



**LORETO SECONDARY SCHOOL,
CLONMEL**

Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)

**Ratified by
The Board of Management
on 9th April 2019**

Introduction

A **Critical Incident Management Plan** for Loreto Secondary School Clonmel means having a set of procedures in place, so that we can respond as a school community in a caring, supportive way in the event of a Critical Incident occurring. The goal is to provide a caring, safe and supportive environment, which respects the whole school community, so that all those involved will emerge from any Critical Incident knowing that there are structures in place that will help them deal appropriately with the event. Though the Principal obviously exercises a pivotal role in the school's response to a Critical Incident, best practice recommends the formation of a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) composed of key school personnel, in providing a vital support role. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist assigned to the school also exercises an important role in consultation with the Principal.

Dealing with death, loss and trauma is inevitable in a school community. The school, inspired by its mission statement, endeavours to respond effectively and sensitively, in a comprehensive manner, to crises when they occur, while recognising its role and work in partnership with others in supporting all concerned.

Research and Review

The CIMT should consult resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie, these include:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)
<http://www.fcspa.ie/downloads/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents-1.pdf>
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
<http://www.ias.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Suicide-Prevention-in-Schools-Best-Practice-Guidelines.pdf>
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
<https://www.healthpromotion.ie/hp-files/docs/HSP00849.pdf>
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf>

Definition of a critical incident

“In general, any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school is determined to be a critical incident.”

Responding to Critical Incidents – NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools, 2016, pg.12

Such crises may include but are not limited to:

- The loss 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.
- A major accident/tragedy in the wider community.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- An accident involving students or staff on or off the school premises.

- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

In the event of a Critical Incident arising the Critical Incident Management Team may comprise of:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Counsellor
- Year Head
- School Chaplain
- R.E. Team
- Class Tutors of affected year group(s)
- CARA Team
- Administration Staff,
- Caretaker(s)
- others maybe co-opted as deemed appropriate to an individual situation.

Specific roles are allocated in the Critical Incident Management Team.

Suggested roles for each member are outlined in *NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools* in section 3.4 pg.17, pg. 81 - 86; these roles are not exclusive and can be re-organised by agreement at the initial CIMT meeting to best meet the critical incident.

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 the school 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 impact on students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to affect 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

Some examples (but not limited to):

- Health and Safety Statement in place
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Supervision

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Loreto Secondary School Clonmel 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.

Some examples are (but not limited to):

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. 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 are addressed in the SPHE curriculum. 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 Procedures and the name of the Designated Liaison Person
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Nominated staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some have attended specialist training such as ASIST provided by the HSE
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies (see Emergency Contacts page 9)
- The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and deals with incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system in place (Student Support Team - SST) in the school using the “Continuum of Support” approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 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. Parents/guardians 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. These folders will be available in the staff room.

Development and Communication of the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)

At all times the CIT will operate in accordance with best practice as outlined in *Responding to Critical Incidents – NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016)*. (link to this is: <http://www.fcspa.ie/downloads/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents-1.pdf>).

Each year, this policy is reviewed using the checklist in section 3.7 page 19 of the above document or **Appendix 3**. A copy of this book is available in the Principal’s office, the Guidance Counsellor’s Office and in the staffroom.

Key Roles and Role Descriptions for the Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Role Description
Team Leader The Principal (or the Acting Principal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; ETB • Liaises with the bereaved family. <p><i>It is important to consider who will take the lead in the absence of the team leader</i></p>
Garda Contact Usually the Team Leader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaises with the Gardaí • Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.
Staff Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A staff member known and trusted by the staff • 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 (Employee Assistance/Inspire Workplaces Service) and gives them the contact number (freephone1800 411057).
Student Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A trusted and familiar figure to the students. • 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) • Access to all student contact records on VShare • Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.
Parent Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone known to parents. This person should be comfortable speaking before a large group and have skills to manage emotional reactions of individual or groups of parents • Visits the bereaved family with the team leader • Arranges meetings, if held • May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers' sessions • Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy • Ensures that sample letters are prepared and available on the school's IT system ready for adaptation • Sets up room for meetings with parents • Maintains a record of parents seen • Meets with individual parents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder).
Community/Agency Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community • Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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.
Media Contact Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone with good interpersonal skills who would be comfortable talking to the media by phone or in person. A person who is able to set limits without being offensive • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents/guardians (on VShare) ○ Teachers (on VShare) ○ Emergency services • Takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response • Ensures that templates are available on the school's IT system and ready for adaptation • Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts • Photocopies materials as needed • Maintains records.

Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff of Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is confirmed

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,

Room	Group
Staff Room	To meet staff
Balcony	To meet large groups of students
Sacred Space	To meet a class group (or smaller) of students (<i>for privacy pull the blinds</i>)
Room 15	To meet parents (<i>off the ground floor for privacy</i>)
Rathfarnham	To meet the media
Guidance Counsellor's Office	To meet individual students

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students, parent/guardian representatives and Board of Management were also consulted.

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 the Principal.

The plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

Key Roles and Contact Details

*note a specific critical incident may require these roles to change

Role	Name	Email address	Telephone number
Team Leader	Principal	principal@loretoclonmel.ie	086 8305732
Garda Liaison	Principal	principal@loretoclonmel.ie	086 8305732
Staff Liaison	<i>The four roles of Staff, Student, Parent and Community Liaison can be undertaken by any of the following and will depend entirely on the Critical Incident:</i> Deputy Principal/Guidance Counsellor/Year Head/Tutor/Inclusion Co-ordinator		
Student Liaison			
Parent Liaison			
Community Liaison			
Media Liaison	Principal or Loreto Education Trust Education Officer		
Administrator	School Receptionist	reception@loretoclonmel.ie	0526121402

Short Term Actions – day 1

The person named below is responsible for undertaking the role specified (and reporting back to the CIMT) but may delegate the job to another person if this is deemed more suitable.

Task	Job Title
Gather accurate information - who, what, when, where?	Team Leader
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Team Leader
Contact external agencies	Team Leader or Community Liaison
Arrange supervision for students	Team Leader or Student Liaison
Hold staff meeting	Team Leader
Agree schedule for the day	Team Leader

Inform students - (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Student Liaison
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Student Liaison linking with Student Support Team (SST)
Contact/visit the bereaved family	Team Liaison or Parent Liaison
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with the media	Team Leader or Media Liaison
Inform parents/guardians	Team Leader
Hold end of day staff briefing	Team Leader
Open School; prepare rooms (e.g. room 14, sacred space, etc); prepare school foyer.	Administrator

Medium Term Actions (day 2 and following days)

The person named below is responsible for undertaking the role specified (and reporting back to the CIMT) but may delegate the job to another person if this is deemed more suitable.

Task	Job Title
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team Leader
Meet external agencies	Community Liaison
Meet whole staff	Team Leader
Arrange support for students, staff, parents/guardians	Staff Liaison or Student Liaison or Parent Liaison
Visit the injured	Team Leader
Liase with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements - Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Team Leader and/or Parent Liaison
Make decisions about school closure	Board of Management

Follow-up Beyond 72 hours

The person named below is responsible for undertaking the role specified (and reporting back to the CIMT) but may delegate the job to another person if this is deemed more suitable.

Task	Job Title
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liase with agencies regarding referrals	Student Support Team (SST)
Plan for return of bereaved person(s)	Student Support Team (SST)
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Year Head or Tutor or RE teachers
Plan for Book of Condolence	Year Head or Tutor or RE teachers
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	Student Support Team (SST) or Year Head or Tutor or RE teachers
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

Emergency Phone Numbers:

Agency	Telephone number
Emergency	112 or 999
Local Garda Station	052 6122222
South Tipperary General Hospital	052 61 77000
Local Fire Brigade	052 6134616
Local N.E.P.S. office	052 61 25833
Evelyn Buckley, NEPS	052 61 25897
TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Clonmel	052 6177302
Loreto Secondary School	052 6121402
Local Garda Station	052 6122222
JLO, Áine Donnelly	087 0601756
Local Fire Brigade	052 6134616
Medical Centre, Mary Street, Clonmel	052 61 21288
Medical Centre, Western Road, Clonmel	052 61 25312
Medical Centre, Suirside, Clonmel	052 61 22963
Childline	1800 666 666 (free phone)
The Samaritans	1850 69 90 90
Loreto Education Centre	01 2899956
Inspectorate Secretariat	01 8896553 / 01 8890002
Local N.E.P.S. Office	052 61 25833
Evelyn Buckley	052 61 25897
School Chaplain Fr. Twomey	052 61 23239 or 087 6564170
State Examinations Commission	090 6442744
DES	090 6483600
Employee Assistance/Inspire Workplaces Service	1800 411057 (free phone)
School Secretary, Margaret Maher	086 3939805
Chairperson of Board of Management	087 6978025
Principal	086 8305732
Deputy Principal	086 3293025
Security Alarm/Fire Alarm system	Hall 052 6121944 / 61 21165 G4 01 831 7100 Day G4 01 831 7888 Night

These Emergency Contact Details are laminated and posted at the following locations:

- Reception/front office,
- The Principal's office,
- The Deputy Principal's office,
- The Guidance Counsellor's Office
- The Inclusion office.

LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

(Sample letter requesting consent for involvement of outside professional/s)

*All other suitable letters included in Responding to Critical Incidents NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools <http://www.fcspa.ie/downloads/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents-1.pdf>

Date:

Dear Parents,

Following the recent (tragedy, death of X) we have arranged professional support for students in school who need particular help.(X) is available to help us with this work. This support will usually consist of talking and listening to students, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with the psychologist. If you would like your daughter to receive this support please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by

If you would like further information on the above or to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip or telephone the school.

Your sincerely,

I / We consent to having our daughter met by a psychologist employed by the Minister for Education and Science.

I / We understand that my daughter may meet the psychologist(s) in an individual or group session depending on the arrangements which are thought to be most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____

Class / Year: _____

Date of Birth: _____

I would like my daughter _____ to avail of the support being offered by the psychologist.

Signed _____ Parent/Guardian

Responding to Critical Incidents - Further information

Further Information can be viewed from the following link:

<http://www.fcspa.ie/downloads/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents-1.pdf>

The following useful sections are included in this document:

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20	4.1	Initial assessment of the incident
21	4.2	Initial action plan
22	4.3	Agenda for meeting with Critical Incident Management Team/Key Staff
24	4.4	Meeting with a staff group
24	4.4.1	Sample script for principal
26	4.5	Cultural sensitivity and awareness
26	4.6	Students with learning difficulties
27	4.7	End of day session with teachers
27	4.8	Contact with the affected family/families
28	4.9	Summary checklist for principals: Day 1
29	Section 5	ACTION PLAN FOR PRINCIPALS: MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS
29	5.1	Meeting with the CIMT and other agencies
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39	Section 6	ACTION PLAN FOR PRINCIPALS: FOLLOW UP
32	Section 7	SUICIDE/SUSPECTED SUICIDE
32	7.1	Suicide prevention - what schools need to do
34	7.2	Criteria for judging the suitability of external programmes
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37	7.4	Flow Chart: Responding to concerns
38	7.5	Issues that may arise when a student dies by suicide/suspected suicide
39	7.6	Suicide contagion
40	Section 8	ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AND VIOLENT DEATHS: SOME ISSUES
40	8.1	Road traffic accidents
41	8.2	Violent death
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44	Section 9	DEALING WITH THE MEDIA
44	9.1	Guidelines for the school
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47	9.3	Frequently Asked Questions in dealing with the media - Principals
48	Section	10 CRITICAL INCIDENTS DURING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
48	10.1	Frequently Asked Questions during exam time

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51	Section 11	RESOURCES: RESPONDING TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS
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54	R2	SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS - SUDDEN DEATH/ACCIDENT
55	R3	SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS - VIOLENT DEATH
56	R4	SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MEDIA
57	R5	A CLASSROOM SESSION FOLLOWING NEWS OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT
60	R6	CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING AND REACTION TO DEATH ACCORDING TO AGE
62	R7	STAGES OF GRIEF
63	R8	HOW TO COPE WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS
64	R9	REACTIONS TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT
65	R10	GRIEF AFTER SUICIDE OR SUSPECTED SUICIDE
66	R11	REINTEGRATION OF THE BEREAVED CHILD IN SCHOOL
67	R12	WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME
68	R13	A GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS, CHAPLAINS, OTHER DESIGNATED STAFF
69	R14	CHECKLIST - STUDENTS AT RISK
70	R15	EXPLORING SUICIDE RISK
73	R16	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - PRINCIPALS
76	R17	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - TEACHERS
78	R18	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - PARENTS
79	R19	CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY & PLAN - FRAMEWORK
86	R20	CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE FOR SCHOOL PLAN
88	R21	EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST
89	R22	GUIDANCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND CRITICAL INCIDENTS
92	R23	TEACHERS HELPING STUDENTS IN TIMES OF CRISIS OR EMERGENCY
95	R24	USEFUL WEBSITES AND HELPLINES FOR ACCESSING RESOURCES

This Critical Incident Management Plan was agreed on the date noted below and will be reviewed annually.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____