

**St Anne's Community College**



# CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Updated September 2022  
St. Anne's Community College

## Definition of a Crisis/Critical Incident

**“A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school” – NEPS**

**A crisis or critical incident is broadly defined as any situation faced by a school community causing its members to experience unusually strong emotional reactions, which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the time the situation arises or later. The necessity of responding promptly and appropriately in such a situation is important in protecting the mental health of students, staff and families.**

---

### *FUNCTION OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT TEAM*

---

- 1. To provide direction, structure, control and support when a crisis occurs.**
- 2. To implement an immediate plan to respond to a critical incident.**
- 3. To assist the school community in managing the fear and anxiety that accompanies a critical incident, and to monitor the reactions of the students, staff and school community.**
- 4. To coordinate and monitor the plan.**

---

*CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM*

---

<b>Leader.</b>	<b>Ms. Eukaria O'Grady</b> <b>Ms. Beverley Hartigan (Acting Principal)</b> <b>Assisted by Chaplain</b>
<b>Deputy Leader.</b>	<b>Ms. Mary Fitzgerald</b>
<b>Staff Liaison.</b>	<b>Ms. Mary Fitzgerald</b> <b>Ms. Ailis Minogue</b>
<b>Student Liaison.</b>	<b>Mr. John Gleeson</b> <b>Ms. Maree Murphy</b> <b>Ms. Fiona Daly</b>
<b>Year Head/s</b>	<b>Dependant on Year group directly affected</b>
<b>Family/ Parent Liaison.</b>	<b>Ms. Karol Torpey</b> <b>Ms. Eukaria O'Grady</b>
<b>Community Liaison.</b>	<b>Ms. Eukaria O'Grady/Ms. Mary Fitzgerald</b>
<b>Media Liaison.</b>	<b>Ms. Eukaria O'Grady</b>

**\*Year Head/Secretary may be added as or when required.**

---

*Role of Leader / Deputy Leader*

---

1. **To clarify the facts surrounding death/incident.**
2. **To reduce risk and make environment safe.**
3. **To alert the team members to the crisis and convene meeting.**
4. **To coordinate the tasks of the team.**
5. **To agree a statement regarding the incident and distribute it.**
6. **To liaise with the E.T.B., Department of Education and Science and other agencies as necessary e.g. NEPS.**
7. **To identify contact person for family with school and explain role and method of contact.**
8. **To convene a short staff meeting if circumstances allow, or organise special staff briefings as required. E.g. send message around to teachers.**
9. **To ensure classes run as normally as possible.**
10. **To attend all meetings of the Critical Incident Management Support Team.**

---

*Role of Staff Liaison*

---

1. To alert staff members of incident, if necessary by phone, as early as possible. (To agree a statement to be made by the Critical Incident Management Support Team when contacting staff and agree on additional people to be contacted. To agree a statement to be used by the Secretary regarding enquires).
2. To distribute a written statement to each staff member which they will be asked to read to their students.
3. To remind staff of their obligation to strictly adhere to the facts on the written statement when answering student questions. Avoiding terms such as murder/suicide.
4. To identify students directly involved in incident and inform their teachers.
5. To facilitate staff support for those who may not be able to take classes.
6. To identify staff members with individual skills/strengths which would be of help.
7. To ensure classes run as normally as possible.
8. To notify Student Liaison Team members of vulnerable students identified by staff.
9. To attend all meetings of the Critical Incident Management Support team.

---

*Role of Student Liaison.*

---

1. To provide a link between staff and students.
2. To identify students affected by the incident, inform them appropriately and monitor their reactions.
3. To provide material of support to students.
4. To observe vulnerable students and alert staff.
5. To facilitate meetings of groups of students or individual students in pre designated areas.
6. To liaise with Principal.
7. To attend all meetings of the Critical Incident Management Support team.
8. The Principal or a representative from the Critical Incident Management Support team will advise students regarding media interviews and use of inappropriate terms such as suicide, murder etc. And use of more appropriate terms as agreed with the relevant prepared statement such as violent death, sudden death, tragic death as agreed.

---

*Role of Family / Parents Liaison.*

---

1. **To provide a link between the family/ies and the school.**
2. **To be the named contact for parent groups.**
3. **To visit the bereaved family/ies with team leader.**
4. **To compile a list of families of vulnerable students and make contact.**
5. **To facilitate meetings and information between the family/families and the school.**
6. **To meet with individual parents.**
7. **To provide material to parents to help them cope with a crisis/loss.**
8. **To attend all meetings of the Critical Incident Management Support team.**

---

*Role of Community Liaison*

---

1. **To compile and maintain a contact list of support agencies.**
2. **To coordinate the involvement of the necessary support agencies.**
3. **To liaise with agencies in the community for support and referral.**
4. **To update support team members on the involvement of support agencies.**
5. **To attend all meetings of the Critical Incident Management Support team.**

---

*Role of Media Liaison*

---

1. **To prepare a press release (If possible following a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Support Team).**
2. **To brief the media.**
3. **To be the sole spokesperson for the school in relation to the incident.**



---

*Guidelines for Staff*

---

1. **To reduce risk and make environment safe in the event of a classroom incident. Control the situation and send a student for help to office and nearest teacher.**
2. **Keep a record of all students who leave class or are absent.**
3. **Observe vulnerable student/staff and liaise with the Critical Incident Management Support team.**
4. **Adhere strictly to written statement and avoid elaboration. Avoiding terms such as suicide, murder. (Use words as agreed in the statement such as tragic death, violent death, sudden death as agreed).**
5. **Try to ensure classes run as normally as possible.**
6. **The Principal is the only person authorised to hold media interviews unless a separate media liaison spokesperson has been previously appointed.**
7. **A statement will be provided to the media but access to the staff and students will not be facilitated.**
8. **Advice to students re media interviews will be included with written statement.**
9. **If an incident occurs in school, the section where the incident has taken place will be closed and the emergency services will be called.**
10. **If an incident occurs on a school outing, see School Policy on same for guidelines.**
11. **A list of phone numbers of emergency services is attached**

12. Staff members are recommended to keep a written record of all meetings relating to the incident.
13. Each Team Member will be allocated a specific list of teachers to contact.
14. The location and operation of all cut out switches in practical rooms will be made known to staff.
15. Staff with expertise in specific areas, e.g. first aid, and who are willing to assist in a critical incident should inform the Critical Incident Management Support Team.
16. Class lists for Student Liaison Members will be compiled and updated as necessary.
17. A specific area either within or without the school will be used as a base for all activities.
18. Religion and Drawing Rooms will be used for group meetings of students.
19. Oratory will be used for prayer and reflection.
20. A suitable meeting room will be designated to immediate family if required.
21. Language Lab and Computer Room will be used as meeting rooms for family groups.

---


*Contact Numbers*

---

<b>AMBULANCE / FIRE BRIGADE</b>	<b>999</b>
<b>BALLINA SRGERY</b>	<b>061 376546</b>
<b>EAST CLINIC</b>	<b>061 376349</b>
<b>DR LYNCH</b>	<b>061 375731</b>
<b>SHANNON DOC</b>	<b>1850212999</b>
<b>LIMERICK REGIONAL HOSPITAL</b>	<b>061 30111</b>
<b>NENAGH HOSPITAL</b>	<b>067 31479</b>
<b>CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM</b>	<b>061 485092</b>
<b>Regional Hospital Limerick</b>	<b>087 6534917</b>
<b>GARDA</b>	<b>061 376242</b>
<b>NEPS</b>	<b>01 8892700</b>
<b>CHILD &amp; ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAMHS)</b>	<b>061 412247</b>
<b>MID WESTERN HEALTH BOARD</b>	<b>061 316655</b>
<b>CHILD PSYCHIATRY SERVICES</b>	<b>061 483388 / 412247</b>
<i>CHILD PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES</i>	
<b>CLARE</b>	<b>065 6822027</b>
<b>LIMERICK</b>	<b>061 483692</b>
<b>NR TIPPERARY</b>	<b>06738300</b>
<b>SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE</b>	<b>061461454</b>
<i>VOLUNTARY GROUPS</i>	
<b>BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING SERVICE</b>	<b>01 8391766</b>
<b>SOLAS</b>	<b>01 4732110</b>
<i>BEREAVEMENT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN</i>	
<b>THE SAMARITANS</b>	<b>061 412111</b>
<b>RAINBOWS</b>	<b>061400133</b>
<b>'SLAINTE' Drug &amp; Alcohol Services</b>	<b>061 318633</b>

This policy was ratified by the board of Management on 28/09/22

  
Signed (School Principal)

  
Signed (Chairperson of the Board of Management)