staff of procedures to be followed with relation to media under CETB Critical incident Response Protocol

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

BOM Liaison

Intervention

- Communication critical incident to the Board of Management

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response

Communication

The management and staff have a responsibility to protect the privacy and name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind. No individual staff member will disclose information outside of what has been briefed. It is important that the family's privacy is always protected.

Record Keeping

The Critical Incident File

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. Staff will refer to Section 11 in *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools* (NEPS 2016) for templates and procedures.

The school secretary, will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Action Plan

All staff will refer to 'Critical Incident Response Protocol' by CETB.

Short Term Actions (Day 1)

- Gather accurate information
- Convene a CIMT meeting
- Contact external agencies
- Arrange supervision for students
- Hold staff meeting
- Agree schedule for the day
- Inform parents
- End of day staff briefing

Medium Term Actions (Day 2 and following)

- Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1
- Meet external agencies
- Meet whole staff
- Arrange support for students, staff, parents
- Visit the injured (when appropriate)
- Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements
- Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service
- Make decisions about school closure

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Long Term Actions (Beyond 72 Hours)

- Monitor students for signs of continuing distress
- Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
- Plan for return of bereaved student
- Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students/staff, and they may need additional support at this time. (Anniversaries of events will not be marked formally by the school.)
- Acknowledge the anniversary with the family at the family's request, including facilitating religious/belief events in line with the ETBI Patrons Framework where practicable.
- The only appropriate memorial for the school to consider installing on the grounds will be a tree planted in the sensory garden at the south end of the premises without a plaque.
- Review response to incident and amend plan

Response Review

Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately

- What went well?
- Where were the gaps?
- What was most/least helpful?
- Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any unfinished business?

Formalising the Critical Incident Plan for the Future

- Consult with NEPS Psychologist
- Inform new staff/new school pupils affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate
- Ensure that new staff are aware of the school policy and procedures in this area
- Ensure they are aware of which pupils were affected in any recent incident and in what way
- When individual pupils or a class of pupils affected by an incident are transferring to a new school the principal may brief the principal of the new school with parental consent

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Contacts

NEPS

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National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
Department of Education
Block C, Heritage Business Park, Mahon, Cork T12 CXK5R
T: +353 (0)761 108 470
Email: Raymonte_Desmond@education.gov.ie

Gardaí

Carrigaline Garda Station,
Main Street,
Carrigaline,
Cork City,
P43 HN40
+353214919370
Call 999/112 or your local Garda Station if an immediate response is required.

Media

communications@corketb.ie

Clare Creedon	086-3816662
Sarah Flynn	086-4183518
Suzanne Mullins	086-3509467

EAS

The EAS is accessible through the dedicated Free-phone Confidential Helpline and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

freephone: 1800 411 057

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

Follow this link for Information on services available

Employees can access the Spectrum.Life wellbeing portal as follows:

sign up at this link <https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login?org=yVIIU17>

organisation code will be pre-populated. If not, organisation code is yVIIU17

log in thereafter to:

[Access the Wellbeing Webinar Calendar via the online portal](#)

[Access the Wellbeing Webinar Calendar via the online portal](#)

[Access the weekly Wellbeing Live Events](#)

[Access to Principal and Deputy Principal Mental Health Seminars](#)

[Access to eLearning on the Wellbeing Together for the school community](#)