



Critical Incident Management Policy and Plan in Templemore College

Templemore College of Further Education 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 (*Dr. Noel Colleran*), 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

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- 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).

Definition of term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of *Templemore College of Further Education* 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*
- *A national/international health crisis*
- *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
- Electrical equipment used in areas such as hairdressing, beauty therapy etc regularly maintained.
- Key code and fob entry to management and admin offices.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Templemore College of Further Education* 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.

- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- 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 suicidal students
- 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 Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary) or 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 support teacher), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents if appropriate 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 (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: *Dr. Noel Colleran*

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.

(Note - It is important to consider who will take the lead in the absence of the team leader).

Garda liaison: *Dr. Noel Colleran*

Role

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

Staff liaison: *Mr. Micheál Lenihan*

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: *Guidance Counsellor and Jane Quinlan*

Role

- 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: *Micheál Lenihan*

Role

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - 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: *David Young*

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: *Dr. Noel Colleran*

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: *Pauline Ryan*

Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - Parents, guardians, next of kin
 - 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: *Pauline Ryan*

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.

(Templemore College of Further Education secretary 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 *Templemore College of Further Education* 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.

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All 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 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 Dr. Noel Colleran and/or Micheál Lenihan

The plan will be updated annually Dr. Noel Colleran and Jane Quinlan.

Stages in the Plan

Stage 1. Identification of Potential Crisis

1. Death of student or teacher
2. Violence or serious assault
3. Death or injury on college outing
4. Road, sea or air accident involving students or staff
5. Destruction or vandalism of part of the College.

Stage 2. Choosing suitable support agencies and personnel



The list of contacts and telephone numbers attached as per Appendix 1 will be worthwhile should a crisis arise. It is important to make personal contact with specialist services so that you have an established working relationship and won't be starting from scratch in a time of crisis.

Stage 3. Action plan and responsibilities apportioned within the college

1. Obtain factual and reliable information at start of crisis
2. Senior management i.e. Principal, Deputy Principal, meet with relevant personnel i.e., First Aid personnel, Counsellor and person designated to liaise with family
3. The pastoral team will meet to coordinate events

Contact families

- immediately, to offer sympathy and practical support
- consultation with them regarding appropriate support from college
- evaluate family circumstances.

Staff meeting regarding the following issues

- suspension of normal timetable
- method of informing families
- facts of situation
- family situation and proposals for college response
- preparation of staff for student briefing
- instruction on what staff say outside the college so as not to divulge the specifics of the situation
- be aware of any teachers who may be particularly distressed e.g. those recently bereaved.

Student briefing

- who – class/year/whole college
- by whom – class Co-Ordinator/Principal
- what information; be sensitive to the bereaved family or that of the injured, anticipate student questions and responses, strongly discourage students from spreading rumours and explain the consequences of doing this.

Media management

- designate a spokesperson
- prepare a brief statement; expressing the college's grief, outlining the actions being taken to meet the needs of the students/staff
- protect the family's privacy
- prohibit staff/students from talking to media.

Support for staff/students

- ensure that counselling services are available



- students at risk; close friends, peer group, relatives, neighbours
- staff needs including management.

The College Community

- recognising the importance of the college as a community
- grieving as a community
- ceremony/silence/assembly/prayer.

Participation in funeral rite

- designated person to liaise with family to extend sympathy and clarify family's wishes regarding colleges involvement in funeral/memorial service
- involvement of students/staff if agreed by family
- appropriate representation at funeral service
- request a decision from Principal and Board of Management re college closure.

Medium term tasks

- providing long-term counselling
- close monitoring of students.

Medium/long-term tasks

- keeping in contact with family of deceased
- being aware of certain occasions such as, months mind, anniversaries, Christmas
- ensure new staff are aware of colleges policies and procedures and ensure they are aware of which students were affected and in which way
- review of overall college response.



Appendix 1

College Emergency Contact Numbers

Contact	Name	Telephone
College Doctor		
Fire Brigade		112/999
Gardaí - Templemore		0504 32630
Hospital Emergency Dept		
Health Promotion		061 483218
Local Clergy		
Roman Catholic		0504 35772
Church of Ireland		0504 31175
Other		
Counselling Services		
Educational Services	NEPS	01 8892700
Suicide Prevention Office		
Voluntary Agencies	Aware	01 6766166
	Rainbows	01 4734175
	Grow	061 318813
	Mental Health Ireland	
	Pieta House	0505 22568
	Suicide Aware	
Print and Media	Tipperary Star	0504 29100
	Nenagh Guardian	067 31214
	Midland Tribune	0509 20003
	The Nationalist	052 6172500
	Tipp FM	052 25447/067 44477
DES Press Office		01 8892322



Appendix 2

Checklist for Consideration by Principal – Day 1

The following is a checklist of things to consider on the morning/day of a tragedy. They are not written in order of what must come first etc. It is important for the Principal to take time to plan what he/she must do and what is appropriate to say to all concerned.

- Take time to let the news sink in
- Call a meeting of the Support Team – include coordinator of student/s
- Put together as much factual information as possible
- Inform staff of what has happened
- Discuss college routine for Day 1 with staff
- Identify particular students who may need to be told individually – eg close friends, relatives etc.
- Inform the students that a student has died tragically/badly injured and explain this is something that everyone will find difficult to deal with. Explain the college routine for the day and support and back-up that is available to them.
- Contact NEPS and HSE Crisis Service
- Make contact with family of deceased/critically ill
- Meet with key staff who can offer student support and decide on the format for this
- Decide on any other arrangements which may need to be made – prayers for student/staff and his/her family
- Check in with staff in the staff room during the day and keep abreast of what is happening in the college
- Be aware of any particular teachers who may be particularly distressed – eg those who are recently bereaved themselves or who have prior experience of a family suicide
- Encourage staff to come to you during the day and let you know how things are going.
- Find out details on the funeral etc. and communicate with staff and students
- Make contact with bereaved family
- At the end of Day 1 review events with staff and make plans for following day
- Make staff aware of students who are particularly vulnerable and what supports will be available to them
- If there is a likelihood of interest from the media discuss a strategy to deal with such requests.