

**CRITICAL INCIDENT  
MANAGEMENT POLICY**  
**For**  
**Eureka Secondary School**

EUREKA



*Eureka Secondary School* aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment always.

### *Mission Statement of Eureka:*

Eureka Secondary School aims to provide the highest quality education possible to meet the needs of all students, within the limits of available resources, and within an environment and ethos that promote Christian Values, mutual respect and responsible citizens.

The school aims to offer opportunities equally to all its students, whatever their ability, circumstances or religious experiences, in order to develop each person's potential to the full. Programmes are provided to facilitate students whose goal is further education; those who wish to enter the world of work; and those who wish to return to full-time study in the school.

The school is committed to maintaining a supportive partnership with parents who are the primary educators of their children; with employers, schools, the local community, and the parishes from which the pupils come.

The staff, the school's most valued resource, are supported and encouraged in their work and we aim to promote their individual and corporate development through supportive structures and in-service training, both internal and external.

The school is committed to developing a community where mutual respect reigns, where personal standards of work and behaviour are high, and where students' grow to recognise fully their responsibilities both to themselves and to others. Our hope is that when they leave school they may be better able to take their place in society as mature and responsible citizens imbued with the Christian values, which are the inspirations of this school. The school fosters an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated, and all breaches are treated seriously.

The Board of Management through, Caroline O Reilly, Principal, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

### **Review and Research**

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie) including

Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)

- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)

## **What is meant by “Critical Incident”:**

The staff and management of *Eureka Secondary School* 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*
- *An 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 effects on the 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 Health and Safety Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Pastoral Care policy

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard (possibly include details)
- Rules of the movement of students around the school, especially while walking on stairs and in narrow corridors i.e. all Students walk on the right.

### **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of *Eureka Secondary School*, 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 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. 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 Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures

- 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
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students
- **The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS**
- 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 (Primary) or 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with 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 and 2010 for post primary schools.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or support teacher), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. See Ladder of Referral. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency. *Ladder of Referral is displayed throughout the school, and an information night informs parents of such.*
- 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 particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

#### **Team leader: Caroline O'Reilly**

##### **Role**

- 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
- Liaises with the bereaved family

#### **Garda liaison Eimear Flanagan**

##### **Role**

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

#### **Staff liaison Clodagh Brady**

##### **Role**

- 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 the day progresses

- 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.

#### **Student liaison** *Year Heads*

##### **Role**

- At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- 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** *Eimear Flanagan / Roisin Flanagan / Clodagh Brady*

##### **Role**

- 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 liaison** *Gabrielle Moran*

##### **Role**

- 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 (from their critical incident folder)

#### **Media liaison** *Caroline O'Reilly, Gabrielle Moran*

##### **Role**

- 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** *Jennifer Reilly*

**Role**

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
  - Parents or guardians
  - Teachers
  - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

**Record keeping** *Co-Ordinate by Clodagh Brady/ Aisling Mc Guinness*

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.

*Jennifer Reilly* will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

**Confidentiality and good name considerations**

Management and staff of *Eureka Secondary School* have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, e.g. 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.

<b>Critical Incident Rooms</b>	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
<b>Room Name:</b>	<b>Designated Purpose:</b>
<i>Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Gym</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Canteen</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Reception room</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Guidance Rooms</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Reception rooms/ Rooms 45/46</i>	Meetings with other visitors

**Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

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

The plan will be updated annually or as need arises

<b>Critical Incident Management Team</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Team leader:</b>	<i>Caroline O'Reilly</i>	
<b>Garda liaison</b>	<i>Eimear Flanagan</i>	
<b>Staff liaison</b>	<i>Clodagh Brady</i>	
<b>Student liaison</b>	<i>Year head of each Year group</i>	
<b>Community liaison</b>	<i>Eimear Flanagan, Roisin Mallen, Clodagh Brady</i>	
<b>Parent liaison</b>	<i>Gabrielle Moran</i>	
<b>Media liaison</b>	<i>Caroline O'Reilly / Gabrielle Moran</i>	
<b>Administrator</b>	<i>Jennifer Reilly</i>	

### **Short term actions – Day 1**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Gather accurate information</b>	Student Support Team
<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	See teams allocated
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	Caroline O'Reilly, Clodagh Brady
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	NEP's, Garda, Counsellors, Roisin / Students support Team
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	Jennifer Reilly/ Gabrielle
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	<b>All staff</b>
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	Student Support Team
<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	Gabrielle Moran /Roisin Mallen
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	Roisin Mallen/Eimear Flanagan
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	Caroline O'Reilly Gabrielle Moran
<b>Inform parents</b>	Gabrielle Moran
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	Clodagh Brady

## Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	Roisin / Eimear meet
Meet whole staff	Clodagh Brady
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Student Support Team
Visit the injured	Student Support Team
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Student Support Team
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Caroline O'Reilly
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

## Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers / Eimear Flanagan/ Student Support Team
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Eimear Flanagan
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Student Support Team
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Student Support Team/ Year Head / Tutor
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	0469240999
Hospital	0469078500
Fire Brigade	0469051068
Local GPs	Dr Gallagher 0469293941 Dr Walhrab 0469241333 Dr Coffey 0469251400 Dr O'Connell 0469244424
HSE	
Community Care Team / Community Guard	Pauric Keegan - 0469240999
Child and Family Centre	0469021595
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	0469079350
School Inspector	
NEPS Psychologist	Maeve Daly – 0761108635
DES	018896400
ASTI/TUI	ASTI 016040160 TUI 014922588
Clergy	Fr John Byrne/Fr Liam Malone 0469240213 Chaplain Fr David Brennan 0879973264
State Exams Commission	0906442700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057