



Scoil Chonglais

Post-Primary School

Critical Incident Management Policy



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARA AGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN
KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

Mission Statement

Scoil Chonglais is a warm, caring, and welcoming school in which all students are valued and respected. We provide a positive, supportive, and inclusive learning environment, where each student and their unique contribution is celebrated. We are committed to excellence in education and to empowering each student to reach their full potential.

School Motto

“Empowering Minds, Shaping Futures and Celebrating Success”

KWETB Core Values

Scoil Chonglais is a coeducational, multid denominational post primary school, under the patronage of KWETB. Our school community is committed to our ETB core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Respect, Equality and Community.



We in Scoil Chonglais aim to protect the wellbeing of our students and staff by endeavouring to always provide a safe and nurturing environment. A critical incident challenges the normal coping mechanism of the school and this Critical Incident Policy is intended to outline clearly the actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident. For that reason, a large part of the policy is concerned with the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP).

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 a return to normality as soon as possible.

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 2016)
- 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 2015)

Define what you mean by the term ‘critical incident’

The staff and management of Scoil Chonglais 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

Levels of Critical Incident

Response Level 1: the death of a student or staff member who was terminally ill; the death of parent/sibling; a fire in school not resulting in serious injury; serious damage to school property

Response Level 2: the sudden death of a student or staff member

Response Level 3: incident: an accident/event involving several students; a violent death; an incident with a high media profile or involving several schools

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
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard (possibly include details)
- Front gate locked during school hours
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the playground – include details

Psychological safety

- The management and staff of Scoil Chonglais aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of students, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing issues such as grief and loss; communication skills;

stress and anger management; resilience; conflict management; problem solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision

- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/post primary school student are available
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some members of the guidance department are trained in interventions for suicidal students.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – TUSLA, CAHMS, INSYNC, BELONG TO, etc
- 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 in 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 as 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 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.

Should a member of staff hear of an incident, they will phone a member of the CIMT immediately. Each member of the CIMT will then be contacted. Using the cascade model, for the benefit of the psychological welfare of staff, members of the CIMT will contact designated staff members to inform them of the confirmed and agreed details. Ideally this will happen prior to the commencement of the next school day, and each member of staff will receive the same information details.

Team leader: Patrick Maguire (in case of absence, Emma Fox - Deputy Principal)

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

Role

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

Staff liaison

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 contacts them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison

Role

- At post-primary level, may coordinate 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.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison

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

Role

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arrange parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensure 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

Role

- In advance of an incident, we 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, we 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

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
- Ensure that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials 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 sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.

The CIMT 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 Scoil Chonglais, 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:
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Staff Room	Main room for meeting staff
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Guidance Office	Meetings with students
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Conference Room	Meetings with parents
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Conference Room	Meetings with media
Guidance Office	Individual sessions with students
Principal Office	Meetings with other visitors

Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name	Contact number
Team Leader	Patrick Maguire	#####
Deputy Team Leader	Emma Fox	#####
Media Liaison	Principal	#####
Garda Liaison	Paul Feighery	#####
Staff Liaison	Breda Carty	#####
Student Liaison	Wilma Murphy	#####
Parent Liaison	Julie Hedderman	#####
Community Liaison	Eileen Gallagher	#####
Administrators	Nicola O' Reilly	#####
Guidance Counsellor	Martin Mc Mullin	#####
Wellbeing Support	April Prendergast	#####

Summary of Action Plan for Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT).

Short Term Actions (Day 1):

- Gather accurate information
- Contact external agencies
- Convene CIMT meeting
- Message all school staff
- Agree a plan for the day
- Identify vulnerable students
- Arrange supervision for students as necessary
- Hold staff meeting
- Inform students as appropriate
- Inform
- Prepare media statement
- Hold end of day staff meeting

Medium Term Actions (Day 2 and subsequent days):

- Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of Day 1
- Meet external agencies
- Meet whole staff
- Arrange support for students, staff, parents
- Liaise with affected family re visiting and funeral arrangements
- Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service
- Make decisions around school closure through BOM and KWETB.

Follow Up actions – (beyond 72 hours).

- Monitor student and staff wellbeing
- Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
- Plan for return of bereaved students
- Review response to incident and CIMP

Review and ratification of Policy Ratification by Board of Management

This policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management on **10/03/2025**

Board of Management Next Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in **March 2026**