

Plean Scoile

St. Fiacc's

Critical Incidence Policy



St. Fiacc's N.S.  
Fírinne le Misneach

Formulated/Ratified/Reviewed	By
Formulated 17/02/16	Staff
Ratified 09/03/2016	BOM
Reviewed 11/1/2017	Staff
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Signed Chairperson BOM

*Lillian Fogarty*

## CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

St. Fiacc's NS aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. St Fiacc's embodies Christian, Catholic values which emphasises compassion and care. The Board of Management, through John Brennan has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

*Our aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the Critical Incident Management Plan.*

### Review and Research

The CIMT should consult resource documents available to schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie), these include:

- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015) (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)

Other useful documents may be found on websites listed below:

[www.barnardos.ie/resources](http://www.barnardos.ie/resources)  
[www.irishchildhoodbereavementnetwork.ie](http://www.irishchildhoodbereavementnetwork.ie)  
[www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)  
[www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)  
[www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)  
[www.ias.ie](http://www.ias.ie)  
[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)  
[www.winstonwish.org.uk](http://www.winstonwish.org.uk)  
[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)  
[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)  
[www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)  
[www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)  
[www.mentalhealthireland.ie](http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie)

Helplines: Childline: 1800 666 666

### Definition of the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of St. Fiacc's NS 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
- A major 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 impact on 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** (See also St. Fiacc's Health & Safety policy)

- Evacuation plan formulated.
- Regular fire drills occur.
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked.
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard from 8:50 -9.10am.
- Entrance gates are locked during school hours.
- School doors are locked during school hours. A buzzer entry system is in place.
- Rules of the playground are enforced regularly (See Code of Behaviour).

**Psychological safety**

The management and staff of St. Fiacc's 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.

Specific examples are as follows:

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. 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 are addressed in the SPHE curriculum. 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 Procedures and the name of the Designated Liaison Person.
- 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.



- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPs; TUSLA; Barnardos.
- 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.
- The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and deals with incidents of 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.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member, 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 (a summary of this support is set out in R 23)
- 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 to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

### **Preparation of CIMP.**

**Roles:** Schools need to make arrangements for assigning roles, taking account of such practical issues as school size and the number of staff available. Many schools will double up of roles. Schools might wish to consider including one or more members of the BOM on the team as well as members of the school's student support / care team.

The key roles which need to be covered are as follows:

TEAM LEADER  
 GARDA LIAISON  
 STAFF LIAISON  
 STUDENT LIAISON  
 PARENT / GUARDIAN LIAISON  
 COMMUNITY LIAISON  
 MEDIA LIAISON  
 ADMINISTRATOR

Outlined below are some points on the key responsibilities of each role.

### **TEAM LEADER - John Brennan**

A person who carries authority and can make decisions during a crisis (eg school closure, attendance or memorial services, etc)

- 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; ETB
- Liaises with the bereaved family.
- The Deputy Principal will take the lead in the absence of the team leader.

#### **GARDA LIAISON- John Brennan**

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

#### **STAFF LIAISON - Fiona Payne, Gillian Doyle, Pauric Bolton**

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)
- 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.
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses

#### **STUDENT LIAISON - Mandy Minnock, Justin Kelly, Mary Kavanagh, Karen Kavanagh, Ciara O' Brien**

A trusted and familiar figure to the students.

- 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 - Pauric Bolton, Fiona Payne, Gillian Doyle**

Someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community.

- 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/GUARDIAN LIAISON - Pauric Bolton; John Brennan; Fiona Payne; Siobhan Cody Gaule**

Someone known to the parent. 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 meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers' sessions
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are prepared and available on the school's IT system 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 - John Brennan**

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 a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management).

#### **ADMINISTRATOR - Sharon O' Byrne, Vanessa Reddy**

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of parents/guardians; teachers; emergency services.
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response
- Ensures that templates are available on the school's IT system and ready for adaptation.
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials as 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 emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretary (Sharon O' Byrne) will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

#### **Confidentiality and good name considerations**

The management and staff of St. Fiacc's 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 confirmed 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,

*Staff Room* - will be the main room used to meet the staff

*Room 24 & 17* - for meetings with students

*Room 8* - for parents

*Parish Centre* - for media

*HSCCL Room* - for individual sessions with students

*Principal/HSCL Room - for other visitors*

### **Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan.

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 John Brennan

The plan will be updated annually (*January*)

### Management Team

Role	Name	Contact
Team Leader	John Brennan	059 9132444
Garda Liaison	John Brennan	059 9132444
Staff Liaison	Fiona Payne Gillian Doyle, Pauric Bolton	059 9132444
Student Liaison	Mandy Minnock Justin Kelly, Mary Kavanagh, Karen Kavanagh, Ciara O' Brien	059 9132444
Parent Liaison	John Brennan Pauric Bolton Fiona Payne Siobhan Cody Gaule	059 9132444
Community Liaison	Pauric Bolton, Fiona Payne, Gillian Doyle	059 9132444
Media Liaison	John Brennan	059 9132444
Administrator	Sharon O' Byrne, Vanessa Reddy	059 9132444

### SHORT TERM ACTIONS – DAY 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	John Brennan
Who, what, when, where?	John Brennan

Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Team
Contact external agencies	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton
Arrange supervision for students	Pauric Bolton
Hold staff meeting	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton
Agree schedule for the day	All Staff
Inform students - (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	John Brennan & Team members to be agreed
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Fiona Payne
Contact/visit the bereaved family	Pauric Bolton; John Brennan
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with the media	John Brennan
Inform parents/guardians	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton
Hold end of the day staff meeting	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton

## Medium Term Actions (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	John Brennan
Meet external agencies	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton
Meet whole staff	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton
Arrange support for students, staff, parents/guardians	Fiona Payne; Gillian Doyle, CIMT
Visit the injured	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Fr Dunphy; John Brennan; Pauric Bolton
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	CIMT



Make decisions about school closure	BOM
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Follow-Up beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Fiona Payne
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton; Fiona Payne
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	John Brennan; Pauric Bolton
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff/Parents & Students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

**Emergency Contact List**

Agency	Contact Numbers
Garda	059 9136627
Hospital: St Luke's Kilkenny	056 7785000
Fire Brigade - Carlow Fire Station	999 or 112
GP Dr Ni Ghrainne	059 9132450
GP Dr Lach	059 9133330
GP Dr Jacob	059 9130357
Child & Family Agency/TUSLA	057 8692567 057 8692568
HSE Tullamore SMO DR Fiona McGuire	057 9359891
CAMHS	057 8696152
Inspector Jean Pender	<a href="mailto:Jean.Pender@education.gov.ie">Jean.Pender@education.gov.ie</a> 01 8896400
NEPs Psychologist Sheila Keane	087 1959503
DES	090 6483600
INTO	01 8047700
Chaplain Fr John Dunphy Parish Centre	086 2547601 059 9141833
Inspire Workplace Services	1800411057
Dolmen Guarding Ltd Keyholding Monitoring Richard Timmons	059 9137217 086 0578166
Chairperson BOM Lillian Fogarty	0868337848
PENSEC Alarms/electrical services Martin Pender	087 8065651
Fire Alarm Company - maintenance Horizon	059 9182517
Alarm Monitoring - Alarm Control 24 - Pensec Security Solutions	01 2923775 059 9139731