



## Holy Child Community School

### Critical Incident Policy

#### Defining a Critical Incident:

Holy Child Community School aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The school has taken measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos for our students and staff. It has developed policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety and wellbeing of staff and students, both in ordinary circumstances and in the event of critical incident.

**"A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school."**

Examples of critical incidents, which could disrupt the normal running of Holy Child Community School, could include the following:

- Sudden death of a member of school community
- An accident involving members of the school community
- A major accident/tragedy in the wider community
- Outbreak of major illness or disease
- Serious damage to the school caused by fire, flood etc
- Disappearance of student from home or school

#### AIM:

Recognising that the key to managing a critical incident is forward planning Holy Child Community School has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy (CIMP) and accompanying Plan. It is envisaged that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. The aim is to return the school community to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.

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

Systems have been put in place to reduce the probability of the occurrence of an incident. These measures include addressing both the physical and psychological safety of staff and students.

#### PHYSICAL SAFETY:

- An evacuation plan has been formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and fire extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre opening supervision is in place in the school



- After School supervision is in place
- School doors are locked between classes and during break time
- There is staff supervision at both break time and lunch time.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

The management and staff of Holy Child Community School 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. 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 are addressed in the SPHE curriculum. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision.
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Procedures and the name of the Designated Liaison Person
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/post primary school student are available
- 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 have attended specialist training.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies
  - NEPS
  - NCSE – NBSS and SESS
  - St Vincent de Paul
  - Mountown Youth Services
  - Carmona Services
  - St John of God



- 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 clear anti-bullying procedures and deals with incidents of bullying in accordance with these procedures (
- There is a care system in place in the school using the Continuum of Support approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2010 for post primary schools. The Student Support Team/Care Team meets twice a week.
- 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/guardians 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:

Holy Child Community School has established a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) in line with best practice and will maintain this team into the future. In Holy Child Community School the CIMT comprises of a group of staff members who have practical skills that can be drawn upon in the event of a critical incident occurring. These will retain their roles for at least one year. The team will meet annually to review the plan. For the current academic year 2017-2018 the following staff members will form the CIMT:

ROLE	NAME	EMAIL	TELEPHONE
<b>Team Leader :</b>	Valerie Maher, Principal.		
<b>Garda Liaison:</b>	Valerie Maher, Principal		
<b>Media Liaison:</b>	Valerie Maher, Principal		
<b>Staff Liaison:</b>	Clodagh Downes Deputy Principal		
<b>Student Liaison:</b>	Miriam Kenny Helen Kirwan Michael Melley aoife scott		
<b>Home School Liaison Parent Guardian Liaison:</b>	Year Heads DP Principal		
<b>Counselling Role:</b>	Deirdre Ni Shuibhne		
<b>Chaplaincy Role:</b>	Deirdre Ní Shuibhne, School Chaplain		



<b>Administrative Role:</b>	Valerie Maher, in conjunction with the Administrative Staff.		
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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 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; ETB
- Liaises with the bereaved family.

### 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, 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 and advises them of the availability of the Employment Assistance Service and gives them the contact number.

### STUDENT LIAISON

- Co-ordinate information from tutors and other relevant personnel about students they are concerned about



- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (where appropriate)
- 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.

## **COMMUNITY/AGENCY LIAISON**

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.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN LIAISON**

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges meetings (where appropriate)
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers' sessions
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are prepared and available on the school's IT system 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**

- 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).

### **ADMINISTRATOR**

Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of

- Parents/guardians
- Teachers
- Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response
- Ensures that templates are available on the school's IT system and are ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials as 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 emails and texts 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 name of school have a 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. 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 confirmed 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.

## **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 Valerie Maher

The plan will be updated annually February.



## CRITICAL INCIDENT ROOMS

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In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

<b>Room Name:</b>	<b>Designated Purpose:</b>
<i>Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>School Library</i>	Meetings with students
<i>School Library</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>School Grounds</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Guidance Counsellor Office/ Chaplain's office</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Parents Room</i>	Meetings with other visitors

## ACTION PLAN

### SHORT TERM ACTIONS – DAY 1





<b>TASK</b>	<b>NAME</b>
<b>Gather accurate information</b>	Principal Deputy Principal Assistant Principals
<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	Principal Deputy Principal Assistant Principals
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	Principal
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	Principal HSCL
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	Principal Deputy Principal
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	<b>All staff</b>
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	Principal
<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	Year Heads and Tutors
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	Care Team
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	Principal
<b>Inform parents</b>	Principal and Poppy Centre coordinator HSCL
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	Principal Deputy Principal

## Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Principal
Meet external agencies	Principal HSCL



Meet whole staff	Principal Deputy Principal
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Principal Deputy Principal SEN coordinator
Visit the injured	HSCCL
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal HSCCL
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Deputy Principal
Make decisions about school closure	Principal BOM



## Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers Student Support Team/ Care Team
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	SEN Coordinator Career Guidance
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	School Chaplain
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	School Chaplain
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM



# EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	01 6665500
Hospital	01-2806901
Fire Brigade	1. 6665500
Local GPs	01-2855520
HSE	01-2843579
TULSLA Community Care Team	01-771850
Child and Family Centre	0872484953
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	01-2843579
School Inspectorate	01-8896553
NEPS Psychologist Carmona Psychologist	01 - 8738700
DES	0906483600
I/ASTI/TUI	ASTI: 01- 6040160 TUI: 01- 4922588
Clergy – Our Lady of Victories	01 2854667
State Exams Commission	090 6442700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057