

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

2024-2025



ST LOUIS HIGH SCHOOL

The key to managing a critical incident is planning. Schools are strongly advised to develop a policy in relation to critical incident response. NEPS also encourages schools to develop a Critical Incident Management Plan, outlining who will do what in the event of a tragedy.

The templates outlined below are designed as an aid to schools in drawing up a policy and plan. Each school will need to look at its own particular context and circumstances and draw up its own unique policy and plan. Additional guidance is contained in Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016) R19-21 P.79-90.

St Louis High School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

Mission Statement

***St Louis High School is a dynamic community of learning
where we aspire to foster a happy and inclusive environment.
We nurture creativity, embrace diversity and cherish our values
while building on our rich traditions
in an atmosphere of respect, gratitude and generosity.
As active global citizens we share in the journey
towards a deeper understanding of and engagement in our complex, ever-changing and inter-
dependent world.***

The Board of Management, through Ms C McDonough (Principal & SLHS Care Team) has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Review and Research

The CIMT have consulted 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))

- 2e1 : 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)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

Define what you mean by the term ‘critical incident’

The staff and management St Louis High School 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 students 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

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.

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

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school (from 8am-8.20am)(on S & S rota)
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the outside area – junior cycle students in area adjacent to car park; senior students in area adjacent to basketball courts.
- Health & Safety Policy in place
- Students to keep to the right on corridors and on stairwells to reduce congestion.
- The use of passenger lifts is restricted to those only who need to use them. Students must be accompanied by one other. Instructions are posted on the inside of the lift in the event of a person/persons becoming trapped in a lift.

- Service contract for lifts and chair lifts is with Accel Lifts. Contact details in office. All lifts are serviced every quarter.
- Alarm on chair lifts to alert other people that the lift is in use.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *St Louis High 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. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing 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 this provision.
- Staff members have access to training for their role in SPHE and Social Education.
- Staff members are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures. These guidelines are shared on an annual basis with all staff. All staff is required to have completed the online Tusla training.
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the 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 is informed in the area of suicide awareness and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – Lucena Clinic, Pieta House; Linn Dara; Tusla Family Support; Tusla – social work departments and educational Welfare Officer.
- 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 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on www.education.ie
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or year head), 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.
- 5th Yr Mentoring System is put in place to support 1st Yr students and to aid with the transition from primary to post-primary school.
- We run a Cairdeas and Sláinte week on an annual basis where speakers visit the school and provide talks and workshops on topics such as anti-bullying, cyber-bullying; coping with stress; dealing with relationships, building resilience.

- Talks are provided for parents also on an annual basis to help with mental health issues, dealing with teenage difficulties etc.
- Staff are provided with CPD at various times to support both themselves and the students in their care.

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. 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 the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.**

Team leader: Clíona McDonough (Principal)

Deputy Team Leader: Sinéad Thornton (Deputy Principal)/ Niamh Mulcahy (Acting Deputy Principal)

Role

- 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

Garda liaison: Principal Clíona McDonough (Deputy Principal – Sinéad Thornton; Acting Deputy Principal Niamh Mulcahy)

Role

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

Staff liaison Ruth Farragher, Aoife Rodgers

Role

- 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.

Student liaison Beatrice Dooley, Niamh Mulcahy & Sharon Muldoon

Role

- At post-primary level, may 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

Community/agency liaison Sinead Thornton/Niamh Mulcahy & Louise Stenson

Role

- 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 liaison – *Cliona McDonough, Niamh Mulcahy & Avril Doyle*

Role

- 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)

Media liaison *Cliona McDonough & Cliona Maughan*

Role

- 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 *Jean Garry; Lizzy Morgan; Chrys Anastasopoulou*

Role

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

Record keeping *Jean Garry, Lizzy Morgan & Chrys Anastasopoulou*

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.

Jean Garry, Lizzy Morgan and Chrys Anastasopoulou will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of *ST Louis High School* 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.

Critical Incident Rooms	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>LIBRARY/Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>HALL/CUISLE</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Meeting rooms/Cuisle</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Meeting Rooms</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Meeting Rooms/ Care Room/Guidance Counselling Suite</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Meeting Rooms</i>	Meetings with other visitors

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 Clóna McDonough (Principal)

The plan will be updated annually in the months of September/October.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Cliona McDonough</i>	0868340027
Deputy Team Leaders:	<i>Sinead Thornton</i> <i>Niamh Mulcahy</i>	0872384922 0868398953
Garda liaison	<i>Cliona McDonough</i> <i>Sinead Thornton</i>	0868340027 0872384922
Staff liaison	<i>Ruth Farragher</i> <i>Aoife Rodgers</i>	0868707546 0863850688
Student liaison	<i>Niamh Mulcahy</i> <i>Beatrice Dooley</i> <i>Sharon Muldoon</i>	0868398953 0879033114 0866403165
Community liaison	<i>Sinead Thornton</i> <i>Niamh Mulcahy</i> <i>Louise Stenson</i>	0872384922 0868398953 0876965371
Parent liaison	<i>Cliona McDonough</i> <i>Avril Doyle</i> <i>Niamh Mulcahy</i> <i>Sinead Thornton</i>	0868340027 0861509262 0868398953 0872384922
Media liaison	<i>Cliona McDonough</i> <i>Cliona Maughan</i>	0868340027 0874198403
Administrator	<i>Jean Garry</i> <i>Chrys Anastasopoulou</i> <i>Lizzy Morgan</i>	0879494153 0858480001 0876627868

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Cliona McDonough Sinead Thornton Niamh Mulcahy
Who, what, when, where?	
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly Meeting with Year Heads	Rm 15 – 8am 8.20am
Contact external agencies	Garda NEPS
Arrange supervision for students	Jean Garry/Chrys Anastasopoulou
Hold staff meeting	All staff

Agree schedule for the day	With CIMT & Staff Council
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Year Heads
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Year Heads/ SEN Co-ordinator/Guidance Counsellor
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Team leaders
Inform parents	Administration in consultation with Team Leaders
Hold end of day staff briefing	With all staff

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	Where appropriate
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Consult with NEPS
Visit the injured	YH & CT
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	YH, Principal
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	YH, senior Management, Middle Management representation, student representation
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers & Year Heads Subject teachers Guidance Counsellors
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Where appropriate
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	In consultation with families
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	
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 (Rathmines) (Ternenure)	01 6666700 01 6666400
Hospital St James' Hospital St Vincent's Hospital Crumlin Children's Hospital Temple St Children's Hospital	01 4103000 01 2214000 01 4096100 01 8784200
Local Schools	St Louis Senior Primary School: - 01-4976098 (Dolores Hanrahan – (PO)) St Louis Infant School: - 01-4972188 St Mary's College : 01 4995700 (Denis Murphy (P) Barry Leonard (DP))
Fire Brigade Emergency ring 999	Donnybrook 016734000 Dolphin's Barn
Local GPs	Rafter Medical Centre 01 4974747 Rathmines Clinic 014966025 Belgrave Clinic 01 4975666
HSE	Terenure Health Centre D 6W: 01 4904648 Meath Primary Care Centre 1-9 Heytesbury St., D 8 01-7085700 Rathmines Health Centre, Unit 46 The Swan Centre, Lwr Rathmines Rd., D 6 01 4973322
Community Care Team	Community Intervention Team (CIT Services) – Dublin South: 01 4987100/087 9792589
Child and Family Centre	Barnardos Child and Family Centre, Jobstown D 24 014598035 Tusla (various offices) Lord Edward St(Dublin South Central) - 016486555
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Lucena Team A – Community Mental Health Team, Lucena Clinic, Rathgar, 014923596
School Inspector	

NEPS Psychologist	<p>Hilary Virtue Hilary_Virtue@education.gov.ie <i>Phone:</i> Landline: (01) 8650 412 Mobile: 087 457 5320</p> <p><i>National Educational Psychological Service, Department of Education and Skills, Floor 1, Bord Iascaigh Mhara Building, 12 Crofton Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.</i></p>
DES	<p>Dublin office: 01 8896400 NEPS office: 01 8892700</p>
ASTI	<p>Head Office, Thomas MacDonagh House, Winetavern St., Dublin 8 1850-418400; 01-6040160 info@asti.ie</p>
Clergy	<p>Fr Andrew O’Sullivan (PP) Rathmines: 0872141498</p>
State Exams Commission	<p>090-6442700</p>
Employee Assistance Service	<p>1800 411 057</p>

Updated August 2024
Clíona McDonough (Principal)

Reviewed and Ratified by the BOM on September 16th 2024.

Signed:

_____ **P Bourden (Chairperson)**

_____ **C McDonough (Principal)**