CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

St Oliver's National School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, through Colm Ó Suilleabháin , 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 and 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)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of St Oliver's National 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

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- School doors locked during class time

Psychological safety

The management and staff of St Oliver's National 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
- 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. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on www.education.ie
- 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. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- 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:
Colm Ó Suilleabháin
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
Colm Ó Suilleabháin
Role

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

Staff liaison Sandra Chute
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 Maria Ryan

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

Martina O'Neill

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

Lynn Jones

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

Noranne Downey

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

Aileen Moynihan

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 and Maintain Records

Record keeping

Aileen Moynihan
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.

Hannah Mary O'Connor and Sharon Healy 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 St Oliver's National 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.

Critical Incident **Rooms**

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
Staff Room	Main room for meeting staff
Office	Meetings with students
Office	Meetings with parents
Office	Meetings with media
Office	Individual sessions with students
Office	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 Maria Ryan
The plan will be updated annually in October.

Critical Incident **Management Team**		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Colm Ó Suilleabháin	
Garda liaison	Colm Ó Suilleabháin	
Staff liaison	Sandra Chute	
Student liaison	Maria Ryan	
Community liaison	Martina O'Neill	
Parent liaison	Lynn Jones	
Media liaison	Noranne Downey	
Administrator	Aileen Moynihan	

Short term actions - Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Colm Ó Suilleabháin
Who, what, when, where?	Colm Ó Suilleabháin
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Office 8:30am
Contact external agencies	Martina O'Neill
Arrange supervision for students	Sandra Chute
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Critical Incident Management Team
Inform students - (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Maria Ryan
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Maria Ryan
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Noranne Downey
Inform parents	Lynn Jones
Hold end of day staff briefing	Critical Incident Management Team

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	Martina O'Neill
Meet whole staff	Critical Incident Management Team
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Critical Incident Management Team
Visit the injured	Team Leader
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Colm Ó Suilleabháin and Lynn Jones
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Colm Ó Suilleabháin
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up - beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Critical Incident Management Team
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Critical Incident Management Team
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Critical Incident Management Team
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	**(064) 6671160**
Hospital	**(066)7184000**
Emergency Phone No for Fire Brigade /Ambulance /Mountain Rescue Fire Brigade- Tralee Station	**911-112** **(066) 7123111-Tralee**
Local GPs	**ROSS MEDICAL PRACTICE** **O64 66 32488**
HSE	**1800 700700** **0646670750**
Community Care Team	(064) 6636030
Child and Family Centre	(064) 6636030
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	(064) 6678400
School Inspector	Eavan_odonoghue@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist	Ms. Cáit O'Sullivan
Dept Education & Skills	09064 83600
INTO / ASTI/TU I	1850 708708
Clergy	(087) 2032455 064 66 31014
State Exams Commission	n/a
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411057