



Critical Incident Management Plan

At all times St. Patrick's De La Salle aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment as defined in our Mission Statement. The Board of Management, through the Principal, has drawn up the following Critical Incidence Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

The aim is to establish a Critical Incidence Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of plan.

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) is 'to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable them to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff'. Having a good plan will also help ensure that the impact on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable the school to return to normality as soon as possible.

Definition of Critical Incident

The staff and management of St. Patrick's De La Salle recognises a critical incident to be **'an incident or sequence of events' which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school' (NEPS 2007)**

Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, their family members or members of the local community e. g.

- ◆ The death of a member of the school community through accident, drowning, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death.
- ◆ A threatening/violent intrusion into the school
- ◆ An accident involving members of the school community
- ◆ A major 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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Reg. Charity No. 20206147

School Roll No. 17854D





- ♦ A pandemic-an outbreak or major illness in school or community.

Creation of a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school

St. Patrick's De La Salle has put systems in place to help build resilience in both staff and students through our SPHE/RSE programmes, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. Staff have also engaged in training in Restorative Practices and attended webinars on same. Measures have been put in place to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical Safety

In the area of physical safety, the school has put in place the following:

- ♦ Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Policy
- ♦ Copies of the layout of the school building displayed in key places around the school with exits clearly highlighted.
- ♦ Fire drills occur once a term.
- ♦ Evacuation plan formulated and reviewed each time following a fire drill
- ♦ Fire exits are checked daily. 'Guardian Fire and Security' also check the fire exits.
- ♦ Fire extinguishers are checked by the company 'Guardian Fire and Security' quarterly
- ♦ Front Gate locked during school hours.
- ♦ School external doors locked during class times.
- ♦ General school rules under the School's behaviour policy to ensure all pupils have a safe environment.
- ♦ Pupils leaving early will only be released by School Secretary/Principal/Deputy Principal or a member of the teaching staff when an authorised adult arrives to accompany the child from the premises. Information pertaining to such departures are recorded in a book kept in the Secretary's office.

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of St Patrick's De La Salle also 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.

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Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

- ◆ It is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by including issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, stress and anger management, resilience, conflict management, problem solving, help-seeking skills, bullying, decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision.
- ◆ The Staff are familiar with the Child Safeguarding Statement and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures i.e to the D.L.P.
- ◆ The staff have access to books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school children. A list of children's books for Wellbeing are available on the PDST website. This list is an exploration of picture books and novels which may support teaching and learning in S.P.H.E. The themes of the books include empathy and friendship, self-esteem, anxiety, trauma etc. See Appendix 1 for the booklist.
- ◆ The school has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. HSE/Community Care/NEPS/Camhs/Túsla (Child and Family Agency) which may be contacted in the event of an emergency or for onward referral of students.
- ◆ 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 as outlined in the D.E.S circular 0022/2010. (This means that a teacher will always be present when external agencies visit.)
- ◆ The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with the Anti-Bullying policy.
- ◆ The
- ◆ Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e. g 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. See Appendix 2 for the list of signs that a child may be experiencing difficulty in school.

Critical Incidence Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. Once prepared all staff should be made aware of the school's Critical Incident Management Plan.

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School management may decide to make copies available on the schools' computer system. Members of the team are selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. Members are suited to the role they are given. They are selected as they show an interest in this type of work and possess suitable skills e.g good interpersonal skills, organisational skills, a calm approach.

Key Personnel of the CIMT

- ❖ Team Leader/Media Liaison - Principal, Ms L. Brennan
- ❖ Garda liaison
- ❖ Staff liaison
- ❖ Student liaison
- ❖ Parent Liaison
- ❖ Community liaison
- ❖ Administrator - Secretary, Mrs Helen Phelan

The following are the key responsibilities of each role

Team Leader - Principal

- ◆ Confirms the event and clarifies facts surrounding the event.
- Alert the C.I.M.T. members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Co-ordinate the tasks of the team
- Liaise with the Gardaí, Emergency Services, Board of Management, The DES and NEPS
- Gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and asks questions, and outlines the routine for the day.
- Liaise with the bereaved family and expresses sympathies.
- Liaise with staff members and students regarding cultural sensitivity and awareness of this incident.
- Liaise with staff members regarding the passing on of information to students with learning difficulties at this time.

The Deputy Principal will assume this role in the absence of the team leader.

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Media Liaison - Also Principal Ms L. Brennan

- ◆ 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.)
- ◆ Will deal with any issues related to this incident on social media.
- ◆ In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with relevant teacher unions etc. and in the case of major incidents the Press Office of the D.E.S
- ◆ Will prepare a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management) The press statement can be placed on the school's website. This can be emailed to media representatives who make contact with the school. It may also be used in an interview if requested.
- ◆ Organises a designated room to address media promptly
- ◆ Ensures telephone lines are free for outgoing and incoming important calls.
- ◆ Designate mobile numbers for contact.
- ◆ Liaises with relevant outside support agencies

Note: Parents should be advised not to allow their children to be interviewed as they do not have the maturity or judgement needed to handle it.

Managing communication needs careful attention. Use of social media is a good medium for facilitating factual and appropriate communication.

Garda Liaison

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

Staff liaison

- ◆ Lead briefing meetings for staff on facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions and outline the routine for the day.
- ◆ Advise staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students (**See Appendix 2 and 3**)
- ◆ Alerts staff to vulnerable pupils
- ◆ Provide materials for staff (from the Critical Incident Folder)

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- ◆ Keep records of students seen by external agency staff
- ◆ Looks after setting up and supervision of a 'Quiet' Room 'where agreed. (It can be useful to have a designated room available for students for a period perhaps a week following a tragedy. The room should contain cushions, soft toys, tissues, writing and drawing materials and some information leaflets from the resource materials section. It offers children a quiet space to be in if feeling overwhelmed. Staff should be clearly informed of the procedures for the running and monitoring of the 'Quiet Room'.

Student Liaison Role

- ◆ Informs students of the facts of the incident.
- ◆ Maintains student contact records.
- ◆ Co-ordinates information from support teachers regarding students whom they are concerned about ie S.E.T teachers/SNA's
- ◆ Advises the staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils. (See Appendix 2 and 3)
- ◆ Alerts staff to vulnerable pupils.
- ◆ Outlines specific services available in the school and provides materials for students from Critical Incident Management Plan.
- ◆ Puts in place clear referral procedures.
- ◆ Helps arrange for counselling with support of N.E.P.S Senior Psychologist.
- ◆ Keeps records of students seen by external agencies.
- ◆ Assists with the organisation and supervision of the 'Quiet Room'.

Community/Agency liaison

- ◆ Maintain up to date lists of contact numbers, members of the Parents Council, emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- ◆ Liaise with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- ◆ Co-ordinate the involvement of these agencies.
- ◆ Remind agency staff to wear name badges.
- ◆ Update team members on the involvement of external agencies.

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Parent liaison

- ◆ Visit the bereaved family with the team leader
- ◆ Arrange parent meetings if held - facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- ◆ Set up room for meetings with parents
- ◆ Meet with individual parents
- ◆ Maintain a record of parents seen
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Provide appropriate materials for parents (from their Critical Incident Folder)

Administrator

- ◆ Maintain up to date contact details of
 - Parents or guardians of pupils
 - Students
 - Staff
 - Emergency services

This list should be displayed in the staff room, the school office and in the principal's office. All lists should be regularly updated.

- ◆ Take telephone calls and take note of those that need to be responded to
- ◆ Prepare templates for letters to parents and templates for press releases. These should be 'ready to go' and on the school computer system so that they can be adapted quickly when an incident occurs.
- ◆ Prepare and send out letters, emails and faxes.
- ◆ Photocopies materials needed
- ◆ Maintains records

Note A copy of the layout of the school building is displayed in key places with exits highlighted.

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The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the Critical Incident Management Plan. Each member of the team has access to the Schools Critical Incidence Management Folder which include all of the following:

- ◆ A copy of the Critical Incident Management Team and their contact details
- ◆ An emergency contact list/school contact list
- ◆ A copy of the duties of each team member on the C.I.M.T.
- ◆ Checklist for the first 24 hours after the incident.
- ◆ A copy of the Board of Management members and contact details
- ◆ A layout of the school building and the exits clearly highlighted
- ◆ An Action Plan Template

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

School trips/Matches

The following is a list of information which should be available in the case of an emergency during school trips/matches/concerts.

- ◆ A list of the names of the students and staff at the event.
- ◆ A list of mobile phone numbers and contact details of all students and staff at the event.
- ◆ A list of up-to-date medical information on students with allergies/epilepsy etc.
- ◆ Contact details of the bus company and bus driver.
- ◆ Details regarding the venue, its address and contact details of same.

It is also recommended to consult with students about what to do if there is an event scheduled such as a trip, concert or a match etc at a time of a critical incident. This should reduce the likelihood of students being angry later on as a result of any school action or inaction.

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Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The management and staff of St. Patrick's De La Salle BNS have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in an 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 the students do so also. For example, 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 Staff Room will be the main room used to meet the staff
- ◆ The Main P.E Hall for meeting with students
- ◆ The Central Activity Space in the ASD Wing for parents
- ◆ The Main P.E Hall for media
- ◆ The Central Activity Space in the ASD Wing for other visitors

Consultation and Communication regarding the Plan

All staff were consulted and regard was given to their views in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments. Our school's final Critical Incident Management Plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff. Each member of the Critical Incident Management Team has access to a personal copy of the plan. All new and temporary staff members will be informed of the details of the plan by a Staff Liaison member.

The plan will be updated annually in the month of October.

Signed: _____

Chairperson

Date: _____

29/11/21

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