



Critical Incident Policy



Scoil Chaitríona 2025-2026

Scoil Chaitríona

Bóthar Mobhí

Glas Naíon

Príomhoide: Fíona Ní Chatháin

Príomhoide Tánaisteach: Katie Ní Dhubhláin

Mission Statement

Scoil Chaitríona is a Dominican community which illustrates the ideals and values of the Dominicans and of the Le Chéile Charter. Scoil Chaitríona is a community which provides education through the medium of Irish. The main aims of the school are:

- To foster loyalty to the Irish Language and Culture.
- To promote the holistic development of the pupils.
- Students are encouraged to reach their full potential academically, socially, personally, spiritually and creatively.
- Learning is promoted inside the classroom and in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.
- We work together for the welfare of all in the spirit of Christianity and Truth.

Scoil Chaitríona 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 Fiona Ní Chatháin, Principal, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Review and Research

The Critical Incident Management Team (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)
- 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)

Definition of a 'critical incident'

The staff and management of Scoil Chaitríona 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.
- Any other exceptional incident which might have a serious impact on the well-being of the school community.

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan (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

- School Health and Safety Statement
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Adequate supervision before school, during breaks and while the school building is open.

- School doors locked or closed during class time
- Code of Behaviour implemented

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Scoil Chaitríona 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 have access to training for their role in SPHE
- The school has developed a well-being programme as part of the new Junior Cycle
- First years are offered the “My Friends” programme (developed by NEPS)
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- 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 are trained in interventions for suicidal students
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies
 - TUSLA (Social Work and Meitheal)
 - CAMHS
 - NEPS
 - Daughters of Charity
 - Jigsaw
 - Pieta House
 - Community Gardaí and JLOs.

- 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
- The school has an anti-bullying week every year for all students
- There is a care system in place in the school - *Student Support Team* - using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the 2010 NEPS post-primary documents. 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 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: *Fiona Ní Chatháin, 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 or affected family
- Liaises with the Gardaí
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared
- 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.

In the absence of the team leader, Katie Ní Dhubhláin, Deputy Principal will assume the role.

Student liaison

Bliain 1 - *Tanya Ní Uiginn*

Bliain 2- *Meadhb Ní Mháinín*

Bliain 3 - *Trish de Bháil*

Niamh Ní Chléirigh

Bliain 4- *Cian Ó Gibealláin*

Anna Ní Mhonacháin

Bliain 5- *Daithí Mac Gabhann*

Bliain 6- *Diarmaid Ó hÓgáin*

Daibhéad de Bháil

Role

Co-ordinate information from staff 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 - Fiona Ní Chatháin, Principal (*in the absence of the principal - Katie Ní Dhubhláin, Deputy Principal*)

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 - relevant year head and/or form tutor

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 - *Fiona Ní Chatháin, Principal*

Role

- In the event 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 Board of Management)

Administrator - *Helen de Buitléir under direction of Fiona Ní Chatháin (Principal) or Katie Ní Dhubhláin (Deputy Principal)*

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

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.

(Helen de Buitléir, school 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 Scoil Chaitríona 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>Staff room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Amharclann, Seomra Cruinnithe, Leabharlann, or any of the following offices</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Principal</i>● <i>Deputy Principal</i>● <i>Guidance Counsellor</i>● <i>Learning Support</i>● <i>Transition Year</i>● <i>HSCL Office</i> <i>Any other suitable space</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Amharclann, Seomra Cruinnithe, Leabharlann, or any of the following offices</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Principal</i>● <i>Deputy Principal</i>● <i>Guidance Counsellor</i>● <i>Learning Support</i>● <i>Transition Year</i>● <i>HSCL Office</i> <i>Any other suitable space</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Amharclann, Seomra Cruinnithe, Leabharlann, or any of the following offices</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Principal</i>● <i>Deputy Principal</i>● <i>Guidance Counsellor</i>● <i>Learning Support</i>● <i>Transition Year</i>	Meetings with media

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>HSCL Office</i> <p><i>Any other suitable space</i></p>	
<p><i>Seomra Cruinnithe, or any of the following offices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Principal</i> ● <i>Deputy Principal</i> ● <i>Guidance Counsellor</i> ● <i>Learning Support</i> ● <i>Transition Year</i> <p><i>Any other suitable space</i></p>	Individual sessions with students
<p><i>Seomra Cruinnithe, any of the following offices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Principal</i> ● <i>Deputy Principal</i> ● <i>Guidance Counsellor</i> ● <i>Learning Support</i> ● <i>Transition Year</i> ● <i>HSCL Office</i> <p><i>Any other suitable space</i></p>	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 *Fiona Ní Chatháin* (Principal), or *Katie Ní Dhubhláin* (Deputy Principal)

The plan will be updated annually before the end of September.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Fiona Ní Chatháin</i>	
Garda liaison	<i>Fiona Ní Chatháin</i>	
Staff liaison	<i>Fiona Ní Chatháin</i>	
Student liaison	<i>Bliain 1 - Tanya Ní Uiginn</i> <i>Bliain 2- Meadhb Ní Mháinín</i> <i>Bliain 3 - Trish de Bháil</i> <i>Niamh Ní Chléirigh</i> <i>Bliain 4- Cian Ó Gibealláin</i> <i>Anna Ní Mhonacháin</i> <i>Bliain 5- Daithí Mac Gabhann</i> <i>Bliain 6- Diarmaid Ó hÓgáin</i> <i>Daibhéad de Bháil</i>	
Community liaison	<i>Fiona Ní Chatháin</i> <i>Katie Ní Dhubhláin</i>	
Parent liaison	<i>Bliain 1 - Tanya Ní Uiginn</i> <i>Bliain 2- Meadhb Ní Mháinín</i> <i>Bliain 3 - Trish de Bháil</i> <i>Niamh Ní Chléirigh</i> <i>Bliain 4- Cian Ó Gibealláin</i> <i>Anna Ní Mhonacháin</i> <i>Bliain 5- Daithí Mac Gabhann</i> <i>Bliain 6- Diarmaid Ó hÓgáin</i> <i>Daibhéad de Bháil</i>	
Media liaison	<i>Fiona Ní Chatháin</i>	
Administrator	<i>Helen de Buitléir</i>	

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Team Leader
Who, what, when, where?	
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Team Leader
Contact external agencies	Team Leader
Arrange supervision for students	Katie Ní Dhubhláin
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	CIMT
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Relevant year head and/or school support team
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Relevant year head and/or school support team
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Team Leader with CIMT
Inform parents	Team Leader with CIMT
Hold end of day staff briefing	Team leader with CIMT

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	Team Leader
Meet whole staff	Team Leader
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	School support team
Visit the injured	Team leader and other relevant staff members
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Team Leader
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Team Leader and School support team
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	School Support Team
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Team Leader and relevant year head/form tutor
Plan for suitable commemoration for bereaved family	Team Leader and relevant year head/form tutor
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	Garda Ballymun (01) 6664400 Community Garda Martin Lynch JLO Catherine Dillon
Hospital	Ambulance 112 Mater Hospital (01) 8302000
Fire Brigade	Fire Brigade 112
Child and Family Centre	Wellmount Centre 01 8567704
NEPS Psychologist	Dermot Bergin Dublin Region NEPS, Floor 4, Metropolitan Building James Joyce Street, Dublin 1, D01 KOY8. Tel: (0761) 108660
DES	Department of Education and Skills, Cornamaddy, Athlone, County Westmeath. N37 X659 Telephone 090 648 3600
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland, Thomas MacDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8.D08 P9V6 Tel: 01-6040160 / 1850 - 418400

	Fax: 01-8972760
Clergy	Bishop Dónal de Róiste or his substitute
State Exams Commission	State Examinations Commission, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 TP65 Phone Number: 090-644 2700 Fax Number: 090-644 2744
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 26/11/2025

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson Board of Management

Principal

Date: 26/11/25

Date: 26/11/25

Date of next review: 2026/27