



Critical Incident Management Policy

Scoil Mhuire Carrick-on-Suir aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Scoil Mhuire is an all-girls Catholic school. It is a Christian caring community which encourages the integrated development of every individual concerned. The Board of Management, through Principal Brendan O'Dwyer 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)

Definition of 'critical incident'

The staff and management of Scoil Mhuire 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 affect 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

Scoil Mhuire follows the Health and Safety Procedures listed below:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Supervision before, during and after school.
- School doors locked during class time
- Safety guidelines for specialist rooms (Labs, Home Economics).

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Scoil Mhuire 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 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 agencies including NEPS

- 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 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). These documents are available on 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.
- Staff is 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.

Scoil Mhuire has set up a CIMT consisting of the following personnel:

The Principal, The Deputy Principal, The School Guidance Counsellor, The School Chaplain, SEN Liaison, Year Heads, The School Secretaries. (The CIMT may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary).

The Principal will act as Team Leader or in his absence the Deputy Principal.

Team leader: (Brendan O'Dwyer, Principal)

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

Garda liaison (*Brendan O'Dwyer, Principal*)

Role

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

Staff liaison (*Brendan O'Dwyer, Principal and Agnes Guerin, Deputy Principal*)

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 (*Agnes Guerin, Deputy Principal*)

Role

- Co-ordinates information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- In event of demise of student, remove student from VS Ware
- 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 (*Agnes Guerin, Deputy Principal and CGC*)

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 (*Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain and CGC*)

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 (*Brendan O'Dwyer, Principal*)

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)

Administrator (*Agnes Guerin, Deputy Principal and Secretarial Staff.*)

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 (*Agnes Guerin, Deputy Principal*)

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.

Secretarial Staff *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 *Scoil Mhuire* 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>PC Rooms</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Visitors' Room</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Visitors' Room</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Principal's Office, Deputy Principal's Office, CGC's Office, Oratory.</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Visitors' Room</i>	Meetings with other visitors

The plan will be updated every September.

Students will be informed if the school is making its facilities available for student support outside of normal school hours.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Brendan O'Dwyer</i>	
Garda liaison	<i>Brendan O'Dwyer</i>	
Staff liaison	<i>Brendan O'Dwyer/Agnes Guerin</i>	
Student liaison	<i>Agnes Guerin /Síle O'Grady/ Maura Jones/ Julie-Anne Denby / Year Head / Class Teachers</i>	
Community liaison	<i>Agnes Guerin</i>	
Parent liaison	<i>Brendan O'Dwyer</i>	
Media liaison	<i>Brendan O'Dwyer</i>	
Administrator	<i>Agnes Guerin/ Secretarial Staff</i>	

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Team Leader
Who, what, when, where?	CIMT
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Team Leader
Contact external agencies	Principal, Deputy Principal, CGC
Arrange supervision for students	Deputy Principal, Year Heads
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Team Leader
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Team Leader, GCG, Chaplain
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Year Heads, Class Tutors, Class Teachers, Chaplain
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Team Leader
Inform parents	Team Leader
Hold end of day staff briefing	Team Leader

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	Team Leader/ CIMT
Meet whole staff	Team Leader
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Team Leader/ Deputy Principal/ CGC/ Chaplain
Visit the injured	Team Leader / CIMT
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Team Leader / CIMT
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Team Leader
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Year Heads / Class Tutors / Class Teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Team Leader / CGC / Year Head/ Chaplain
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Team Leader / CGC/ Year Head/ Chaplain
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Team Leader/ Year Head / Chaplain/Class Tutor / Class Teachers
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 Carrick-on-Suir	051 642040
Hospital	WRH 051 848000 South Tipperary General 052 77000
Fire Brigade	999 or 112
Local GPs	051 640527 Dr John Flanagan 051 640565 Dr Richard Roche- Nagle 051 641059 Dr Tim O'Donovan 051 640542 Dr Andrew Downey
HSE	051 848000 Waterford 052 6189204 Clonmel
Community Care Team	051 842924
Child and Family Centre	051 848883
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	051 842146
School Inspector	051 310028
NEPS Psychologist	051 310028 01 8892700 General 087 7704600 Amanda O'Shea
DES	090 6483600
ASTI	01 6040160
Clergy	051 640168 Parochial House

	089 4798519 Fr. Selva
State Exams Commission	090 6442700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057