St Paul's College Raheny
Critical Incident Management Policy

St Paul's College 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 Mr Seán Moran (Principal), has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Definitions:

In this policy the following terms have the following meaning:

"Board"   Means the Board of Management of the College.

"CIMT"   Critical Incident Management Team.

"CIMP"   Critical Incident Management Policy.

"College"   St. Pauls College.

"Critical Incident"   An incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school.

"DES"   Department of Education and Science.

NEPS   National Educational Psychological Service

SEC   State Examinations Commission

Review and Research:

This policy is informed by 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)

Critical Incidents:

Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents may include:

- *The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death;*
- *An accident involving members of the school community;*
- *Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.;*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community.*

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 us to effect a return to normality as soon as possible. It should also ensure that good communication is provided to the school and to the wider community when required.

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:
Measures to ensure the physical safety of the school community include: -
- Evacuation plan formulated;
- Regular fire drills will occur minimum once a term
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked;
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard- from 8:30 onwards;
- Front door is locked during school hours;
- School doors locked during class time.

Psychological safety:
The management and staff of St Paul's College 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 addresses 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 SPHE;
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures;
- 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 are trained in interventions for vulnerable students. Mental health is also promoted in many different areas and is led by the wellbeing team spearheaded by the wellbeing co-ordinator
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies including NEPS
- 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 Circular 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 on 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 and the College website.
- An updated anti bullying policy will be live from September 2025

- 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 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: Seán Moran, Cathal Mullin, Kevin Kindlon, Ailbhe Hickey, Tracey Flynn

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 this policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.
The CIMT and associated information is set out in Appendix 1.

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations
Management and staff of *St Paul's College* 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.

Impact of Social Media
As referenced in the Acceptable Internet Use Policy and as part of the SPHE and Wellbeing programmes, students are advised as to best practice in relation to the use, benefits and dangers of relaying information and images via modern social media. Impact on the right to privacy and protection of a person's good name (as above), spreading of misinformation and the possibility to increase tensions and worries without accurate data will be outlined.

Where a rumour has escalated on social media, the relevant professional bodies (e.g. – Gardaí, NEPS, JMB) may be consulted and advice sought as is consistent with best practice. Where there is a possible threat to safety, parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Consultation and Communication regarding the Plan:
Staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents is available to all partners on the school website. 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 front office staff and PR post holder.

The plan will be updated annually in November at a Pastoral Care Meeting and submitted to the Board for approval.

Appendix 1

Critical Incident Management Team and Key Information

CIMT Members:

[1]   Team leader:
Seán Moran (Principal)

- 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/ affected persons.

The Deputy Principal will take the lead in the absence of the team leader.

[2]   Garda Liaison:
Seán Moran (Principal)

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

[3]   Staff Liaison:
Cathal Mullin (Deputy Principal)

- 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.

[4]   Student Liaison:
Ailbhe Hickey/ Sr Éibhlís NicUaithuas *(Guidance Counsellors/ Chaplain)*
- 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);
- Maintains student contact records (R1);
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

[5]   Community/Agency Liaison:
Sean Moran (Principal)

- 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.

[6]   Parent Liaison
(Sean Moran) (Principal)

- 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).

[7] **Media Liaison**
Mr Sean Moran ((Principal)

- 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)

- Will manage all social media communications

[8] **Administrator**
(School Secretary) (Pam Darcy/ Deirdre Lawless)

- 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's system in advance and ready for adaptation;
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts;
- Photocopies materials needed;
- Maintains records;

[9] **Record keeping**
(All team members)

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.

(Pam/ Deirdre) will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Critical Incident Rooms	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	**Designated Purpose:**
Staffroom	Main room for meeting staff
Gym/ Study Hall	Meetings with students
Study Hall	Meetings with parents
Committee Room	Meetings with media
Year Head/ Guidance/ Chaplain Office	Individual sessions with students
Committee Room/ Front Office Foyer	Meetings with other visitors

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	**Name**	**Phone**
Team leader:	*Principal* (Seán Moran)	
Garda liaison	*Principal*	
Staff liaison	*Deputy Principal* (Cathal Mullin)	
Student liaison	*Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain* (Ailbhe Hickey	
Community liaison	Seán Moran	
Parent liaison	*Staff Representative* (Sean Moran)	
Media liaison and Social Media	*Chairperson of BOM/ PR Post-Holder* Barry McGee/Sean Moran/Aaron Soady)	
Administrator	*Office* Secretaries (Pam Darcy/Deirdre Lawless)	

Short-Term actions- Day 1.

In the case of a critical incident, the team will meet to arrange the following tasks and procedures. During this meeting, tasks will be designated to team members as appropriate. This list is not exhaustive.

Checklist:

☐ Gather accurate information
☐ Convene a CIMT meeting- specify time and place clearly

☐ Who, what, where, when?
☐ Contact external agencies
☐ Arrange supervision for students
☐ Hold staff meeting
☐ Agree schedule for the day
☐ Inform students (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately
☐ Compile list of vulnerable students
☐ Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media
☐ Inform parents
☐ Hold end of day staff briefing

Medium-Term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

In the days following the Critical Incident, the team should reconvene to consider the next steps required in the process. Duties will be designated to each team member. This list is not exhaustive.

☐ Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of Day 1
☐ Meet external agencies
☐ Meet whole staff
☐ Arrange support for students, staff, and parents
☐ Visit the injured
☐ Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements
☐ Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service
☐ Make arrangements about school closure

Follow-Up – beyond 72 hours

In the days following the Critical Incident, the CIMT team will meet to consider the procedures in dealing with the aftermath of the Critical Incident. Below is a checklist to consider. This list is not exhaustive.

☐ Monitor students for signs of continuing distress
☐ Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
☐ Plan for return of bereaved student(s)
☐ Plan for giving of "memory box" to bereaved family
☐ Decide on memorials and anniversaries
☐ Review response to incident and amend plan

In the case of a Critical Incident, all team members should adhere to guidelines set out by *NEPS Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools*[1]

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[1] Available at https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents.pdf.

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	Raheny- 016664300 Clontarf- 016664800
Hospital	Beaumont- 018092101/018093000
Fire Brigade	999 016734000
Local GPs	Clontarf General Practice- 018331426
HSE	Airside- 018708000
Poisons Information Centre Ireland	018092166
Child and Family Centre	Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service- 018771716
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Darndale- 018771552
JMB	012838255
NEPS Psychologist	Gareth Hughes 0761108680
DES	Dublin- 018896400 Athlone- 0906483600
ASTI	016040160 1850418400
Clergy	Parish Priest- Killester Fr Joe Whelan 01-8510840
State Exams Commission	0906442700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057