

Critical Incident Policy

2023-2024



Scoil Úna Naofa

***Armagh Road,
Crumlin,
Dublin 12***

CRITICAL INCIDENT

Management Plan and Policy

Scoil Úna Naofa Primary School

School Ethos:

Scoil Úna Naofa seeks to provide a happy Christian environment in which children grow in respect and care for themselves and others. Our school is a place where children are helped to develop their potential. We value and promote active co-operation between pupils, parents, staff, management and the local community. We remain open to new ideas for the development of the school.

Rationale:

Scoil Úna Naofa aims to protect the well-being of all its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, in conjunction with the CIMT, has drawn up a *Critical Incident Management Plan* as one element of the school's approach to this area. **In the event of critical incident**, the staff and management of Scoil Úna Naofa have formulated a number of procedures and policies to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both students and staff. It is noted that the school will provide a supporting and caring environment in ordinary time as well as in the event of a critical incident. The staff and management of our school recognise the 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. All people involved will also be urged to keep this in mind.

Critical Incident Management Team:

Principal

Deputy Principal

Assistant Principal 1

Home School Liaison Officer

Creation of a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school:

Refer to School's Vision/Mission Statement.

The following structures have been put in place-

- Creation of a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school
- Defining a critical incident
- Creation of a critical incident management team
- Administrative tasks have been allocated.
- Integration of SPHE programmes in the curriculum addressing issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, self esteem and coping skills. (The following may also be offered on a needs basis - Clanwilliam Family counselling service).
- Creation of a physically safe environment (*Refer to school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying Policy, and Health and Safety Statement*). Regular fire drills take place, allowing all present to take part in an evacuation plan. Fire exits, fire extinguishers and alarms are checked regularly.
- To prevent unwarranted access during the school day – front doors are monitored and all visitors must report to reception.
- Children who are collected early from school, must be documented – class teacher must record on Aladdin.
- Systems and procedures for the identification of students at risk; through the designated Care Team (*consisting of: the School Principal, the Director of the School Completion Programme, the HSCL teacher and one assigned Resource teacher or liaison with the school's DLP/DDLP as necessary*). Community links with Public Health Nurse and Tusla and NEPS also help with this identification.
- Procedures to link with external agencies, through DLP or HSCL teacher
- All staff are familiar with Child Protection Guidelines & Procedures. Counselling and advice for staff, if required, is available 24/7 from Care Call (Freephone – 1800 411 057).

Defining a Critical Incident:

The staff and management of Scoil Úna Naofa recognise that a critical incident is ***'an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping***

mechanism of the school' (Responding to Critical Incidents, 2007). We would see possible incidents as:

- A death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide, or other unexpected death.
- An intrusion into the school.
- Serious damage to the school through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- A disappearance of a member of the school community.
- A serious accident within the school environment.
- Violence towards members of the school community.

Creation of a Critical Incident Management Team:

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. A Critical Incident folder in the Principal's office is maintained and its location is known to all members of the C.I.M.T. This contains a copy of the policy and the plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Roles within the Team shall be as follows:

- Team Leader Principal
- Deputy Team Leader Deputy Principal
- Staff/Student Liaison AP1
- Staff/Student Liaison HSCL
- Parent Liaison HSCL Teacher/Principal
- Garda Liaison HSCL
- Community Liaison HSCL
- Media Liaison Principal
- Administration Principal / School Secretary
- Supervision All staff

All the above have been briefed with the responsibilities that come with each role. In the case of student liaison and supervision, all staff are briefed on the responsibilities required.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for break-down of short term, medium term and follow-up actions. Appendix 2 deals with the individual responsibilities of the above roles.

Communication and availability of plan:

- The plan is readily accessible to all members of staff. Copies are available on the internal shared computer system, in the staff room and in the Principal's office. New members of staff will be familiarised with the plan by Deputy Principal.
- All key members of the critical incident management team have a copy of the plan.
- This plan will be made available to parents/guardians in the school reception, at all times.

For Administrative Tasks and Contact numbers;

Please refer to **Appendix 3** for list of emergency phone numbers and designated tasks/personnel. This list will be displayed in the Staff Room, School Reception Office, and Principal's Office.

Resources:

Critical Incident Rooms –

Staff Room	Meetings with staff
Big Hall	Meetings with students
Small Hall	Meetings with parents
Principal's Office	Meetings with media
Counselling Rooms	Individual sessions with students
Library	Other visitors

The Parents room will be the designated “quiet room” and will be made available when necessary.

- The Principal, as chief administrator, will ensure that templates for letters to parents, templates for press releases, list of emergency contact details, checklist for first 24 hours, map of school building etc are all ready and accessible should they be required.
- A dedicated phone line will be made available, if necessary.

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 etc...

The school secretary, will have a key role in this logging process.

****This policy will be reviewed and ratified on an annual basis by the Board of Management.***

Reference Section

- Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools and Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2016
- Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools, NEPS, 2007
- When Tragedy strikes - Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools, INTO
- CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook, 2007
- Critical Incident Guidelines – Slides for sharing with staff 2021.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting held on 27th September, 2023.

Signature of Chairperson.

Signature of Principal.

Date: 27th September 2023

Appendix 1

Short Term Actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Overall management of the response	Principal
Convene a CIMT meeting, specifying time and place	Principal, CIMT
Contact external agencies	Principal and HSCL
Arrange supervision of students	Deputy Principal / AP1
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for day	Principal
Inform students (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Deputy Principal / AP1 and all relevant staff
Compile list of vulnerable students	Deputy Principal / AP1 and all relevant staff
Contact/visit bereaved family	HSCL/Principal/Relevant staff
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with Media	Principal
Inform parents	HSCL/Principal
Hold end of day staff briefing	Principal/all staff

Medium Term Actions – Day 2 and following days

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting – review events of day 1	CIMT
Meet external agencies	Principal / Deputy Principal
Meet whole staff	Principal / Deputy Principal
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	CIMT
Visit those affected	Principal and HSCL and all relevant staff
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal and HSCL and all relevant staff
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Appropriate staff

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing stress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	HSCL/Principal
Plan for return of bereaved	HSCL/Principal
Review response to incident and amend plan accordingly	CIMT, Staff, BOM

Appendix 2

Team Leader: (Principal)

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the team.
- Agrees schedule for Day 1 Action plan
- Liaises with BOM, DES, NEPS.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.
- Deals with media.
- Decides with BOM re school closure, attendance for funeral services etc.

Garda Liaison: (HSCL)

- Liaises with Gardaí
- Ensures details of tragedy before information is shared

Staff Liaison: (Deputy Principal / Assistant Principal 1)

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts, as they are known; gives staff an opportunity to express their feelings, ask questions; outlines the routine for the day, as agreed with Team Leader
- Advise staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff, from critical incident folder
- Keeps staff updated as day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members, making individual contact with them, and passing on Care Call (emergency assistance) number if required.

Student Liaison Senior School: (Deputy Principal / Assistant Principal 1)

- Provides materials for students, from critical incident folder.
- Keeps records of students seen by external agencies.
- Sets up and arranges supervision for 'parents room'.
- Compiles list of potentially vulnerable students in conjunction with relevant staff.

Student Liaison Junior School: (Deputy Principal / Assistant Principal 1)

- Provides materials for students, from critical incident folder.
- Keeps records of students seen by external agencies.
- Sets up and arranges supervision for 'parents room'.
- Compiles list of potentially vulnerable students in conjunction with relevant staff.

Parent Liaison: (HSCL)

- Visits bereaved family with team leader
- Arrange parent meetings, if held, and facilitate these.
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with school policy
- Keeps records of parents that are seen
- Meets with individual parents, when required
- Help with the return to school of the bereaved

Appendix 2 cont'd...

Community/Agency Liaison: (Principal/HSCL)

- Keeps records of contacted members for Board of Management, emergency support services, and any other relevant agencies
- Liaises with community agencies for support and onward referrals
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies within the school
- Reminds agency members visiting school to wear name badges
- Updates CIMT on the external agencies' involvement.

Media Liaison: (Principal/School Secretary)

- In advance of an incident, will consider the issues that may arise, and how they may be responded to, for example, how interviews would be handled, if photographs would be permitted etc.
- Will liaise, where necessary, with the teachers' unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews, as agreed with BOM.

Administrator: (Principal/School Secretary)

- Ensuring and maintaining an up-to-date record of contact numbers for all parents/guardians, teachers, emergency services etc.
- Takes phone calls and notes those that require a response.
- Ensures that sample letters and templates are on the school's system in advance, ready for adaption and easy access.
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails, faxes etc
- Maintains all records
- Allocates ID Badges.

Appendix 3**EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST**

To be displayed in Staff Room, School Office, and Principal's Office.

Agency	Number
Gardaí (Crumlin)	01 – 6666200
Hospitals	Our Lady's Children's Hospital: 01-4096100 St. James' Hospital: 01-4103000
Dublin Fire Brigade	01-2224000
Local GPs	Sundrive Surgery Road: 01-4925947 Old County Road: 01-4554684 St. Agnes Road: 01-4555306
HSE	Armagh Road Primary Care: 01-921 3864 Old County Road Centre: 01-7957300
School Inspector	Barbara Collins 087-7395237
NEPS Psychologist	01-8650400
SENO	Ruth McKernan 01-6033367
DES	01-8896400 and 090-6483600
INTO	01-8047700 and 1850 708 708
BOM Chairperson	John Mooney:
School Chaplain	Fr. Tom (Parish Office) 01-4555368
Employee Assistance Service/Care Call	1800 411 057 SMS and WhatsApp–Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010