

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY 2019-2020



St David's C.B.S.

Roll Number 60471F

Critical Incident Management Policy

Introduction

St David's CBS aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Our critical incident policy aligns with the school's ethos which aims to provide a caring and nurturing environment for all students and staff. Our ethos can be summarised as the following:

St. David's is a Catholic school, promoting Christian values, that provides opportunities for every student to achieve his full potential in academic, artistic, social and sporting spheres in an atmosphere that promotes responsibility, tolerance and respect for others. (St David's CBS Mission Statement)

The Board of Management, through *Mr Kavanagh* have 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 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)

Definition of ‘Critical Incident

The staff and management of *St David’s CBS* 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, staff and whole school community. 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.

Support Structure

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. Our school curriculum addresses issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, prevention of alcohol and drug misuse, anger management, self-esteem and bullying. A whole school approach is adopted to support the physical and psychological safety of our students.

Specific examples include:

- Supervision of students throughout the school day
- Evacuation plan
- Regular fire drills
- Social, Personal and Health education (SPHE), Religious Education (R.E.), Wellbeing and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are taught to our student cohort
- Staff are familiar with Child Protection Procedures (mandated persons), the name of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP)
- Pastoral care team is an active support structure for our students
- Anti-bullying policy in place and implemented to deal with incidents of bullying
- School has developed links with a range of external agencies such as:
 - Donnycarney Youth Service
 - Kilmore Youth Service
 - Sphere 17
 - Pieta House
 - CAMHS
 - Jigsaw
 - Listen Project
- Support for staff - Inspire Workplaces Wellbeing at Work - free counselling services for teachers (up to 6 sessions)

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 playground

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 leaders: *(P. Kavanagh & M. Flanagan)*

The role of the team leaders is to:

- Alert the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinate the tasks of the team
- Liaise with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC
- Liaise with the bereaved family

Garda Liaison *(P. Kavanagh)*

The role of the Garda Liaison is to:

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

Staff liaison *(M. Rowan)*

The role of the Staff Liaison is to:

- Lead 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
- Advise staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provide materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Keep staff updated as the day progresses

- Be alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advise them of the availability of the Employee Assistance & Wellbeing Programme (EAS) and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison (*E. White, M. Rowan, D. Ball & J Dunne*)

The role of the Student Liaison is to:

- Coordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- Alert other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provide materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintain student contact records.
- Look after setting up and supervision of ‘quiet’ room where agreed

Community/agency liaison (*J. Costello*)

The role of the Community/agency Liaison is to:

- 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 (*J. Costello*)

The role of the Parent Liaison is to:

- Visit the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arrange parent meetings, if necessary
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manage the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensure that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Set up room for meetings with parents
- Maintain a record of parents seen
- Meet with individual parents
- Provide appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media Liaison (*P. Kavanagh*)

The role of the Media Liaison is to:

- 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 (*M. Flanagan*)

The role of the Administrator is to:

- 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.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff of St David's have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good 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, and will seek to ensure that students do so also.

For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is confirmed 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>Green Carpet Area</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Reading Room</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Deputy Principal's Office</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Guidance Counsellor Room Deputy Principal Office Behaviour for Learning Office Oratory</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Green Carpet Area</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. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Deputy Principal

The plan will be updated annually by E. White and M. Rowan.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leaders:	<i>P. Kavanagh & M. Flanagan</i>	0868117164
Garda liaison	<i>P. Kavanagh</i>	0868108527
Staff liaison	<i>M. Rowan</i>	0857203125
Student liaison	<i>E. White, M. Rowan, D Ball & J Dunne.</i>	0858593388
Community liaison	<i>J. Costello</i>	0876387673
Parent liaison	<i>J. Costello</i>	0876387673
Media liaison	<i>P. Kavanagh</i>	0868117164
Administrator	<i>M. Flanagan</i>	0857221747

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Team Leader(s)
Who, what, when, where?	Team Leader(s)
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Team Leader(s)
Contact external agencies	J. Costello
Arrange supervision for students	M. Flanagan
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Team Leader(s)
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	E. White, D. Ball, T Murtagh and SNA's
Compile a list of vulnerable students	E. White, M. Rowan, D. Ball & J. Dunne
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Team Leader(s)
Inform parents	M. Flanagan/J. Costello
Hold end of day staff briefing	M. Rowan

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	J. Costello
Meet whole staff	Team Leader (s)
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	E. White, M. Rowan, D Ball & J. Dunne
Visit the injured	Team Leader (s) J. Costello
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	M. Flanagan & J Costello
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Team
Make decisions about school closure	Chairperson of BoM, Team Leader(s)

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	All Staff
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	M. Rowan & E. White
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	M. Flanagan & E. White
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	E. White & M. Rowan
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
Garda	01 – 666 4800
Hospital	Beaumont Hospital = 01 809 3000
Fire Brigade	01 – 673 4000
Local GPs	Dr Tarek Zourob 01 851 0040 Dr Aidan Hampson 01 831 2260
HSE	01 833 3421 (Marino Health Centre)
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	01 879 6800
NEPS Psychologist	
State Exams Commission	090- 6442700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Appendices

Appendix A

Sample Teacher Communication Text Message Student Death

Dear Staff,

It is with great sorrow that I inform you of the death of one of our student's _____ in class _____, due to a car accident. This is a huge loss for _____'s family, our school and the community. The School's Critical Incident Management Team has met to plan our response.

Principal

Appendix B

Sample Teacher Communication Text Message Teacher Death

Dear Staff,

It is with great sorrow that I inform you of the death of one of our teacher's _____ due to a car accident. This is a huge loss for _____'s family, our school and the community. The School's Critical Incident Management Team has met to plan our response.

Principal

Appendix C

Sample Announcement to the Media –
Student Death

My name is _____ and I am the Principal of St. David's CBS. We learned this morning of the death of _____, a _____ year student in our school. This is a terrible tragedy for _____'s family, our school and the wider community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathies, thoughts and prayers are with _____'s family and friends. We have been in contact with his parents and they have requested that we respect their need for privacy at this very difficult time. Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan. Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) are supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time. The school staff has been helping students to deal with the death. The school has been open to parents and guardians to support them and offer advice and guidance. We would ask you to respect their privacy at this challenging time.

Thank You

Sample Letter to Parents –
Student Death

Dear Parents/Guardian,

Over the weekend, the school learned of the sudden death of _____, one of our students. We are all deeply saddened by this loss. The school has support structures in place to deal with this tragedy. Our Pastoral Care team has been working closely with counsellors from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). It is possible that your son may have feelings that he may like to discuss with you. You can help your son by taking time to listen to him and encourage him to express his feelings. It is important to let him know that his feelings, concerns and reactions are normal and that he will experience a number of emotions over the next few days and weeks. If you have any additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact the school. I anticipate that the next few days will be difficult for everyone, however school will continue as usual.

Principal

Appendix E

Sample Parent Communication Text

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Student Death

Today, with great sadness we learned of the death of _____ one of our _____ Year students. Our thoughts and prayers are with _____'s

family and friends during this difficult time. Further communication will follow in due course.

Principal

Appendix F

Sample Community Notice (to be read at Mass)

The community of St David's CBS is extremely saddened to hear of the death of _____ who was a _____ year student in St. David's CBS. I am sure all of us will make every effort to comfort and support _____'s

family as they attempt to come to terms with their traumatic loss. We remember him in our prayers in Mass today and we extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family, relatives, teachers and classmates.