

Coláiste Alhuire



**CRITICAL INCIDENT  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
2022-2023**

**A critical incident (C.I.) is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school. (NEPS)**

### **Aim of Policy:**

- to outline structures ensuring speedy and effective responses to a critical incident
- to outline guidelines for staff involved
- to define individual roles and responsibilities
- to identify vulnerable students and staff
- to provide after-care service ensuring that effects on staff and students are limited.
- to help the school to return to normal as soon as possible.

### **Critical Incidents may include:**

- death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide\*.
- attempted suicide of a student / staff member
- an accident / attack involving students or staff on or off the school premises
- serious damage to the school building through fire, flooding, vandalism, etc
- the disappearance of a member of the school community
- an accident / tragedy in the wider community.

\* the term “suicide” will not be used without the consent of the family involved. The term “tragic death” or “sudden death” should be used instead.

### **Preventative Measures:**

While the main aim of this policy is to outline procedures to be followed in the aftermath of a critical incident, Colaiste Mhuire identifies the initiatives below as methods aiming to prevent a C.I. occurring:

- Health and Safety Policy:
  - ✓ fire and emergency evacuation procedures
  - ✓ maintenance of extinguishers, smoke detectors, First Aid kits, etc
  - ✓ monitoring of exit routes

- ✓ training of staff in First Aid, use of defibrillators, and fire extinguishing procedures
- ✓ supervision of school yard before, during and after school.
- Student Support Team / weekly Pastoral Care meetings
- Guidance and Counselling
- Class Teacher system
- Buddy Programme
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures
- Code of Behaviour
- SPHE Programme (Junior Cycle and TY)
- RSE Programme (Senior Cycle)
- Staff training and resources ( SPHE, Guidance, HSCL, Child Protection, etc)

## **Critical Incident Management Team**

The Critical Incident Team in Colaiste Mhuire consists of the following personnel:

Team Leader:	Donal O' Sullivan
Staff Liaison:	Carol O' Mahony
Student Liaison:	Gail Gyves & Rachel O' Sullivan
SEN Liaison:	Sheila Murphy & Sinead O' Rourke
Parent Liaison:	Mary Dunlea
Agency Liaison:	Pat Curtin
Administration:	Trish O' Keeffe / Eleanor Duggan

## **Roles and Responsibilities of C.I. Team Members:**

**Team Leader: Donal O' Sullivan**

- Confirm the incident / death.
- Contact C.I. Team, CEO of Cork ETB, Board of Management and Parents Association.
- Contact services required.
- Coordinate the tasks of the C.I. Team.
- Address the staff on the incident
- Liaise with the bereaved family.

- Communicate with the media.

**Staff Liaison: Carol O' Mahony**

- Contact staff members.
- Facilitate C.I. Team-
  - Draw up temporary timetable
  - Organise rooms and supervision of classes
- Organise briefing meetings for staff - give staff an opportunity to ask questions and outline the routine for the day.
- Advise staff on procedures for identifying vulnerable students
- Provides support material for staff (from CI Pack)
- Keep staff updated as the day progresses
- Be alert to vulnerable staff
- Provide a room for distressed staff members to go to.

**Student Liaison: Gail Gyves & Rachel O' Sullivan**

- Care for distressed and vulnerable students.
- Alert staff to vulnerable students.
- Outline the specific services available to students and staff
- Put in place a clear referral procedure to support staff in dealing with students in distress.
- Provide support material for students (from CI Pack).
- Maintain student contact records (R1).
- Look after setting up and supervision of 'quiet room'.
- Organise service within school / mass card / wreath

**SEN Liaison: Sheila Murphy & Sinead O' Rourke**

- Care for distressed and vulnerable SEN students
- Alert staff to vulnerable students
- Provide support material for SEN students (from CI Pack).
- Provide support materials for their parents (CI Pack)
- Maintain student contact records (R1).
- Look after setting up and supervision of 'quiet area'.

**Parent Liaison: Mary Dunlea**

- Visit the bereaved family with the Team Leader
- Arrange meetings, if necessary
- Help facilitate such meetings / manage ‘questions and answers’ sessions
- Ensure sample letters are prepared and available on the school’s IT system, ready for adaptation
- Set up room for meeting with parents
- Maintain a record of parents seen
- Provide support material for parents (from the CI Pack)

**Agency Liaison: Pat Curtin**

- Maintain up to date lists of contacts numbers of Parents Association, emergency support services and other external agencies.
- Liaise with community agencies
- Coordinate the involvement of agencies
- Update CI Team on the involvement of external agencies.

**Administration: Trish O Keeffe / Eleanor Duggan**

- Keep log of events / calls
- Organise letters/texts to be sent home to parents
- Manage phone calls
- Keep all emergency contact / staff contact numbers up to date
- Keep C.I. Policy and Procedures / C.I. Team packs updated annually
- Photocopy resources / guidelines for staff
- Devise a brief list of CI procedures for the SDP notice board in the staffroom
- Send copy of C.I. Policy / list of procedures to all staff via iPad

All C.I. Team members will keep accurate records of phone calls made, letters, emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used, etc on file.

**Informing the Student Body:**

In the interests of the students, the C.I. Team felt that Class Teachers should break the news to their assembly groups in the company of the Guidance Counsellor and stay with their class for as long as necessary. Guidelines to help Class Teachers can be found at the end of this policy. Any Class Teacher not comfortable with this task is not expected to

carry it out and the news will be broken to their assembly group by another Class Teacher / teacher that is willing to do so.

Students with learning difficulties will be at a different developmental level to their peers. Their understanding of death will be in accordance with their developmental age. They will be told the news separately so that the information can be given according to their level of understanding. It is important that they are reintegrated with their peers as soon as possible.

### **Student Council Involvement:**

Members of the Students Council may be drafted in to aid the C.I. Team if deemed necessary. Their role would be:

- to assist the C.I. Team in identifying students at risk or in distress
- to represent students' concerns and wishes in dealing with a C.I.
- to aid the C.I. Team in planning memorial services, fundraising for causes, etc

### **All students and staff will be discouraged from dealing with the media.**

### **Foreign Tours and other Trips:**

Staff organising tours abroad and trips within Ireland are responsible for compiling a list of all students and staff involved in the trip, a list of mobile numbers for accompanying teachers and medical information on all students involved.

A copy of the list of students and relevant data should be left with the Principal and in the Office.

### **State Examinations / Holiday Periods:**

If a critical incident occurs during the State Examinations or during a holiday period, the school will mobilise the C.I. Team and give support to students as in term time, where practical.

### **Review:**

The Critical Incident Team will meet at the start of each year to update and review the plan. Others may be co-opted as necessary in light of the nature of the emergency and the availability of Critical Incident Team members. To ensure the smooth running of the plan under any circumstances, the Critical Incident Team felt it a good decision to incorporate other staff members to substitute the existing members in the unfortunate event of one being involved in a Critical Incident. These personnel are as follows:

Carol O' Mahony	to replace	Team Leader
Celine Cronin		Staff Liaison
Maggie Cronin		Student Liaison
Seamus O' Rourke		Student Liaison
Amelia Fitzgerald		SEN Liaison
Sarah O' Dwyer		Parent Liaison
Tim Jones		Agency Liaison
Liam Lynch		Administration

In the event of an emergency all staff, including non-teaching and temporary staff, will be notified as soon as possible.

### **Long Term Actions and Evaluation:**

- All staff are responsible for monitoring students during usual school activities.
- Where possible, vulnerable students should be referred to in-house school support with particular expertise, i.e. Guidance Counsellor.
- A referral to the Health Board or other external agencies may be pursued after in-house supports have been explored first.
- Students displaying the following signs may need assistance:
  - ✓ uncharacteristic behaviour
  - ✓ deterioration in academic performance
  - ✓ physical symptoms, i.e. weight loss/gain, lack of attention to appearance, tiredness, restlessness....
  - ✓ inappropriate emotional reactions
  - ✓ increased absenteeism

### **Evaluate response to the incident:**

What went well?

Where were the gaps?

What was most/least helpful?

Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?

### **Review Date:**

September 2023

This Critical Incident Management Plan was adopted by the Board of Management on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2022.

Signed: *Alan Edwards*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 27/10/22

Signed: *Donal O'Sullivan*

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 27/10/22