

SCOIL SAN EOIN CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY



The School fosters the physical, social, academic and spiritual development of our children. We cherish the self-esteem and individuality of each child emphasising their many and varying gifts. In this context we value the cooperation of the staff, parents, Board of Management and the local community.

Scoil San Eoin also aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times, to this end we have compiled a Critical Incident policy. This shall be developed, reviewed and implemented by a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT).

CRITICAL INCIDENT

The staff and management of Scoil San Eoin recognise a critical incident to be:

An incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school (NEPS, 2007).

Critical Incidents may involve one or more students, 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 involving 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 CIMT

The aims of the CIMT are:

- 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
- To ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff
- To help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited
- To enable us to return to normality as soon as possible.

CREATION OF A COPING SUPPORTIVE AND CARING ETHOS IN THE SCHOOL

We have put systems into place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

PHYSICAL SAFETY

The school has the following elements in place:

- An evacuation plan
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire extinguishers are serviced annually
- Health and Safety audits are carried out annually and the issues arising reported to BOM.
- School rules are in place to ensure the safety of pupils.

All visitors/parents/volunteers are asked to report to the office on entry to the school and sign in.

This area is covered in more detail under our Health and Safety Policy.

PHYSICOLOGICAL SAFETY

The management and staff of Scoil San Eoin 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 such issues 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 members have access to training for their role in SPHE.
- Staff members are familiar with the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Staff members are familiar with details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures.
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting Primary school pupils are available.
- Information is available on mental health in general and such specific areas on signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, HSE, Gardaí, SENO, Accord, Health Clinic, Lucena Clinic, etc.
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the lights of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content and the expertise of the providers
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Staff members are informed on how to access support for themselves.
- Students who are designated as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member, concerns are explored and appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis. The members of the team will meet every two years 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 San Eoin Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)	
Team Leader:	Principal: Linda Greene
Staff Liaison:	Deputy Principal: AM. Nuzum
Chairperson of the Board of Management	Caroline Mooney
Community Liaison:	Community Rep from the BOM: Pauline Nolan
Parent Liaison	
Administrator	Mary Quigley

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In the event of a Critical Incident, NEPS and Garda Liaison may be contacted.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH ROLE

Leadership Roles Team Leader – Principal:

- Confirms the event
- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the Gardaí.
- Liaises with the Board of Management, Department of Education & Skills and NEPS.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.
- Ensures that information about deaths is checked before being shared.

Leadership Roles Team Leader – Principal:

- 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.)
- Prepares a public statement with the CIMT team, organises designated room to promptly address the media.
- Ensures the provision of ongoing support to staff and students.
- Facilitates any appropriate memorial events.
- Reviews plan.

The Deputy Principal will replace Principal in her absence.

Staff Liaison -Deputy Principal on CMIT:

- Leads briefing meeting for the staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, and outlines the routine for the day.
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students.
- Provides materials for the staff and pupils (from their Critical Incident Folder), outlines services available.
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses.
- Keeps a record of students seen by external agency staff.
- Looks into the provision and supervision of a “quiet room”.
- Is alert to vulnerable members of staff and makes contact with them individually, advises them of employee Assistance Service and provides them with contact number (1800 411 057)

Community Liaison: Pauline Nolan:

- Maintain up-to-date lists of contact numbers for
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents’ Council.
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.
- Liaison with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
- Co-ordinate the involvement of volunteers from wider community whose help may be required.

Community Liaison: Pauline Nolan:

- Assist the team leader in the provision of appropriate materials to parents (from Critical Incident Folder).
- Provide the team with any local information, which may be useful in the management of the incident.
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals' offering support.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

Parent Liaison:

- 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 and ready for adaptation.
- Sets up a room for meeting with parents.
- Maintains a record of parents seen.
- Meets with individual parents.
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from critical incident folder).

Administrator: Mary Quigley:

- Maintenance of up-to-date telephone numbers of:
 1. Parents/Guardians
 2. Teachers
 3. Emergency support services
 4. CIMT members
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that sample letters are on the school system in advance and are ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
- 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
- materials used etc.

The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, photocopying materials and sending and receiving all letters etc.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND GOOD NAME KEEPING

The management and staff of Scoil San Eoin have a responsibility to protect the good name and privacy 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 the 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 phrase “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	Meeting with staff
GP Room	Meeting the parents
Ms. Greene's Classroom	Meeting with the Media/ Other visitors
Ms. Nuzum's Classroom	Meeting the pupils
Resource/Purple room	Individual sessions with pupils

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Staff were consulted and their views canvassed in preparation of this plan.
- Parents' representatives have also endorsed the policy.
- 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 the Substitute folder.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil San Eoin on _____. It will then be circulated to each teacher. It will then also be made available on the school website.

Signed:

Chairperson

Date: _____

Principal

Date: _____