



Coláiste Chú Chulainn
Cúram. Forbairt. Feabhas.



lmetb

*Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Lú agus na Mí*
Louth and Meath Education
and Training Board

Coláiste Chú Chulainn

Critical Incident Management Plan 2021

Adopted: 7th September 2021

Review due: September 2023

Table of Contents

FÍS NA SCOILE	3
REVIEW AND RESEARCH	4
DEFINE WHAT YOU MEAN BY THE TERM 'CRITICAL INCIDENT'	4
AIM	4
CREATION OF A COPING SUPPORTIVE AND CARING ETHOS IN THE SCHOOL.....	5
PHYSICAL SAFETY	5
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY	5
CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (CIMT)	6
TEAM LEADER: MR THOMAS SHARKEY	6
GARDA LIAISON: MR THOMAS SHARKEY	6
STAFF LIAISON: MR RICHARD MELANIPHY	6
STUDENT LIAISON <i>Ms Niamh O'Neill</i>	6
COMMUNITY/AGENCY LIAISON <i>Ms Neasa Ní Chonluain</i>	7
PARENT LIAISON: APPROPRIATE YEAR HEAD AND / OR GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR	7
MEDIA LIAISON: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL.....	7
ADMINISTRATOR: SCHOOL SECRETARY	7
RECORD KEEPING.....	8
CONFIDENTIALITY AND GOOD NAME CONSIDERATIONS	8
CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION REGARDING THE PLAN.....	8
SHORT TERM ACTIONS – DAY 1	10
MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS - (DAY 2 AND FOLLOWING DAYS)	11
FOLLOW-UP – BEYOND 72 HOURS.....	12

Fís na Scoile

Our school's Vision Statement is built on the three strands of Vision, Values, Behaviours as adopted by our Board of Management. This statement is central to all plans, policies and routines in school.

Vision Coláiste Chú Chulainn - Success for All.

Values

- We **Plan** for Success for Every Student
- We **Model** Success in Our Practice
- We **Celebrate** Success
- We are **Partners** for Success in Our Community
- We **Deliver** Success for Students, Families and Community

Behaviours

We Plan for Success for Every Student

- We set and share learning intentions in our work.
- We differentiate in our lessons.
- We give formative feedback to our students on their work.
- We use self and peer assessment in our lessons.
- We engage all students in school life.

We Model Success in Our Practice

- We implement LMETB and Coláiste Chú Chulainn policies in all of our work.
- We are prepared for our work as students and staff.
- We reflect on our professional practice and strive for improvements where identified.
- We share resources, knowledge and experience.

We Celebrate Success

- We praise our students for their efforts and achievements.
- We hold Awards Events.
- We share our stories at every opportunity.
- We include the whole community in our celebrations.

We are Partners for Success in Our Community.

- We collaborate with local and national enterprises.
- We are active in community activities.
- We invite guests to work with us in our learning.
- We are inclusive of everybody.

We Deliver Success for Students, Families and Our Community

- Our students achieve the best possible grades.
- Our students complete their 2nd Level education in Coláiste Chú Chulainn.
- Our students progress to Higher & Further Education or employment.
- Our students have excellent attendance.

The key to managing a critical incident is planning. Schools are strongly advised to develop a policy in relation to critical incident response. NEPS also encourages schools to develop a Critical Incident Management Plan, outlining who will do what in the event of a tragedy.

The templates outlined below are designed as an aid to schools in drawing up a policy and plan. Each school will need to look at its own particular context and circumstances and draw up its own unique policy and plan. Additional guidance is contained in Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016) R19-21 P.79-90.

Coláiste Chúlainn aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, through Mr Thomas Sharkey 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 201 6)
- 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 201 5)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of Coláiste Chúlainn 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

Some of the measures taken by the school to ensure the physical safety of the students include:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard (possibly include details)
- Front gate locked during school hours
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the playground – include details

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Coláiste Chú Chulainn* 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 to ensure the psychological wellbeing of the students include:

- 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 – list these agencies
- 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 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 Thomas Sharkey

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

(Note - It is important to consider who will take the lead in the absence of the team leader.)

Garda liaison: Mr Thomas Sharkey

Role

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

Staff liaison: Mr Richard Melaniphy

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 Niamh O'Neill

Role

- Co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads 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 (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison *Ms Neasa Ní Chonluain*

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: Appropriate Year Head and / or Guidance Counsellor

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: School 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: School Secretary

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

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.

The school secretary 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 *Coláiste Chú Chulainn* 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>Guidance Suites</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Board Room</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Board Room</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Guidance Suites</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Board Room</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. 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 A McGahon

The plan will be updated annually in September.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Thomas Sharkey</i>	042 9354553
Garda liaison	<i>Thomas Sharkey</i>	042 9354553
Staff liaison	<i>Richard Melaniphy</i>	042 9354553
Student liaison	<i>Niamh O'Neill</i>	042 9354553
Community liaison	<i>Neasa Ní Chonluain</i>	042 9354553
Parent liaison	<i>Year Head as appropriate</i>	042 9354553
Media liaison	<i>Thomas Sharkey</i>	042 9354553
Administrator	<i>School secretary</i>	042 9354553

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Team leader
Who, what, when, where?	Team leader
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Team leader
Contact external agencies	N Ní Chonluain
Arrange supervision for students	R Melaniphy, N O'Neill
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Management Team
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Year Head, Guidance Counsellor
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Guidance Team
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
Meet whole staff	Staff Liaison
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Staff Liaison, Student Liaison
Visit the injured	Team Leader
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Team Leader, Guidance Counsellor
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Management Team
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	N Ni Chonluain
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Guidance Dept, Year Heads
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Guidance Dept
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM