

St. Mary's College Dundalk



Critical Incident Management Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management 17th October 2022.

Mission Statement

St. Mary's College aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. As a Catholic secondary school under the patronage of the Marist Fathers, the primary aim of the college through its spiritual and humanistic endeavours, is to promote and develop a sense of community where those entrusted to its care can be brought to the fullness of their human potential in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel. The school, through its academic, pastoral and spiritual undertakings strives to provide for the holistic development and welfare of each of the students in its care.

The Board of Management, through *Principal Mr. Alan Craven*, has 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)
- The Post-Primary Experiences of Transgender and Gender Diverse Youth in Ireland (2020)
- Managing Bereavement: A guide for Schools (2022: UK)

Definition of the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *St. Mary'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*
- *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

The Board of Management shall ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare of the staff and students in accordance to the provision of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. This includes:

- Development of the school Health and Safety Policy
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision: beginning 15 minutes before start of first class and ending 10 minutes after final class
- Rules of the playground / yard – include details

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *St. Mary'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) and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) are both 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 have completed appropriate Tusla / PDST training, which includes details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures.
- Resources on difficulties affecting the primary/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 support services – see Contact Sheet.
- 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 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 (Student Support Team) 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) and SST Review Document (2021). These documents are available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred through the Student Support Team to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor, chaplain or support teacher), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents / guardians are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.

- 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: *Mr. Alan Craven*

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

(Deputy Principals Ms. Anita White / Ms. Pippa Brady (on rotation) will be Deputy Team Leader, in the event of Principal being absent)

Garda liaison: *Mr. Alan Craven / Mr. Stephen Martin*

Role

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

Staff liaison *Ms. Briege Kelly / Ms. Catherine Shaw / Mr. Shane Mc Donnell*

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. Rosie Reynolds / Ms. Lynn McArdle*

Role

- Working in conjunction with the Student Support team to co-ordinate information from teachers and Year Teams 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
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room wh
- ere agreed

Community/agency liaison *Ms. Anita Morgan / Ms. Anne Mulligan*

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

Family liaison *Ms. Pippa Brady / Mr. Stephen Martin*

Role

- Visits the bereaved family 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 *Mr. Alan Craven / Ms. Clodagh Lennon*

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, making staff aware of media lock-down 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 *Ms. Anita White*

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 *Ms. Anita White*

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.

Ms. Patricia Begley 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. Mary'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:
<i>Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>GP Area / Classroom / Library</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Chaplain's Office / Principal's / DPs office</i>	Meetings with parents
	Meetings with media
<i>Guidance / Ms. Reynolds Room</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Upstairs DP Room</i>	Meetings with other visitors
<i>Year Head (Records) Room</i>	Communications room.

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 *Ms. Anita White*

The plan will be updated annually (**September** of each year)

Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management.

Date: 17th October 2022.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Mr. Alan Craven</i>	087 6596929
Garda liaison	<i>Mr. Alan Craven</i> <i>Mr. Stephen Martin</i>	087 6596929 086 3955067
Staff liaison	<i>Ms. Briege Kelly</i> <i>Ms. Catherine Shaw</i> <i>Mr. Shane Mc Donnell</i>	086 3702512 086 6013449 085 2161415
Student liaison	<i>Ms. Rosie Reynolds</i> <i>Ms. Lynn McArdle</i>	087 6178029 087 9315600
Community liaison	<i>Ms. Anita Morgan</i> <i>Ms. Anne Mulligan</i>	087 2030021 087 8239828
Family liaison	<i>Ms. Pippa Brady</i> <i>Mr. Stephen Martin</i>	086 8288841 086 3955067
Media liaison	<i>Mr. Alan Craven</i> <i>Ms. Clodagh Lennon</i>	087 6596929 087 2668414
Administrator	<i>Ms. Anita White</i>	087 2929456
Dedicated <i>WhatsApp</i> Dedicated Email	<i>ALL Members</i>	CIMT Group cimt@maristdundalk.ie

Short term actions – Day 1

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

Hold end of day staff briefing	Mr. Alan Craven
--------------------------------	-----------------

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Mr. Alan Craven
Meet external agencies	Mr. Alan Craven Ms. Clodagh Lennon
Meet whole staff	Mr. Alan Craven Ms. Briege Kelly
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Ms. Rosie Reynolds / Ms. Lynn McArdle (students) Ms. Catherine Shaw / Mr. Shane McDonnell (staff) Ms. Pippa Brady (parents)
Visit the injured	Mr. Alan Craven Ms. Rosie Reynolds Fr. Jim O'Connell Ms. Lynn McArdle Ms. Anita Morgan Ms. Anne Mulligan
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Ms. Pippa Brady Ms. Rosie Reynolds Fr. Jim O'Connell
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Mr. Alan Craven Ms. Anita White Ms. Pippa Brady
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Ms. Anita Morgan
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Ms. Rosie Reynolds
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Ms. Pippa Brady
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

College Emergency Contact List

ORGANISATION	NUMBER(S)	CONTACT NAME
BAM	087 7850674 086 1936430	Evan Henry David Boyle
Bus Eireann Co-Ordinator	087 6991323	Kevin Breen
CAHMS, Dundalk	042 9358330	Megan White
CAHMS, Drogheda	041 9832963	
CARA Cancer Support Centre	042 9339383	
Cerdon	042 9334019	Fr. Jim O'Connell
DES Athlone	090 6483600	Helpdesk
DES Allocations	090 6483730	Mairead Devery
Doctor on Call	1850 777 911	Out of Hours Service
Dundalk Garda Station	042 9388400	
EWO Officer (Local)	087 7567150	Sinead McCourt
EWO Officer (Regional)	087 9248362	Nuala Colton
Family Addiction Support (FASN)	042 9355251 / 087 9046405	
FSSU	01 2690677	
Gary Kelly Cancer Support	041 9805100	
House' Coxes	086 8629508	Vincie McGrory
I.T. Nortech	087 1278928	Shane McKeown
JCT Regional Co-Ordinator	087 1258624	Betty McLaughlin
JLO Garda Dundalk	087 0601716	Paul Burke
JMB (Education Advice)	086 2538532	Siobhan Corry
JMB	01 283 8255	Office
NEPS	01 8650635	
North East Rape Crisis Centre	042 9339491 / 1800 212122	
Pastoral Centre (Magnet)	042 9336393	
SENO Louth VEC Offices	041 9846484	Aedemar Cooke
SOSAD 42 Jocelyn Street,	042 9327311	
SSCP School Co-Ordinator	087 2956573	Niall Weldon
SSCP School Facilitator	083 4141005	Meghan Hearty
SUST: Drugs	087 3752760	Philip James
SUST: Drugs	087 1732088	Lorraine Wright
Tusla Social Worker	087 9315184	Lisa Stewart
Tusla Social Worker	087 7089205	Patrice Finnegan
Tusla Dundalk	042 9392200	Office
Tusla Navan	046 9098560	Office
Undertakers: Dixons McGeoughs Quinn Shevlin	042 9334240 042 9334283 042 9334521 042 9339796	