



**Coláiste Pobail Acla**

## **Critical Incident Management Policy**

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## **Background**

“The key to managing a critical incident is planning. NEPS psychologists report that schools that have developed school policy and a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) are able to cope more effectively in the aftermath of an incident. Having a plan enables staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. It may also ensure that normality returns as soon as possible and that the effects on students and staff are limited”. Responding to Critical Incidents, Guidelines for Schools, NEPS, 2007

### ***This policy was completed with reference to***

- Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools, NEPS, 2007
- Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2007

### ***Issues the school needs to address:***

- Creation of a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school
- Defining a critical incident
- Creation of a critical incident management team
- Development and communication of the plan
- Administrative Tasks

## **Definition of a Critical Incident**

For the purposes of this policy a critical incident is defined as any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school e.g.

- The death of a member of the school community
- A serious accident involving pupils or staff
- A traumatic event involving the school
- Serious accident or tragedy in the wider community

As each Critical Incident will require the school to respond in a manner appropriate to that incident at that time, this C.I.M.P. is intended to serve as a general outline of procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident occurring.

In general, it is regarded as good practice for the school to form a Critical Incident Management Team.

## Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Coláiste Pobail Acla 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; coping with loss, communication skills, conflict management, help seeking, bullying, decision-making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of emotional health is an integral part of this provision. Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Wellbeing is now a part of the Junior Cycle curriculum in Coláiste Pobail Acla.
- 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 students are available. Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Staff have attended workshops relating to students' mental health and wellbeing. Staff are made aware that they must report any signs of depression, anxiety or vulnerability.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies - NEPS, CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service - HSE), Social Workers, School Completion Programme, NCSE, Mindspace, local GPs, local clergy and MSLETB.
- Interactions with external providers are carefully considered in the light 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. A bullying survey is carried out by staff each term.
- There is a pastoral care system in place in the school. This team meet weekly to discuss vulnerable students and measures are enacted to address the issues presented. School Completion and HSCLO work closely with the Pastoral Care Team.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor, chaplain or Home School Community Liaison Officer) 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.
- Positive Mental Health Week and various other initiatives are held regularly throughout the year.

## Critical Incident Management Team

The Critical Incident Management Team includes:

<b>The Principal</b>	Paul Fahy
<b>The Deputy Principal</b>	Susie Farrell
<b>Assistant Principals</b>	Kevin Egan Máire Sweeney Marie Moran Kevin Shannon Adrian Lally
<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>	Margaret Ebbs
<b>Chaplain &amp; Student Support Officer</b>	Lisa Shannon
<b>Home School Liaison Officer</b>	Therese Connolly
<b>Representatives of Board of Management</b>	Pat Kilbane Máire Sweeney
<b>Representatives of Administrative Staff</b>	School Secretary Damien McGinty

This team will meet annually. It will maintain an up-to-date list of contact numbers for:

- Staff
- Parents/guardians of students
- Emergency support services

Copies will be kept in the Administrative office and Principal's office. These lists will be updated when necessary by administrative staff.

**The team will also establish a 'loop' system among staff so that information can be conveyed one to another should a critical incident happen outside of school hours.**

In the case of School Tours, the Lead Teacher will compile an information pack to include:

- Name of the Tour Leader.
- A list of all participating teachers and pupils.
- A list of mobile phone numbers for all participating teachers and pupils.
- Passport details and photographs of participating pupils (in the case of tours outside the country).
- Home contact numbers and mobiles of all involved.
- Relevant medical information on pupils and permission forms from parents in case of a medical emergency.
- Insurance details
- Copy of itinerary

A copy of this file should be left with the Principal prior to departure and school mobile phones will be made available to staff for outings, trips, etc.

By way of protection of our staff and students, all staff will be made aware of the Health and Safety Document, fire evacuation procedures, emergency contact numbers, the location of the defibrillators and the names of those trained in their use. This information will also be posted near the defibrillators, in the Secretary's office, on the Principal's notice board and in the staff room. (See Appendix A).

Staff will be reminded of these procedures at the initial staff meeting annually and this information included in the packs provided to new and substitute teachers.

## Trauma Response Plan

### Procedures to be followed in the event of critical incidents

Upon notification of a critical incident, the Principal will convene the Critical Incident Management Team to:

Ascertain the facts	School Management
Make contact with the family/families concerned	Paul Fahy
Contact appropriate agencies (e.g. N.E.P.S., D.E.S)	Susie Farrell
Inform Staff, B.O.M. and Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Fahy - Call BOM Chair</li> <li>• Paul Fahy - send text to BOM</li> <li>• MSLETB 09490 24188</li> <li>• Paul Fahy - Contact CE and Director of Schools</li> <li>• Susie Farrell - Contact Staff</li> </ul>
Agree on a statement of the facts for staff, pupils, parents/guardians and the media and inform these parties as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susie Farrell (Preparation)</li> <li>Paul Fahy (Media)</li> </ul>
Identify 'high risk' pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lisa Shannon, Therese Connolly, Margaret Ebbs</li> </ul>
Appoint one person to deal with phone calls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Secretary</li> </ul>
Organise timetable/supervision rota for the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susie Farrell</li> </ul>
Organise support and rooms for counselling/assistance where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting Room</li> <li>• Prayer Room</li> <li>• OT Room</li> </ul>
Endeavour to maintain the regular school routine, if possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susie Farrell &amp; all Assistant Principals</li> </ul>
When appropriate arrange for representatives from the school to visit the home(s) of the person(s) concerned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Fahy</li> <li>• Therese Connolly</li> </ul>

## **In the event of an incident during State Exams**

If the State Examinations are in progress contact the State Examinations Commission (0906-442700) as soon as possible, so that they can alert the Examination and Assessment Manager (EAM) for the school. Alternatively, contact the area EAM directly.

## **In the event of death**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inform staff and pupils re: funeral arrangements.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secretary send text to staff &amp; parents</li><li>• Paul Fahy send email to staff</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrange involvement in liturgy if agreed with bereaved family.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lisa Shannon</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate staff and pupils' response e.g. book of condolence, vote of sympathy, flowers, etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Margaret Ebbs</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support distressed pupils and staff.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Margaret Ebbs, Lisa Shannon, Maire Sweeney</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure counselling service is available.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paul Fahy/Susie Farrell contact NEPS + Parish Priest</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Care of deceased person's possessions in keeping with parent/guardians' wishes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Secretary</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate return to school of siblings and close friends.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class Tutor, Therese Connolly (HSCL)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor siblings and friends of the deceased.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pastoral Care Team</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update and amend school records and inform DES.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Secretary</li></ul>

## **Long Term Tasks**

In the aftermath of a critical incident, awareness of the following is important:

- Keep in contact with the family/families concerned.
- Be sensitive to occasions such as anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas, etc.
- Organise school services/memorial as appropriate.
- Review the support structures available.
- Provide the appropriate support.
- Review overall school response.

## Checklist for School Management during a Critical Incident

1. Gather the facts – what has happened, when, how, where, and who is injured or dead.
2. Consult Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools (available on the DES website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)). Go to NEPS link.
3. Is it an incident requiring a NEPS Response at Level 1, 2 or 3?
4. Who do I need to call? (see Emergency Contact List – Appendix A)
5. Meet with the Critical Incident Management Team.
6. Meet with other agencies, if involved, to agree on roles and procedures.
7. Have administration staff photocopy appropriate literature.
8. Arrange for the supervision of students.
9. Address the staff meeting.
10. Identify vulnerable students.
11. Inform students.
12. Draft a media statement.
13. Prepare for a media interview.
14. Draft a letter to parents.
15. Meet with the C.I.M.T. to review the day and arrange an early morning meeting for the following day.
16. Meet with the staff group.
17. Contact the affected family/families.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Pat Kilbane

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Paul Fahy

Board Secretary & School Principal (Acting)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A

**Location of Defibrillator:** Outside Staff Room

**Persons Trained to use the Defibrillator:**

- Paul Fahy
- Kevin Shannon
- Therese Connolly
- Damien McGinty

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST	
Contact Person	Phone Number
Paul Fahy	
Susie Farrell	
Therese Connolly	
Lisa Shannon	
Margaret Ebbs	
Maire Sweeney	
School Secretary	098 45139
Damien McGinty	
Fr John Murray (P.P.) Achill Sound	098 45288
Keel Health Centre	098 43105
Achill Sound Health Centre	098 45231
Achill Sound Gardaí	098 45108
Westport Gardaí	098 25555
Mayo General Hospital	094 902 1733
Achill Fire Brigade	999
Achill RNLI	098 45612
Achill Coastguard	086 3993221
Health and Safety	1890 289 389
NEPS, Thomas St. Castlebar	094 90 28310
NEPS	094 9025846
Care Call, Employee Support	1800 411 057
Sarah Sheridan (SCP)	
Childline	1800 666 666
The Samaritans	1850 60 90 90

Role	Name
C.I.M.T. Leader	Paul Fahy
Garda Liaison	Paul Fahy
Staff Liaison	Paul Fahy
Student Liaison	Pastoral Care Team
Parent Liaison	Therese Connolly (HSCL)
Community Liaison	Therese Connolly (HSCL)
Media Liaison	Paul Fahy
C.I.M.T. Administrator	School Secretary