



# **CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**St Oliver Post Primary School**

August 2023

## **Introduction**

St Oliver Post Primary School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by always providing a safe and nurturing environment. The Board of Management, through the principal has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

**Important Note: If an LMETB School experiences a Critical Incident the Principal will contact the CE, the Director of Schools, LMETB and the school's NEPS Psychologist immediately to alert them to the Critical Incident.**

**The CE and/or Director of Schools will schedule a meeting with the School Principal and/or Deputy Principals regarding next steps in implementing the Critical Incident Management Plan.**

**In LMETB Schools and Colleges, the Principal will discuss any queries from the media and/or An Garda Síochána with the Director of Schools and/or Director of OSD and/or CE.**

## **School Mission Statement**

St. Oliver Post Primary School is committed to quality education. It seeks to enrich students' lives and empower them for life's many challenges. This is done in a caring atmosphere of good order and discipline and in partnership with parents.

In our daily life we value the principles of justice, mutual respect, equality, and tolerance leading to promotion of a positive self-image and the confidence to achieve the highest levels.

## **Review and Research**

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://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)

## **What is meant by a Critical Incident?**

The staff and management of St Oliver Post Primary School 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 of the CIMP**

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**

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard

#### **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of St Oliver Post Primary School 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 around suicide awareness, and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPs, Jigsaw etc.
- 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](http://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. This team includes those listed below and Assistant Principal 1's and relevant tutors.

**Team Leader:** Brendan Corcoran

**Deputy Team Leader:** Micheal McCafferty

#### **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** in LMETB Schools and Colleges, the School Principal will liaise with the CE and Director of Schools/Director of OSD regarding communication with An Garda Siochana.

**Role**

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

**Staff liaison** Brendan Corcoran

**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 contacts them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

**Student liaison** Guidance Counsellor

**Role**

- At post-primary level, may 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** Guidance Counsellor

**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** Brendan Corcoran

## **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** – in LMETB Schools and Colleges, the School Principal will liaise with the CE and Director of Schools when processing queries from the media. All media queries received by staff members in an LMETB school should be directed to the 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** Micheal McCafferty

## **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 school’s system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails, and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

**Record keeping** Micheal McCafferty

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.

School secretaries will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

## Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff 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.*

<b>Critical Incident Rooms</b>	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
<b>Room Name:</b>	<b>Designated Purpose:</b>
<i>Staffroom</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Canteen</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Guidance Offices</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Principal's Office</i>	Meetings with media*
<i>Guidance Offices</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Guidance Offices</i>	Meetings with other visitors

**\*In LMETB Schools and College the Principal will liaise with the CE and Director of Schools when processing queries from the media.**

## Checklist - 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 Deputy Principal
- The plan will be updated annually



Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
<b>Team leader:</b>	School Principal	0876844166
<b>Garda liaison</b>	School Principal	0876844166
<b>Staff liaison</b>	School Principal	0876844166
<b>Student liaison</b>	Guidance Counsellor - ANiAinle	0877947929
<b>Community liaison</b>	School Principal	0876844166
<b>Parent liaison</b>	Guidance Counsellor - SMcArdle	0879379398
<b>Media liaison</b>	School Principal	0876844166
<b>Administrator</b>	Deputy Principal	0879601399
<b>Other Members</b>	Assistant Principal 1s Relevant Tutors	

### Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	
Who, what, when, where?	
Contact CE, Director of Schools, NEPS Psychologist	<b>School Principal</b>
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	
Contact external agencies	
Arrange supervision for students	
Hold staff meeting	<b>All staff</b>
Agree schedule for the day	
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	
Compile a list of vulnerable students	
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media – in LMETB Schools the Principal will liaise with the CE and/or Director of Schools and/or Director of OSD regarding same	
Inform parents	
Hold end of day staff briefing	

### 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	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	
Visit the injured	
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

### **Follow-up – beyond 72 hours**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	
Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family	
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents, and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

## EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

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Emergency Services:	999 / 112
Teen Counselling:	01 6231398
Fire Brigade:	046-9051068
Garda Station:	049-8541102
Kells Garda:	046-9280820
Ambulance:	046-9023333
Oldcastle Health Centre:	049-8541118
Doc on Call:	1850777911
E.S.B:	1850372757
DES:	0906483600
NEPS: Deirdre Conway	076-1108780
TUSLA (Navan)	046-9098560

[Cpwrf.lhmf@tusla.ie](mailto:Cpwrf.lhmf@tusla.ie)

## Critical Incident Management Plan

**Date of Ratification of  
Policy by Board of  
Management**


24th August 2023

**Date of Scheduled  
Review of Policy by  
Board of Management**

August 2023

## **BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for This Policy**

### **BOM Ratification**

<b><i>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</i></b>	<b><i>24th August 2023</i></b>
<b><i>Proposed By:</i></b>	
<b><i>Seconded By:</i></b>	
<b><i>Signed:</i></b>	<b><i>(Chairperson, BOM)</i></b>
<b><i>Signed:</i></b>	 <b><i>(Secretary to the BOM)</i></b>
<b><i>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</i></b>	

### **LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board**

<b><i>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</i></b>	
<b><i>Signed</i></b>	<b><i>(Chairperson)</i></b>