



Critical Incidents Policy

TITLE OF POLICY: Critical Incidents

DEFINITION OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT: A critical Incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the whole school with a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) having greatest involvement and responsibility for the co-ordination and organisation of a coherent and effective response to a CI.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL'S MISSION/VISION/AIMS:

The mission statement emphasises establishing a 'care environment' where a student feels safe and valued. This environment is coupled with The Coláiste's two pillar principles of Bród agus Uaillmhian (Pride and Ambition) where students are encouraged to identify and pursue socio-personal, moral and academic goals. The CI policy is embedded in and an extension of The Coláiste's strong, pastoral care environment/ethos. Therefore prevention is the essential first element of Coláiste na hInse's CI policy (see Coláiste na hInse Pastoral Care policy).

RATIONALE

CI policy is necessary to

- (a) To recognise the reality of life where bad things happen, e.g. suicide
- (b) To Respond not React. Empower the Coláiste community to deal effectively and compassionately with such incidents allowing space to the whole school community to respond to events in an organised, supportive manner. In this way The Coláiste community can return to 'normal' as soon as possible.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

An organised response (CIMP) Team ready to move into action with precise roles (i.e. respond not react).

- To achieve a sense of “control” and “purpose” throughout the CI period and beyond which gives comfort and confidence to whole school community.
- Create an environment that is encouraging and supportive to all, which allows space for normal reactions to CI events in a controlled manner.
- Identify members of community who are vulnerable and extend specialist support to these.
- To provide good communication and coordination with outside agencies and all relevant parties.
- Returns the school to normal as soon as possible.

POLICY CONTENT

(a) Prevention is the most important element of CI policy. Prevention will be achieved through the continuous development of the caring ethos in the school and the pastoral care policy and structures. Intermittent programmes will be engaged in to support this e.g. ‘Sticks and Stones’, guest speakers. Overtime we aim to have CPD on issues of preventing suicide for the whole staff.

-As the school grows, appoint specialist care team including Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, SEN Coordinator.

-Develop strong relationships with local services including NEPS and Family Resource Centre Laytown.

-Promote home-school partnership as through this an openness exists and discussion of sensitive issues that may impact on children occurs more readily – “knowledge is power” i.e. Power to respond.

(b) Establish a CIMP Team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

-Provide a physically safe school through regular on-site safety checks by Care taker and the Health and Safety Committee (H&S Committee– reports to CIMP team leader.

-Having an ethos of teacher responsibility for physical safety within room and on corridors – adequate supervision.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CIMP Team also know as CI Team

(i) Team Leader: Principal

- notifies team
- organises emergency CI Team meeting
- co-ordinates tasks of team
- informs BOM
- liaison with family

(ii) Media Liaison: Principal

- only school representative to make announcements to press
- establishes a “press release” if necessary

(iii) Staff Contact: Deputy Principal

- Texts all staff to inform of CI and includes a contact number for staff to contact for specific details (depends on the CI).
- Informs staff of staff meeting/arrangements for day e.g. whole staff meeting/emergency evening meeting etc.
- Identifies and distributes relevant resource information at the first staff meeting.
- Refers to NEPS psychologist for guidance and uses ‘Responding To Critical Incidents’ resource book for materials

(iv) Garda Contact: Principal

- Has an emergency number list of all relevant agencies .
- Contacts Gardaí re information throughout CI period.

(v) Student Contact: Relevant Realtóir/Caoimhnóir, Guidance Counsellor and SEN Coordinator

- Liaise with staff re. students displaying vulnerable signs
- Identify agencies with the NEPS psychologist for extra support
- Identify relevant material and distribute as a resource pack i.e. putting the day into action
- Identify training for these two members to give extra support to students throughout the day.
- Refers to NEPS psychologist for guidance and uses ‘Responding To Critical Incidents’ resource book for materials

(vi) Parent Contact: Parents association representatives on the Board of Management

- Informs members of PA
- Meet parents individually as enter the school.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Strong care ethos permeates whole school environment – happy school

- Strong care structures e.g. Caomhnóir, Realtóir, guidance and counselling (prevention).
- In case of a CI situation the following criteria:
 - o Organised controlled environment achieved
 - o CIMP team meet and roles revised and put in action
 - o Effective whole-school-community communication organised via the CI team
 - o Relevant, useful resources
 - o Identify vulnerable students and staff and access support
 - o Bereaved family feels respected and supported
 - o Long term screening process in place
 - o Good liaison with relevant agencies
 - o Return to normality as soon as possible
 - o Appropriate acknowledgement of CI in medium/longer term
 - Memorials
 - Services
 - Tree planting i.e. “go back to normal and remember”.

MONITORING PROCEDURES

CI team meets at appointed times during CI period e.g. after school and first thing in morning each day.

- Team meet during the year and practice scenario situations (help of NEPS required).

- Review of event and CI team reaction after event (2 weeks).
- NEPS attend this meeting to give feedback.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Evaluation sheet/session at Tuesday meeting after a period of two weeks has elapsed (whole staff).

- PA (on agenda at next meeting)
- BOM (on agenda at next meeting)
- Students (during SPHE) after a period of time has elapsed
- NEPS psychologist (meeting with CI Team)
- Review will only occur after a period of normality has returned in order that persons can evaluate effectively.

LEGISLATION/EQUALITY PROOFING: Who & How?

- Physical safety of building – health and safety at work legislation.
- Psychology safety – “Child First” child protection guidelines. These guidelines will act as The Coláiste’s child protection policy in the interim.

Date of ratification

SDPI Committee_8th January 2013_____

Staff 5th February 2013

Parents__11th April 2013_____

BOM 20th March 2013

Date of review_____