



**St Kieran's College
Secondary School
Kilkenny**

Critical Incident Policy

St Kieran's College aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management understands that a "critical incident" can mean an especially difficult time for the school community as there will not have been occasion to prepare for the event. The Board of Management, in consultation with the Principal, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan.

The aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team to steer the development as well as the implementation of this plan. The response to any critical incident follows the guidelines published in the document: "Responding to Critical Incidents – Advice and Information Pack for Schools" - published by the National Educational Psychological Service.

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

Sustainability

Our preparedness for critical incidents includes planning for environmental emergencies such as extreme weather events. We aim to build resilience within our school community by developing strategies that address the challenges posed by climate change and promote sustainable recovery practices.

Critical Incident

It is understood that a critical incident is any event where the immediate emotional, physical or social safety/welfare of our school community is gravely affected. Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include but are not limited to:

- 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;
- The disappearance of a member of the school community;
- Serious damage to the school environment through fire, flooding, vandalism etc.

The aim of the C.I.M.P. (Critical Incident Management Plan) is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of a critical incident, thus enabling a sense of control and ensuring that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. A good plan should facilitate a return to normality within the school community without undue delay. Systems have been put in place in our school to help to build resilience amongst both staff and students. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical Safety

In accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Fire drills as part of the school routine
- Fire exits and extinguishers are frequently checked
- Supervision in school yard and corridors prior to first formal class of the day, during morning break, during lunch break and for a period after the final class of the day

Psychological Safety

- SPHE is offered as part of the school curriculum
- CAIRDEAS, the school's First Year Induction Programme, helps new students to cope with the transition to post-primary school
- The school's School Support Team have a system in place which aims to support the needs of all members of the school community. An implicit part of this system is the facility whereby staff may refer students to the School Chaplain or the Guidance Counsellor for assistance and support. Students perceived to be at risk may be referred to appropriate outside agencies.
- The School Chaplain(s) and the Guidance Counsellors are available to staff and students
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures

- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some are trained in interventions with suicidal students
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves in times of need
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies
- The Student Council provides a forum for the airing of student viewpoints
- Students are encouraged to become involved in a wide range of extra- curricular activities
- The school's Anti-Bullying policy is supported by students, teachers and parents

Critical Incident Management Team

St Kieran's College has set up a *Critical Incident Management Team* made up of the following personnel:

- The President
- The Principal
- The Deputy Principals
- The School Secretary
- The School Chaplain
- The Guidance Counsellor
- The C.I.M.T. may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should this be deemed necessary.

Roles

Team Leader: Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting; coordinates the tasks of the team; liaises with the BOM, DES, NEPS, SEC, liaises with the bereaved family if necessary.

Garda Liaison: Liaises with the Gardaí; ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

Staff Liaison: Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known; outlines the routine for the day; advises staff on the procedures for the identification of vulnerable students; provides materials for staff (from 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: (a number of people may be required) Alerts staff (appropriately) to vulnerable students; provides materials for students; keeps records of students seen by external agency staff; looks after setting up and supervision of “quiet room” where agreed.

Parent Liaison: Visits the bereaved family with the team leader; arranges parent meetings, where appropriate, and may facilitate such meetings; ensures that sample letters are on the school system and ready for adaptation; sets up room for meetings with parents; maintains a record of parents seen; provides appropriate materials for parents.

Community Liaison: Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers (Parents’ Association representatives, emergency support services, etc.); liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral; is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support.

Media Liaison: In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise - e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises and the appropriate response; in the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the SEC and relevant teacher unions and so on; will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management).

Administrator: Maintains up to date telephone numbers of parents/guardians, teachers and other staff members, emergency services; takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response; ensures that templates are on the school system ready for adaptation; prepares and sends out letters, emails, text messages; photocopies materials needed; maintains records.

Role	Name
Team Leader	Principal
Garda Liaison	Principal/President/Deputy Principals
Staff Liaison	Principal/Deputy Principals
Student Liaison	Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor /Year Heads
Parent Liaison	Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor /Year Heads
Community/Media Liaison	Principal/President/Deputy Principal
Administrator	School Secretary

Short Term Actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information. Who, what,	Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head/
Convene a CIMT meeting-specify time &	Principal
Contact external agencies	Principal/Deputy Principal/Chaplain/ Guidance
Arrange supervision for students	Deputy Principals
Hold staff meeting, agree schedule for the	Principal
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor/Year Head
Inform students, close friends and vulnerable students who may need to be	Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor/Year Head
Draft a media statement	Principal/Deputy Principals
Draft a letter to parents - if appropriate	Principal
Make contact with the affected family/	Principal/Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor/ Year
Meet with CIMT to review the day and	Principal

Medium Term Actions Day 2

It is sometimes the case that the first day following an incident is quite calm as people may be in shock. Day 2 may be a day when more support is needed as the news begins to sink in. It is advisable that the CIMT continues to meet each day until the school returns to normal functioning.

Meet with CIMT and other agencies where appropriate to review what has	Principal
Meet with the staff to update on any new information and outline schedule	Principal

Follow Up

Follow-up is the work carried out in the weeks, months and years following a critical incident. The goal of follow-up is to help the school community cope with the impact of the event in the longer term and to monitor those individuals with ongoing difficulties. The school may also decide to review the critical incident policy and plan memorials.

- Meet with appropriate staff to review the list of affected staff and students. Identify who will be responsible for follow-up
- Discuss referral procedures and when an onward referral may be indicated
- Prepare for the return of bereaved student(s)
- Discuss what the school will do in memory of the student(s). A representative from the school should liaise with the deceased person's family regarding the memorial
- Discuss what to do with respect to events in the school the deceased person may have been involved in
- Mark the school's calendar in advance with the anniversary date. Anniversaries may trigger emotional responses in students or staff and they may need additional support at this time. The school may decide to acknowledge the anniversary and should link with the family on any proposed commemoration
- Evaluate the school's response to the incident and amend the Critical Incident Management Plan appropriately - What went well? Where were the gaps? What was most/least helpful? Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made? Is there any unfinished business?

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

- All staff members were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent 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 members of staff.
- Each member of the critical incident management team has a copy of the plan.
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Head of Teacher Induction.
- The plan will be reviewed and updated regularly.

Emergency Contact List	
Garda, Kilkenny	056 7775000
Hospital	056 7785000
Fire Brigade	056 7794400
Local GP's - Ayrfield Medical Centre Castle Gardens	056 7721320 056 7765891
NEP's Psychologist	056 7760200
Priest - Fr D Ryan	056 7721086
State Examinations Commission	906442700

Policy Availability

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, provided to the Parents' Association and Student Council. A copy of this policy will be made available the Department and the patron if requested.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____