Critical Incident Management Plan

St. Clement's College

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St. Clement's College aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. We seek to do this by our mission statement which aims to facilitate the development of each student to his full academic, personal, spiritual and social potential in a catholic, caring, respectful and safe environment.

St. Clement's College have formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students, and the creation of a supportive and caring ethos in the school, at all times including in the event of a critical incident. They have established a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

What is a Critical Incident?

St. Clement's College recognise a critical incident to be: *"an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school"*

Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for schools- NEPS 2007[1]

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 school community
- Serious damage to the school building such as fire, flood, vandalism
- The disappearance of a member of the school community

Aim of our Critical Incident Policy.

The aim of this policy 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 make 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.

[1] https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Responding-to-Critical-Incidents-Staff-Room-Notice.pd

Physical Safety

Please refer to St Clements College Health & Safety Policy

- An evacuation plan has been formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- There is a daily supervision rota in the school – pre-school, break times, lunchtimes and after school (This is posted in the staff room)
- The main entrance, student entrance and the gates to both car parks are locked during school hours
- The rules, regulations and guidelines for behaviour have been formulated in a Code of Behaviour which is contained in the school journal. This Code of Behaviour is sent home to parents who sign an acceptance letter and return it to the College. Year Heads and Assistant Year Heads remind pupils of these rules throughout the year.

Psychological Safety

St. Clement's College aims 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.

This is done in the following ways:

- 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 alcohol and drug prevention. Promotion of mental health is included in this provision.

- Staff has access to training for their role in SPHE.
- The College has adopted the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. NEPS etc.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy. All staff and students are aware of this policy. (ref. Bí Cineálta)
- There is a Pastoral Care system in place in the school (ref. Pastoral Care Policy)
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. outreach support worker/counsellor), 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 (Employee Assistance Service)

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.

The key roles are as follows:

- Team leader
- Gárda liaison
- Staff liaison
- Student liaison
- Parent liaison
- Community liaison
- Media liaison
- Administrator

Team Leader

A person who carries authority and can make decisions during a crisis (e.g., school closure, attendance at memorial services, etc.)

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the DES; NEPS; SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda Liaison

- **This may be seen as part of the team leader's role**
    - Liaises with the Gardaí
    - Ensures that information about death is verified before being shared.

Staff Liaison

- **A staff member known and trusted by the staff**
    - 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 day progresses
    - Be alert to vulnerable staff members and make contact with them individually. Advises them of availability of Employee Assistant Service and gives them the contact number.

Student Liaison

- **A trusted and familiar figure to the students**
- May co-ordinate information from class tutors, Year Heads and Assistant Year Heads about students causing concern.
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where necessary

Agency Liaison

- **Someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community.**
- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert of the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent Liaison

- **Someone who is known to the parents. This person should be comfortable speaking before a large group and have skills to manage emotional reactions of individual or groups of parents.**
- 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

Media Liaison

- **Someone with good interpersonal skills who would be comfortable talking to the media by phone or in person. A person who is able to set limits without being offensive.**
    - 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 press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator

1. **Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of:**
   - Parents or guardians
   - Teachers
   - Emergency support services
   - Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to. In the immediate aftermath of any incident it may be necessary to have several people taking phone calls. Anyone carrying out such a function will report the outcome of all calls to the Administrator.
   - Ensures that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
   - Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
   - Photocopy of materials needed
   - Maintains records

2. **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. She will be assisted in the logging of phone calls where necessary.

Confidentiality and good name considerations.

St. Clement's College have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any 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 that students do so also. For instance, 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

Critical Incident Rooms In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	**Designated Purpose:**
Library	Main room for meeting staff
Base classrooms/Gym/ Demo Room	Meetings with students
Principal/Deputy Principal's Office	Meetings with parents
Conference Room	Meetings with media
Chaplaincy/Counselling Room	Individual sessions with students
Resource rooms	Meetings with other visitors

Report

A log of everything that we do should be kept and stored in a file/folder so that a critical incident if it occurs is recorded in its entirety. This report can be then used as a means to assessing our response to a critical incident and provide the basis on which we can evaluate any such incident.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal and Deputy Principal at the new staff induction meeting which occurs prior to the beginning of the academic year.

This plan will be updated and reviewed at the beginning of each year.

Critical Incident Management Team

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	**Name**	**Phone**
Team leader:	*Ms. Patricia Kieran* *Mr. Michael O'Connor*	
Garda liaison	*Mr.Michael O'Connor*	
Staff liaison	*Ms. Joanne Behan* *Ms.Frances Murphy* *Mr. Mike Lynch*	
Student liaison	*Mr. Robert Browne* *Ms. Joanne Behan* *Mr. Mike Lynch* *Ms. Frances Murphy* *Ms. Una Ruddle* *Mr David Tidswell* *Mr Eoin O'Toole* *Mr. Tommy Giltenane* *Mr. Willie Griffin*	
Community liaison	*Ms. Niamh Canty* *Mr. Tommy Giltenane*	
Parent liaison	*Mr. Michael O'Connor* *Ms. Joan Chawke* *Mr. Tommy Giltenane*	
Media liaison	*Mr. Michael O'Connor* *Ms. Patricia Kieran*	
Administrator	*Ms .Deborah O'Mara* *Ms. Margaret Gallagher* *Extra support staff to be drafted in to help if necessary*	

Short Term Actions – Day 1 (Resources kept in staff room)

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Michael O'Connor
Who, what, when, where?	Michael O'Connor
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Michael O'Connor
Contact external agencies	Michael O'Connor/Joan Chawke/Niamh Canty/Tommy Giltenane/Toni Breen
Arrange supervision for students	Robert Browne/Joanne Behan/Mike Lynch/David Tidswell/Eoin O'Toole/Willie Griffin/Una Ruddle/Frances Murphy/Toni Breen
Hold staff meeting	**All staff**
Agree schedule for the day	Michael O'Connor
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	NEPS/Toni Breen
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Robert Browne/Joanne Behan/Mike Lynch/David Tidswell/Eoin O'Toole/Willie Griffin/Una Ruddle/Frances Murphy/Niamh Canty/Toni Breen/Tommy Giltenane
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Michael O'Connor/Patricia Kieran
Inform parents	Michael O'Connor/ NEPS
Hold end of day staff briefing	Michael O'Connor

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Ms Patricia Kieran Mr Michael O'Connor
Meet external agencies	Mr. Michael O'Connor
Meet whole staff	*Ms. Joanne Behan* *Ms. Frances Murphy* *Mr. Mike Lynch*
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Niamh Canty/Joan Chawke/Frances Murphy/Toni Breen/Tommy Giltenane
Visit the injured	Niamh Canty/Joan Chawke/Frances Murphy/ Tommy Giltenane
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Niamh Canty/Joan Chawke/Frances Murphy/Tommy Giltenane
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Joan Chawke/David Tidswell/Joanne Behan/Mike Lynch/Robert Browne /Eoin O'Toole/Willie Griffin/Una Ruddle/Frances Murphy/Niamh Canty
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	Outreach worker/Counsellors/HSCL
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Chaplain/ Year Head/HSCL/Outreach Worker
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Chaplain
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	(061) 212400 (Henry Street)
Hospital	(061) 301111 (UHL)
Fire Brigade	(061) 407100 (Limerick Fire Station)
Local GPs	See first aid personnel
HSE	(061) 483719
Community Care Team	See HSCL/Outreach Worker
Child and Family Centre	See HSCL/Outreach Worker

Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	(061) 483388
School Inspector	See HSCL/Outreach Worker
NEPS Psychologist	See HSCL/Outreach Worker
DES	(01) 889 6400 (Dublin Office)
INTO/ASTI/TUI	01 6040160 ASTI/ 01 4922588 TUI
Clergy	061 315099 Redemptorists
State Exams Commission	090 6442700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN Reviewed

At a suitable time following the incident the CIMT should organise a debriefing session for all those involved.

Note: Submitted to Board of Management and Trustees on October 23rd 2025

Reviewed and ratified on October 23rd 2025

Signed:_____ Date: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management
Date of next review: October 2026

Statement to the Media from the Principal

My name is _____ and I am the principal of St. Clement's College. We learned this morning of the death of (one of our students / Name of the student). This is a terrible tragedy for _____ family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with (Name) family and friends.

(Name of student) was a (? Year) boy and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

We have been in contact with his parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers and support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and (insert other relevant) have been with us all day supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time.

The teachers have been helping students to deal with this tragic event.

The school has been open to parents to support them and to offer them advice and guidance.

We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.