



Critical Incident Management Policy

Dunshaughlin Community National School

Introduction

Dunshaughlin Community National School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, through the school Principal has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Important Note: If a Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) School experiences a Critical Incident the Principal will contact the Chief Executive (CE), the Director of Schools, LMETB and the school's NEPS Psychologist immediately to alert them to the Critical Incident.

The CE and/or Director of Schools will schedule a meeting with the School Principal and/or Acting Deputy Principal regarding next steps in implementing the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP).

In LMETB Schools and Colleges, the Principal will discuss any queries from the media and/or An Garda Síochána with the Director of Schools and/or Director of Organisational Support and Development (OSD) and/or Chief Executive (CE).

School Mission Statement

Our vision and core values in Dunshaughlin CNS include the promotion of a caring and positive school environment, where every pupil, their welfare, wellbeing and health is a priority. The uniqueness of each child is celebrated, and individual needs identified and supported. Dunshaughlin CNS fosters a positive school culture, where pupils have positive and respectful interactions with their teachers and peers. Pupils are active and valued members of our school community. Pupils are nurtured to have respect for themselves and others and be responsible for their behaviour and their learning.

Review and Research

The Critical Incident Management Team (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, (National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS), 201 6)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)

What is meant by a Critical Incident?

The staff and management of Dunshaughlin CNS recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school”. Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community.

Types of incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death
- An intrusion into the school
- An accident involving members of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc
- The disappearance of a member of the school community

Aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)

The aim of the CIMP is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to 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

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard
- Front gate locked during school hours
- Trained First Aid responders on staff
- Key code on main gate and entrance to school office area
- Garda Vetting legislation complied with

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Dunshaughlin CNS 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; resilience; personal safety; substance abuse; bullying; are addressed as of the SPHE curriculum.
- Staff have access to training in skills which support pupil well-being, e.g. Zones of Regulation
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and the names of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP)
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, PDST, NCCE, TUSLA
- 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) - Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Best Practice Guidelines for Primary Schools
- 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 in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published on 2007 for primary schools
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Team Leader: Yvonne Slevin (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

Deputy Team Leader: Catherine Ward (Deputy Principal)

Role

- Take the lead in absence of the Team Leader
- 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: The **School Principal** will liaise with the LMETB Chief Executive and Director of Schools/Director of OSD regarding communication with An Garda Siochana.

Role

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

Staff liaison: Catherine Ward (Deputy Principal)

Role

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually

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

Student liaison: Management recognise, under the guidance of NEPS, it will be the child's **class teacher** at the time who is best placed to liaise with and counsel their pupils.

Role

- Communicate information from Teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNA) about pupils they are worried about to NEPS/ counsellor/ Faith Leader/ Family as appropriate
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room or other similar intervention/ facility, where agreed

Parent/Community/agency liaison: Catherine Ward (Deputy Principal)

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
- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison: The School Principal will liaise with the LMETB Chief Executive and Director of Schools when processing queries from the media. All media queries received by staff members in an LMETB school should be directed to the Principal.

- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator: Joanna Kelly (School Secretary)

Role

- Maintenance of up-to-date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the school 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 School Secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of Dunshaughlin CNS 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.*

Checklist - Consultation and communication regarding the plan

- All staff were consulted, and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan
- Students and parent/guardian representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

- Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.
- Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan.
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Yvonne Slevin
- The plan will be updated annually in August.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Yvonne Slevin	0868522070
Garda liaison	Yvonne Slevin	0868522070
Staff liaison	Catherine Ward	0868057668
Student liaison	Class teachers	
Community liaison	Catherine Ward	0868057668
Parent liaison	Catherine Ward	0868057668
Media liaison	Yvonne Slevin	0868522070
Administrator	Joanna Kelly	0860123533 (Office Phone)

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information Who, what, when, where?	Yvonne Slevin
Contact CE, Director of Schools, NEPS Psychologist	Yvonne Slevin School Principal
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Yvonne Slevin Catherine Ward Joanna Kelly

Contact external agencies	Yvonne Slevin & Catherine Ward
Arrange supervision for students	Yvonne Slevin
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Yvonne Slevin
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Class teachers
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Class teachers
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media – in LMETB Schools the Principal will liaise with the CE and/or Director of Schools and/or Director of OSD regarding same	Yvonne Slevin
Inform parents	Yvonne Slevin
Hold end of day staff briefing	Yvonne Slevin / Catherine Ward

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader Yvonne Slevin
Meet external agencies	Yvonne Slevin
Meet whole staff	Yvonne Slevin
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Yvonne Slevin
Visit the injured	Yvonne Slevin
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Yvonne Slevin
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Yvonne Slevin
Make decisions about school closure	BOM, LMETB and DES

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Yvonne Slevin
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Yvonne Slevin and class teacher
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Yvonne Slevin and class teacher
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents/guardians, and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	Dunshaughlin 018010600
Hospital	Navan 046 9078500 Blancharstown 016465000
Fire Brigade	999/112 or non emergences Dunshaughlin Station 046-9021666
Local GPs	Dunshaughlin Health Centre 018024100
HSE	Dunshaughlin Health Centre 018024100
Community Care Team	Dunshaughlin Health Centre 018024100
Child and Family Centre	Child and Family Agency, Enterprise Centre, Navan , 046 9098800
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	CAMHS, Trim 0469420800
School Inspector	John Fitzgerald John_fitzgerald@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist	North Eastern region 076 110 8635
DES	https://www.education.ie
INTO	Telephone: +353 1 804 7700 LoCall: 1850 708 708
Clergy	
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

BOM Ratification

LMETB School/College:	Dunshaughlin CNS
Date of Board of Management Meeting:	25/09/2024
Policy:	Critical Incident Management Policy
Proposed By:	Gerry O' Connor
Seconded By:	Elaine McCormack
Signed by Chairperson BOM:	Gerry O' Connor