



*St. Helen's S.N.S.
Portmarnock*



Critical Incident Plan

Ratified by Board of Management

ST. HELEN'S SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL - PORTMARNOCK

CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN

Introduction

St. Helen's S.N.S. aims to protect the well being of its pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management and staff have drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Definition of the term "critical incident"

The Staff and Management of St. Helen's S.N.S. 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 pupils 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

This plan aims to:

- help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident
- enable us to maintain a sense of control
- ensure that appropriate support is offered to pupils and staff.
- help ensure that the effects on the pupils and staff are limited.
- enable us to return to normality as soon as possible.

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.

Roles

The key roles are as follows:

- Team Leader
- Garda liaison
- Staff liaison
- Student liaison
- Parent liaison
- Community liaison
- Media liaison
- Administrator

<p>Team Leader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Liaises with the bereaved family 	<p>Ms. Mary. O’Leary or Mrs. Berna. Furlong</p>
<p>Garda liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaises with the Gardaí • Ensures that the information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared 	<p>Ms. Eleanor. Curran</p>
<p>Staff liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the identification of vulnerable pupils • Provides materials for staff • 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 Employee Assistance Service (EAS) and gives them the correct contact number 	<p>Mrs Berna. Furlong or Mr. John Kelly</p>
<p>Student liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alerts other staff to vulnerable pupils. • Provides materials for pupils • Keeps records of pupils seen by external agency staff • Looks after setting up and supervision of ‘quiet’ room. 	<p>Mrs. Síle. Dowd</p>
<p>Community/agency liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Association - 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 	<p>Mrs Siobhán. Kelly Mrs. Jacqueline. Derby (BOM)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminds agency staff to wear name badges • Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies • 	
<p>Parent liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Sets up room for meetings with parents • Maintains a record of parents seen • Meets with individual parents • Provides appropriate materials for parents 	<p>Mrs Berna. Furlong Mr. Andrew. O’ Riordan</p> <p>Ms Orla Darby (BOM)</p>

<p>Media liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by the school management) 	<p>Ms. Enda Rice (BOM)</p>
--	----------------------------

<p>Administrator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents or guardians - Teachers - Emergency services • Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to • Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation • Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes • Photocopies materials needed • Maintains records 	<p>School Secretary:</p> <p>Mrs Deirdre Quinn Mrs Bríd Walsh</p>
---	--

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

The management and staff of St. Helen's S.N.S. have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in an incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, 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 Staff Room will be the main room used to meet the staff

Room 19 for meetings with students

Room 11 or the Hall for meeting groups of parents

Room 11 or the Hall for meeting the media

Room 3 for individual sessions with students

The Library will be used to meet other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

This plan was prepared in consultation with all members of the staff.
Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Our school's final 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 Mrs B. Furlong.

References:

Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines for Schools
Responding to Critical Incidents – Resource Materials for Schools