



**Ennis Community College/Gaelcholáiste an Chláir/**

**Ennis College of Further Education**

**Critical Incident Management Plan**

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## **1. Aim**

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) is to help school management and staff of Ennis Community College /Gaelcholáiste an Chláir / Ennis College of Further Education to respond quickly and effectively in the event of a Critical Incident, to maintain a sense of control and calm and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. The CIMP should enable the school to return to normality as soon as possible.

## **2. Definition**

*'An incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of Ennis Community College/Gaelcholáiste an Chláir/Ennis College of Further Education and disrupts the running of the school'*

The following are examples of critical incidents, but are not limited to these:

- 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
- A physical attack on a staff member, student or school community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- A serious accident involving cars, machines or equipment
- Robbery
- A phone call or notice of imminent danger
- A serious issue involving other public or private facilities within close proximity
- An accident / incident on near-by access roads.

## **3. Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**

- Principal – Brian O'Donoghue
- Deputy Principal – Yvonne Walsh
- Guidance Counsellor – Moira Murrihy
- HSCL – Conor O'Brien
- SCP Coordinator – Catherine O'Donnell / Linda Dinan
- Múinteoir i bhFeighil – Ann Considine (GC only)

## **Critical Incident**

Following an incident deemed to be of a critical nature, the critical incident team will be contacted by the Principal to meet at a designated location. The notification will inform them of the type of incident and the exact location of the incident.

If an incident happens during the night or at the weekends or during holiday periods, the critical incident team will respond to it in an appropriate manner. A judgment will be made by senior management of how best to deal with the event at the school and in the wider community. The team will initiate actions to allow the school carry on its work. A decision will be made by senior management in conjunction with the CIMT as to which protocols / procedures to implement depending on the CI.

If a critical incident occurs on school campus:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> member of staff on the scene will manage the incident scene where appropriate
- Remove people at risk
- Call the emergency services and alert first aiders etc.
- Follow the instruction of competent personnel – Gardaí, Fire Personnel, etc.
- Cooperate with the external services if they assume control of the incident
- Liaise with the media.

## **Organisation and Administration Tasks**

In advance:

- Up to date list of contact numbers
- Emergency list of information for trips
- Draft letter / email to parents / post for website

During the response

- Rooms for Parents / quiet rooms
- Log of events
- Telephone calls
- Log of offers of help and contact details
- Communication with Parents

**Phase Red: Short Term Actions (0 – 12 hours)**

**Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident:**

**1. Principal and Deputy Principal to obtain accurate information about the incident:**

- What happened, where, when, why and how?
- What is the extent of the injuries?
- What is the location of those injured and not injured?
- How many are involved and what are their names?
- Is there a risk of further injury?
- What agencies have been contacted already?
- Should Year Group assemblies take place?

**2. Convene the Critical Incident Management Team:**

- Agree a statement of facts for staff, students, parents and the media to be delivered by the Principal and/or Deputy Principal. Draft a written version also.
- Delegate responsibilities to team members
- Principal/Deputy Principal only to receive phone enquiries and to ensure that a phone line remains open and available for enquiries.
- Principal to deal with the media.
- Deputy Principal to organise the timetable/routine for the day if necessary and to ensure as much as possible the school maintains its normal routine.
- Identify vulnerable staff and students.
- Agree roles and responsibilities of staff members as deemed appropriate for the CI.

**3. Contact appropriate agencies:**

**Principal to contact agencies as deemed appropriate by the CIMT.**

- Emergency Services.
- Medical Services.
- LCETB Psychological Services Officer (Teresa Crawford)
- N.E.P.S.
- Board of Management.
- D.E.S.

**4. Hold Staff Meeting (out of class time)**

- Prior to a whole staff meeting vulnerable staff members need to be identified and informed privately.
- Principal and Deputy Principal to address staff and give an account of the facts as known.
- Give an opportunity for staff to express their views and feelings.
- Explain how the facts will be shared with the students.
- Outline the routine for the day.

- Inform staff about which outside agencies have been contacted or are involved and the supports what will be put in place for both students and staff.
- Identify vulnerable students.
- Distribute relevant support material if necessary.
- Staff should avoid heresay and speculation.

## **5. Informing Parents /Guardians**

### **Contacting Parents/Guardians of students involved in a critical incident.**

- The Principal, Deputy Principal and other members of CIMT, where necessary will contact parents as soon as possible. Handle with great sensitivity. In the case of a bereavement, the first point of contact with the family of the student will be through the Principal or Deputy Principal only.

### **The CIMT should**

- Agree who will share information with parents and how this will be delivered.
- Compile a list of parents/guardians who have been contacted and those who still need to be informed.
- Give parents/guardians relevant and factual information.
- Create a quiet time out space for students to use (Canteen/Room 11).
- Provide support to parents who are on their own when they arrive at the school (Room 28/Room 31).
- Give telephone numbers for enquiries.
- Other staff members must have the expressed permission of senior management before contacting parents/guardians.
- Provide a space for NEPs to meet with staff members who wish to avail of their support (Boardroom/Room 31)

### **Informing Parents/Guardians of students not directly involved in a critical incident**

- Parents of other children in the school should be informed of the incident and that their child may be upset.
- Send a letter to parents stating the facts and brief details of the incident.
- May not be appropriate at this stage to disclose the names of those involved.

## **6. Informing Students:**

- Year Head/Tutor will deliver the information (being mindful of suitability)
- Inform students of a Critical Incident in class groups or sub-groups.
- Give facts and avoid speculation.
- Ask students to ask questions, tell their story and express feelings.
- Help students to realise that overwhelming emotions are natural and normal following a Critical Incident.

- Contact will be made with the parents/guardians of students that are very upset/distressed so as they can be collected and returned home for the day. A private room will be provided for the arranged arrival of parents to the school to collect their child.

### **7. Deal with the Media (Location: Boardroom/School Porch)**

**The Principal/Deputy Principal will prepare a written statement posted on the School website and FaceBook page which will include:**

- The facts about the incident.
- Actions taken by the school (if necessary).
- Further Actions to be taken (if necessary)
- Positive information or comments about the deceased person – No photos
- No staff and / or student interviews

#### **If giving a live interview:**

- Assign task to someone skilled or familiar with dealing with the media or seek advice regards conducting an interview.
- Take some time to prepare.
- Keep it simple, factual and brief.
- Decline if you are not ready or think it inappropriate.

### **Phase Orange: Medium Term Actions (24-72 hours)**

#### **1. Review the events of the first 24 hours.**

- Reconvene Critical Incident Management Team.
- Liaise with affected families.
- Agree who will connect with vulnerable staff and the format that will take.
- Agree arrangements for support meetings for Parents/Staff/Students.
- Agree on mechanisms for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students.
- Have review staff meeting with all staff if necessary.
- Ensure all staff are kept up to date on any developments.
- Establish contact with absent staff and pupils.
- Update media (if necessary)

#### **2. Arrange Support for individual Students, Group of Students and Parents, if necessary.**

- Provide a suitable room – Room 9

- Hold support/information meeting for parents/students in order to clarify what has happened if necessary.
- Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings, the choice of opting out.
- Arrange, in consultation with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission.

**3. Plan for the Re-integration of Students and Staff:**

- e.g. Absentees, Injured, Siblings, Close Relatives etc.

**4. Plan Visits to Injured :**

- Principal Brian O'Donoghue and/or Deputy Principal Yvonne Walsh to visit Home/Hospital.
- Staff must get expressed permission from senior management before engaging in any communication with affected families i.e. visits, flowers, cards etc.

**5. Liaise with the Family regarding Funeral Arrangements:**

**Designate Staff Member to :**

- Extend sympathy.
- Clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral service. The school does not provide a guard of honour (NEPs advice).
- Arrange a home visit by two staff representatives within 24 hours, if appropriate.
- Have regard for different religious traditions and faiths.

**6. Attendance and participation at funeral service:**

- Decide in accordance with parents' wishes and school management decisions.
- Students attending a funeral must do so in the company of parents/guardians and must stay out of school for the duration of that day. Students attending with parents must not be in school uniform.
- A small number of students will be selected with parental permission to attend the funeral with school management in full uniform to represent the school.

**7. School Closure :**

- Request a decision on this from the Board of Management.



**Phase Green: Longer Term Actions (72 hours Plus)**

- CIMT to review the list of affected staff and students.
- All staff to monitor and support each other and to report to Management staff they may have further concerns about in the aftermath of the critical incident.
- Management to consider the impact of the critical incident on the CIMT and support that may be required for team members.
- All staff to monitor students for signs of continuing distress.
- At a staff meeting, evaluate the school's response to the incident and amend the Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately.
- Return personal belongings.
- Decide on appropriate ways to mark anniversaries.
- Consider if necessary how the school might promote students ability to cope with a future critical incident.
- Keep the BOM informed of how the school community is coping in the aftermath of the critical incident.

**Supporting distressed Students in the weeks after a Critical Incident**

Following a critical incident, it can be expected that a number of the students will exhibit distress, especially close friends and relatives of those who were injured or died in the CI. **Within approximately six weeks, most students will have returned to normal functioning.** However, if any students continue to show significant signs of distress they may need to be referred on to the guidance counsellor or to external services. For example, if over a prolonged period of time, a student continues to display the following, he/she may need additional assistance and support:

- uncharacteristic behaviour
- deterioration in academic performance
- physical symptoms e.g. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness, etc.
- inappropriate emotional reactions
- increased absenteeism.

Referrals to the HSE Community Psychology and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – or Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS) in the case of students over 18 years – are usually organised through a GP by parents/guardians. If the situation is urgent, however, the referral can be made through a hospital emergency department.

In the case of Suicide threats, parents/ guardians must be informed and the student should be referred on to their GP immediately or, if already attending a mental health service, to that

service. Arrangements already discussed with the relevant support services for onward referral should now come into play.

### **Critical Incidents During State Exams**

In the event of the death of someone close to a student sitting state exams, the following procedures should be put into action in addition to the above:

1. Ring SEC to alert the Exam Manager for your school.
2. In the event of the death of a parent/family member, senior management may visit the student's family to determine if it is appropriate for the student to be encouraged to finish their exams (LC only).
3. If desired by the affected student, a separate exam centre should be assigned with staff to manage it. With the agreement of the Exam Manager, a student may be given extra time during their exams.
4. If the student would prefer to return to the main exam centre, the student should be informed of his/her return and given support and advice on how best to support their classmate.
5. In the event of the death of a student before or during their state exams, normal procedures should be put in place regarding response to a death during term time.
6. If it is deemed necessary, a separate exam centre can be set up to accommodate students who have been particularly affected by the loss of a close friend.
7. Students who are particularly affected by any of the above may be spoken to separately after exams (with the agreement of parents); remaining students could be addressed in a group after the exams.

## **Appendix 1**

### **SST Agenda post Critical Incident**

### **Agenda 1<sup>st</sup> CIMT Meeting Post Critical Incident – 0 – 12hours**

#### **Role of the Principal in a Critical Incident**

The first meeting with the CIMT and other key staff members will be convened and chaired by Principal and facilitated by the Coordinator. The agenda should include the following:

- a) Provide clarity on the CI to ensure that all in attendance have **accurate** information. In the case of sudden death of a student/learner, the information must not make reference to the cause
- b) Agree a statement of facts for staff, students, parents and the media
- c) Delegate responsibilities of the CIMT as per designated roles and responsibilities
- d) Discuss what support services to contact
- e) Prepare (possibly written) what to say to staff
- f) Prepare (possibly written) what to say to students
- g) Prepare a statement/ letter/ text/ notice for Social media for parents/guardians of student/learners who are under 18 years. In the case of vulnerable adults, guardians may be contacted where appropriate either by phone or through usual means letters, etc.
- h) Prepare (possibly written) what to say to media. Only the Media Liaison member of the CIMT or another nominated person will talk to the media at a pre-arranged time and place
- i) Make a decision about the school closure
- j) Organise the schedule/timetable for the day
- k) Ensure that a phone line remains open for the day and is available for enquiries
- l) Appoint someone to handle phone enquiries and to deal with the media
- m) Organise a staff meeting
- n) Organise the supervision of students during any staff meetings
- o) Arrange for the copying and printing of letters for parents/guardians (where appropriate)
- p) Decide which external agencies should be involved
- q) Allocate time for students to reflect/talk about the CI with key staff and arrange for staff to have handout on managing a class after a CI
- r) Allow for any member of staff to be given the opportunity to withdraw from the process if they feel unable to offer support at this time
- s) Ensure that the LCETB Psychological Services Officer is briefed, and advice and guidance sought, where necessary
- t) Notify other relevant LCETB Staff as appropriate – see contact list.

### **End of First Day Session**

The Principal will meet with staff to:

- Thank them for their efforts in the course of the day and for remaining behind
- Acknowledge the day's difficulties and state that feeling tired is normal in times of crisis
- Emphasise the importance of ensuring that everyone is coping adequately
- Provide an update on the latest facts as known and outline the schedule for the following day
- Ask staff if there were any additional concerns to be raised
- Advise staff about the sensitivity of information shared on social networks
- Remind staff to compile a list of students about whom they have particular concerns
- Thank staff again for all their work and support during the day.

### **CIMT Meetings**

It is advisable that the CIMT meet daily until the school returns to normal functioning, regularly reviewing the CIMP and adapting it as necessary. Depending on the nature of the CI, it may be beneficial to arrange an evening or early morning meeting to ensure that the CIMT is well prepared and has a plan in place in advance of the school day.

#### **A suggested Agenda for this CIMT meeting on day 2 is as follows:**

- Review what has been done to date
- Make a decision about school closure – it is generally advisable for schools to stay open
- List tasks for the day and assign roles in terms of media, contact with family, etc.
- In the event of bereavement, arrange for contact with family, attendance and participation in the funeral /memorial service, etc.
- List items to be addressed by the Principal /Coordinator/Staff Liaison at staff meetings
- Review the list of vulnerable or "at risk" students and staff and consider a plan for monitoring students over the coming weeks
- Ensure adequate counselling services are made available for students and staff

## **Appendix 2**

### **Roles and Responsibilities of School Community**

## **Critical Incident: Roles and Responsibilities**

Below are listed roles and responsibilities that are normally undertaken in the event of a Critical Incident. The list is not exhaustive and responsibilities will be distributed under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal depending on the nature of the critical incident.

### **Principal and Deputy Principal will be responsible for:**

- Communication with parents of students involved or affected.
- Liaising with media.
- The care of and communication with staff.
- Organising the supervision of students.
- Liaising with the administrative, caretaking and other non-teaching staff.
- Communicating with the Parents Council.
- Liaising with the external support agencies, the emergency services, the Board of Management, the Trustees and the Department of Education and Skills.
- Drawing up a letter informing all parents of the critical incident and schools response if necessary (*See Appendix 6 sample letter*).

### **Year Head(s) and class tutor(s) will be responsible for:**

- The care of and communication with the students in their year group.
- Identifying and monitoring students at risk and making appropriate referrals.
- Gathering accurate information about the incident (*See Appendix 5 Teacher Packs - re breaking news to students/ classroom session*)

### **Guidance Counsellor be responsible for:**

- The care of students and staff immediately involved or affected.
- The care of distressed visitors.
- Providing rooms for debriefing parents, quiet rooms and counselling.
- Liaising with support agencies if necessary.

### **Administration staff will be responsible for:**

- Ensuring the office is open and running at all times.
- Keeping a telephone line free for outgoing and important incoming calls.
- Liaising with the Principal, Deputy Principal and other members of the Critical Incident Team.

### **Ancillary Staff will be responsible for:**

- Controlling access to the school premises.
- Maintaining security procedures and services.
- Liaising with the Principal, Deputy Principal and other members of the Critical Incident Team.

**Teaching staff will be responsible for:**

- Supervising their own and colleagues' classes.
- Assisting in identifying and supporting students at risk or in distress and making appropriate referrals to Guidance Counsellor.
- Maintaining normal procedures and schedules as far as possible.
- Being mindful of their role in creating a safe atmosphere where students are free to be upset.

**Other non-teaching staff will be responsible for:**

- Maintaining normal procedures.
- Assisting in and identifying and supporting students at risk or in distress and notifying Principal, Deputy Principal or Guidance Counsellor.

**Student Council will contribute by:**

- Identifying and supporting students at risk or in distress by informing the Student Council link teacher Mr Carragher, teaching staff or Guidance Counsellor.
- Representing students' concerns and wishes re the schools response to the critical incident.

**Parents Council will contribute by:**

- Representing parents' concerns and wishes re the schools response to the critical incident.



## Roles & Responsibilities of Team Members

### Student Support Team (SST)



The Principal will identify staff as SST members in advance of a CI and will clarify their key roles in terms of who will do what, when and how. A contract of work should be completed at the beginning of each academic year.

#### Members

<b>ROLE</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
<b>Co-ordinator</b>		
<b>Student Liaison</b>		
<b>Staff Liaison</b>		
<b>Parent Liaison</b>		
<b>Administration Liaison</b>		
<b>Media/Community Liaison</b>		

*Responsibilities: CI Management for Schools; Resource pack pages: 8-12*

## **Appendix 3**

### **Local Contact Numbers, Helplines & Websites**

### Local Contact Numbers

Ennis Garda Station:	(065) 684 8100
Ambulance:	999/112
Fire Brigade:	999/112
Fergus Medical centre:	2 St Anthony's Terrace, Ennis, Co. Clare Phone: (065) 684 2166
NEPS Psychologist	<a href="mailto:orla_murphy@education.gov.ie">orla_murphy@education.gov.ie</a> 087 4414183
CAMHS, Ennis	065-6706601
DES	01 889 6400 / 090 648 3600
State Exams Commission	0902 74621
Fr. Tom O’Gorman	Tel: 065 6824043 Mobile: (087) 228 5355

### USEFUL WEBSITES and HELPLINES

- NEPS Francis Street, Ennis - (0761 108561) – Orla Murphy, School NEPS Psychologist.  
The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) works with both primary and post-primary schools and work in partnership with teachers, parents and children in identifying educational needs. They offer a range of services aimed at meeting these needs, for example, supporting individual students (through consultation and assessment), special projects and research. For more details on NEPS, see [www.education.ie/](http://www.education.ie/)
- Barnardos provide resources and advice on [www.barnardos.ie/resources](http://www.barnardos.ie/resources), [www.barnardos.ie/teenhelp](http://www.barnardos.ie/teenhelp) (01 473 2110)
- The Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) is a multi-professional federation of organisations and individuals working with bereaved children and young people. [www.irishchildhoodbereavementnetwork.ie](http://www.irishchildhoodbereavementnetwork.ie)
- Rainbows: Rainbows is a free, voluntary service for children and young people experiencing loss following bereavement and parental separation. The Rainbows service is an inclusive service, supporting children and young people experiencing grief and loss resulting from bereavement/parental separation/parental relationship breakdown /divorce.

[ask@rainbowsireland.ie](mailto:ask@rainbowsireland.ie) North West Clare Family Resource Centre Co. Clare 065 707 1144, Crusheen Parish Co. Clare 087 642 4382

- The Professional Development for Teachers (PDST) Health and Wellbeing Team provide support for teachers at primary and post-primary level in physical education, social personal and health education (SPHE) which includes anti-bullying, child protection, mental health and wellbeing, relationships and sexuality education (RSE) and other SPHE related areas. Supports offered to schools include in-service for Principal, co-ordinators, teachers of SPHE, whole staff groups; programme planning; school policy development; schools visits. [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie). The former SPHE Support Service has been integrated into the Health and Wellbeing team of the PDST. Visit [www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie) for further information and to book post-primary SPHE courses.
- Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention – Mary Kennedy, St Joseph’s Hospital Mulgrave Street, Limerick. 061 461454 / 061 461143
- The National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) was established to oversee the implementation of ‘Reach Out’ the National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention, and to co-ordinate suicide prevention efforts around the country. The NOSP works closely with the HSE Suicide Prevention Officers. Up-to-date contact details for suicide prevention officers can be found on the NOSP website [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie) 1850 24 1850/ 041 6850300
- The Irish Association for Suicidology (IAS) sets out to be a forum for all individuals and voluntary groups involved in any aspect of suicidology for the exchange of knowledge gained from differing perspectives and experiences [www.ias.ie](http://www.ias.ie)
- The Irish Hospice Foundation promotes discussion of issues related to dying, death and bereavement in order to identify concerns about these matters and consider how they might be addressed. [www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)
- Lifelines supports all people who are affected in anyway by self-injury within the United Kingdom and beyond. It supports people who self-injure, and their family and friends. [www.selfharm.org](http://www.selfharm.org)
- Winstonswish Foundation, help for grieving children and their families. [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

- Resources and support for those dealing with suicide, depression or emotional distress, particularly teenagers and young adults. [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)
- A national charity committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people. [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- An Irish website covering all aspects of health, lifestyle, and culture relating to youth. [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)
- A site that focuses on issues relating to youth in Ireland today. [www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)
- An Australian site that helps young people through tough times. [www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)
- Mental Health Ireland aims to promote positive mental health and to actively support persons with a mental illness, their families and guardians by identifying their needs and advocating their rights. The pro teen matters web magazine, which is created by young people for young people, has information about physical and mental health, and frequently asked questions. [www.mentalhelathireland.ie](http://www.mentalhelathireland.ie)
- The Gay Switchboard Ireland offers non-judgemental information and confidential support for the LGBT community. [www.gayswitchboard.ie](http://www.gayswitchboard.ie)

### **HELPLINES**

Remind students that if they need someone to talk to, at any time of the day or night, they can ring either:

- Counselling Service for Teaching Staff and Special Needs Assistants                      Freephone:  
1800 411 057 [eas@vhics.ie](mailto:eas@vhics.ie)
- Childline: 1800 666 666 (free calls)
- The Samaritans: 1850 60 90 90 (Local call cost)
- Parentline: LoCall 1890 927277 or 01 8733500
- AWARE: 1800 80 48 48
- National Suicide Helpline (Pieta House) 1800 247 247 · [www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie). Tel: 01 623 5606
- Rainbows North West Clare Family Resource Centre Co. Clare 065 707 1144, / Crusheen Parish Co. Clare 087 642 4382
- Bereavement Counselling Service: 01 8391766

## **Appendix 4**

### **Checklist for phase Red, Orange & Green**

### Checklist of actions in the first 12 Hours (Short Term)

Summary List of Actions in the First 12 Hours	Who Coordinates?
Assess the incident / Gather the facts (as above)	The Principal
Determine what level of response is needed	The Principal
Contact external agencies as appropriate e.g. LCETB, NEPS, Gardaí, TUSLA, CAMHS, HSE, etc.	The Principal
Take Immediate Safety Actions /Convene the SST	The Principal
Convene and request administrative staff to print /photocopy/post relevant letters and handouts	Administrative Liaison
Ensure Emergency Packs are available and distribute	Administrative Liaison
Identify the phone line/mobile phone to be kept open for outgoing and incoming emergency calls. Identify a staff member to deal with phone queries and provide him/her with guidance and written information for responses and logging calls	Administrative Liaison
Identify high-risk students / staff and organise support as appropriate	Student Liaison/ Staff Liaison
Consult teachers/students if there are any events scheduled such as a trip, concert, match, etc. and whether these should be cancelled or re-scheduled	Student Liaison / Staff Liaison
Disseminate the list of rooms that will be used for individual and group support sessions, for meetings parents/ guardians, the quiet room for students, the quiet room for staff, the room for meeting agencies <a href="#">[Handout R4]</a>	Administrative Liaison
Arrange to inform staff / plan for supervision of students in the event that staff group is met in two separate groups	The Principal / Staff Liaison
Prepare the rooms for meeting parents/ guardians and for meetings with agencies	Administrative Liaison
Prepare the quiet room for students and arrange to have the room supervised to ensure their safety and/or to offer support.	Student Liaison
Arrange to inform students either as a group in classrooms or individually in the room allocated for them.	Student Liaison
Withdraw siblings (where a student has been seriously or critically injured) and organise support	Student Liaison
Prepare the quiet room for staff	Staff Liaison
Arrange to inform parents/ guardians, relatives or friends as appropriate. Remember that each must always be told separately	Parent Liaison
In the event of a bereavement, make contact with the bereaved family, including a home visit if appropriate	Parent Liaison
Where relevant, issue media statement on the school's website, emailing or phoning media representatives, etc.	Media/ Community Liaison
Designate a safe place to maintain a log of events / telephone calls made and received/offers of help from agencies	Administrative Liaison / Media/Community Liaison
Convene End of Day Sessions/De-briefings with staff and with SST; Agree schedule for next day	The Principal / Coordinator

### Checklist of actions 12-72 Hours

The Principal in collaboration with the CIMT will oversee the following and allocate responsibilities accordingly. It should be noted that the following actions are not necessarily carried out sequentially.

Summary List of Actions in the First 12- 72 Hours	Who Coordinates?
Plan a whole staff briefing (including ancillary staff). The briefing may be arranged in two groups depending on the requirements for the supervision of students	Principal/Coordinator/ Staff Liaison
Arrange support for students or staff, individually or in groups	Student Liaison/ Staff Liaison
Develop a plan for monitoring and supporting students over the coming weeks, especially for those identified as vulnerable[Handout R16] Staff should link with parents/ guardians when they are concerned about students	Staff Liaison/ Student Liaison/Parent Liaison
Liaise with and arrange support for parents/ guardians whose children were directly involved in the CI. A briefing may be relevant for parents/ guardians if a number of students from the same class group are involved in the CI	Principal/Coordinator/ Parent Liaison
Ensure all information has been communicated to parents/ guardians in general and to the wider school community as relevant	Parent Liaison/ Administrative Liaison
In the event of a student or staff member being injured in the CI, arrange visits to those who were injured, if considered appropriate and in consultation with the family /relatives	Principal / Staff Liaison/ Student Liaison
Plan for the re-integration of students and staff who were directly affected by the CI	Staff Liaison/ Student Liaison
In the event of a death of a student or staff member, consideration should be given to any special arrangements in organising prayer services, or attendance at funerals, etc. if students are from different nationalities or religious backgrounds. It may be necessary for two staff representatives to arrange a home visit to meet with parents/ guardians (within 24 hours) in these circumstances.	Principal / Staff Liaison/ Student Liaison/ Parent Liaison
As far as possible, the school should remain open and follow the normal timetable and routines as this gives structure to the students and provides a safe place for them to be in. However, it may be necessary to consider a school closure. Students and parents/ guardians should be kept apprised of decisions regarding any school closures.	Principal / Parent Liaison/ Student Liaison



**Checklist of actions 72 Hours Plus (Long Term)**

Summary List of Actions in 72 Hours Plus	Who Coordinates?
Provide recovery support and advice for students/staff/parents/guardians about the normal cycle of recovery and indicators that extra support may be required.	Student Liaison/ Staff Liaison/ Parent Liaison
Prepare for the return of bereaved students. Identify and offer more specialised personal support to vulnerable and/or most affected staff and students. Monitor and arrange support for students of concern. Make referrals to the school Counsellor or to external services (as above)	Student Liaison/ Parent Liaison
Acknowledge people who have supported the school	Principal/Coordinator/ Media Liaison
In the event of a CI involving a death, discuss what the school will do in memory of the student(s) and liaise with the deceased person's family about any memorial. (Remember that whatever policy or precedent the school sets, at this time, may need to apply to all future deaths.)	Principal /Coordinator /Parent Liaison
Return personal belongings to the family where the CI involved the death of a student. Bereaved parents/ guardians often find it helpful or comforting to visit the school at a later date. This offers the school an opportunity to return the student's personal belongings and schoolwork. 'Memory folders' could be used for the deceased student's work books or products along with letters, poems and pictures, composed or drawn by their peers.	Principal / Parent Liaison
Discuss what to do about events in which the deceased student would have participated, e.g. award ceremonies, trips away, etc.	Principal/ Student Liaison
Mark the anniversary date on the school's calendar as anniversaries may trigger emotional responses and staff and students may need additional support at these times. The school may decide to acknowledge the anniversary after consulting on any proposed commemoration with the family concerned.	Administrative Liaison/ Parent Liaison
Evaluate the school's response to the CI and arrange the Operational debrief, amend the CIMP if necessary, and review the CI policy in the light of the CI.	Principal /Coordinator
Keep all new staff, students and parents/ guardians informed of the SST policy	Student Liaison/ Staff Liaison/ Parent Liaison
Review school records/ mailing lists and amend as appropriate	Administrative Liaison

## **Appendix 5**

### **Teacher Resource Pack**

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents.pdf>

#### **Include the following Resources**

- R5
- R7
- R8
- R10
- R11
- R14
- R16

## **Appendix 6**

### **Parent/Guardian Resource Packs**

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents.pdf>

**Include the following Resources:**

- R2
- R18
- R24
- R6
- R9

## **Appendix7**

### **Frequently Asked Questions by Principals**

# Frequently Asked Questions by Principals

R2

The following is a summary of questions often asked by Principals in the aftermath of a CI.

**What do I do first on hearing news of the incident/death?** If the source of the news is the affected family, express condolences and get as many facts as possible as sensitively as possible.  
If the news is from another source

- check for veracity
- obtain the facts such as the numbers injured, etc.

Ascertain who will contact the next of kin as the Gardaí may have already undertaken this role.

**Who do I contact for help?** **School Closed/ Holidays:** If the school is closed (weekends/holidays) contact members of the SST with a view to setting up a meeting. Contact the Board of Management (BOM) and/or outside agencies e.g. NEPS/HSE, etc.

**State Examinations:** If the State Examinations are in progress contact the State Examinations Commission (SEC) 0906 442700 as soon as possible in order to alert the Examination and Assessment Manager (LAM) for the school.

**What should I do first thing on the first morning back at school?** Call a meeting of the SST, if the school has one. If not, call a meeting of the BOM and Senior Management. Set up a SST for the duration of the CI.

**What should be on the agenda for this meeting?**

1. A statement of the facts as known
2. Delegation of responsibilities
3. Preparation of what to say at a staff meeting
4. Preparation of what to say to students
5. Initial schedule for the day
6. Preparation of a letter to parents
7. Discussion of support services/agency whose support may be needed and agreement about who will contact them
8. Preparation of a media statement, if appropriate

**How do I handle all the phone calls?** As staffing the telephone may be a stressful task, assign one or two suitable people to take calls  
Provide clear guidance to those involved on what to say  
Agree a factual statement to be provided to the telephone operators that can also be read or emailed to the media  
Request that all calls made/received in relation to the CI are logged

**How do I keep staff up to date?** The Staff Room is a very important room to provide information to teachers on this day and informal briefings can take place during the breaks, as well as more formal meetings at the beginning and end of each day

**How do I detail the school's part in the funeral/religious ceremonies with the wishes of the parents?** Follow the schools procedure regarding funerals - copies are available in the school's CIMP and in the Grab Bag

Consult with the family and inform what support the school can offer e.g. choir, etc.

Schools should not provide a Guard of Honour

The school may facilitate the base class/close friends to attend the funeral. All other students wishing to attend will do so with a parent/guardian

Decide upon who is responsible for the students throughout and after the funeral

**How do I handle staff members who want to opt out?**

All staff would be expected to attend meetings held to share information. However, it should be made clear to staff at these meetings that opting out of support type work is completely acceptable. Be aware that some staff may be particularly vulnerable, and it would be important to offer them support

**How do I handle the media?**

Delegate one suitable person from the SST to deal with the media (Media/Community Liaison). Prepare a written statement to include the following:

- State that it is a difficult time for the school community
- Emphasis should be on what is being done to support staff and students

In the event of a CI involving suicide, the school should follow the 'Media Guidelines on the Portrayal of Suicide' (1999) which suggest that the media can help prevent copy-cat suicides by:

- not mentioning specific details of the suicide e.g. location and method used, etc.
- not using colourful phrases to romanticise it
- not citing causes of suicide and thereby indirectly suggesting suicide as an option

Allow limited and controlled access to the media by providing a press room

The LCETB Communications office can offer additional help, if appropriate. Tel: 061 442100

**What/When should I tell staff/students about the incident?**

Give the facts, as you know them. This is the best way to counter rumour and fantasy. This should be done as soon as possible to prevent staff and students hearing from other (and sometimes) inappropriate sources.

In the case of a suspected suicide, always use the term 'sudden death' rather than 'suicide' as this will not be determined until an inquest is completed.

**What If I feel upset myself and find it difficult to talk?**

It is very important to let children know that it is natural and acceptable to be upset and to cry. It is better to share feelings than to hide them, so it is important to be aware that getting upset is ok. You should also seek and accept support for yourself while dealing with this difficult event.

It is imperative that the Principal remains in the school throughout this time.

**What if some students do not appear to grieve?**

Do not assume that because overt signs are absent, the person is not grieving. Each individual has his/her own personal way of grieving. It is important that these different individual ways are respected and seen as normal.

Repression of grief because of the fear of 'losing face' in front of friends is an inappropriate coping strategy, as it can lead to difficulties later.

**[Handout R24; R25; R26]**

## **Appendix 8**

**Guidance can be sought from the below website in the event of a critical incident**

**<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Critical-Incidents.html>**