



CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY



St. Paul's Community College is a state school run by the Education Training Board of Ireland (ETBI). Our school is run under the ethos of the ETB and the core values underpinning its characteristic spirit. St Paul's is a state, co-educational, multid denominational school underpinned by the core values of the Ethos of excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect.

Ratified by the Board of Management: 23rd February 2023

St. Paul's Community College aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

St. Paul's Community College is a multi-denominational, co-educational school providing an inclusive learning environment for all.

We recognise and respect each student as an individual, embracing a variety of learning and teaching styles and aspiring to encourage each student's unique skills and talents.

St. Paul's Community College encourages the involvement of parents through home school contacts and through the involvement in the development and growth of the Parents Council.

The Critical Incident Management team, headed by Ms. Fiona McDonnell 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 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)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

- Coronavirus/Covid-19 - Resources for Schools and other Education settings. (DES,2020) □ Covid-19 – NEPS advice and resources for keeping children and young people well during covid19. (DES, 2020).
- Teachers Wellbeing and self-care during Covid-19 school closures (DES, 2020)

Define what you mean by the term ‘critical incident’

The staff and management of *St. Paul’s Community College* 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*
- ***An unforeseen whole school closure such as a virus outbreak.***

Aim

The aim of the CIMT 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
- Visitor registration
- ***In case of virus outbreak please see Appendix One: Preventing and Managing Sickness including outbreaks and COVID-19 (Coronavirus)***

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *St. Paul's Community College* 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
- 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 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 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.
- 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 as to how to access support for themselves.
- ***The school has developed links with a range of external agencies including the HSE and DES in the case of managing and preventing sickness resulting in the case of a whole school closure.***

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The Critical Incident Management Team is comprised of the following members of Staff: Principal, Deputy Principals, AP1's, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Home School Community Liaison teacher, Secretary and School Caretaker.

Record Keeping

All team members will keep written record of phone calls, letters, meetings interventions etc. Records are also kept digitally in the case of unforeseen school closure such as that due to virus outbreak.

Confidentiality

The school is conscious of its responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any accident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements.

Team leader: *Ms. Fiona McDonnell*

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
- 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.

❖ *Please refer to Appendix One for details of specific role of team leader in the case of the incident of an unforeseen school closure as a result of Covid-19/Coronavirus outbreak.*

Student liaison *Assistant Principals, Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor*

Role

- At post-primary level, may gather 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.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

❖ *Please see Appendix one for the specific roles assigned to AP holders during an unforeseen school closure.*

Administrator *Jennifer Tobin.*

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 - both digital and hard copies.

❖ Please refer to Appendix One for specific roles undertaken by administrative staff during the situation of a Covid-19 outbreak.

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.

Ann Purcell, Jennifer Tobin, Linda Sheridan, 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. Paul's Community College* 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>R5</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Year Head's Office.</i>	Meetings with parents

<i>R5 and offices</i>	Individual sessions with students
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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.

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Principal
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly <i>In the case of an incident occurring during a period of an unforeseen school closure (Coronavirus or otherwise), this meeting will take place remotely and via an online video platform approved by the WWETB.</i>	Principal
Contact external agencies	Secretary
Arrange supervision for students	Deputy Principals
Holds briefing meeting	Principal
Attends briefing meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Deputy Principals
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately) <i>Should this be necessary during a period of enforced whole school closure we will endeavour to communicate this information to each student as we see fit, at all times cognisant of the need for great sensitivity in our approach to this task.</i>	Appropriate Year Head / Guidance Counsellor / Chaplain
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Appropriate Year Head / Guidance Counsellor / Chaplain
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Principal
Inform parents	Principal
Hold end of day staff briefing	Principal

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1 <i>* In the case of a whole school closure at this time this meeting will take place remotely via video conference.</i>	Team leader
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Principal, Deputy Principals, Year-heads, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor , HSCL
Plan to visit the injured	Principal, Deputy Principals, HSCL or another staff member/Year Head/AP1
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements <i>* In the case of an unforeseen school closure due to a virus outbreak we will follow guidelines set down by the HSE as they relate to attendance at funerals by staff and students.</i>	Principal, Deputy Principals
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Principal, Deputy Principals
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers and Year Heads.
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Principal, Deputy Principals, Year-heads, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor , Year Heads
Decide on memorials and anniversaries. <i>In the case of whole school closure we will endeavour to plan towards a suitable memorial service at a future point when the school re-opens.</i>	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	(051) 305 300
Hospital	(051) 848 000
Fire Brigade	(051) 849 982
Local GPs:	
-The Keogh Practice, Unit 3, Lismore Park:	051 375752
-Rowe Creavin Medical Practice, Waterford Health Pk	051 370057
HSE	(051) 842 800

Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	(051) 842 146
NEPS Psychologist	(0761) 108921
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

(APPENDIX ONE)

ST. PAULS'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN FOR PREVENTING AND MANAGING SICKNESS INCLUDING OUTBREAKS AND COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

This policy is divided into four stages including

- ❖ prevention,
- ❖ mitigation/delay,
- ❖ containment phase necessitating the need for school closure
- ❖ post-peak or post-pandemic school re-opening phase.

PHASE:	KEY ACTIONS:	RESPONSIBILITY OF:
STAGE ONE: PREVENTION – WHERE AN INCREASED RISK OF INFECTION IS PRESENT (local increases in sickness, public health alerts, suspected cases of a specific illness/virus within the school or local community)	- Communication of effective hygiene procedures to key stakeholders (staff, students and parents) in line with HSE guidelines. - Effective handwashing facilities and products are in place - Good handwashing and coughing/sneezing etiquette encouraged throughout the school - Administrative staff distribute Key Information Posters	CIMT Leader/Principal , Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals, Class teachers, Administrative staff, Ancillary staff, Students

	- Year heads, teachers to encourage use of handwashing amongst students before and after eating food - Changes made where necessary to scheduled school trips/matches etc. - Initiate core control measures (adequate stocks of hand sanitizer, wipes, tissues for each class/common area) - measures enacted to avoid cross contamination of germs including regular cleaning of door handles and tables throughout the day. (Class Teachers and Ancillary staff) - Contact made with additional users of the building informing them of usage expectations - Identify vulnerable students/staff, particularly those with underlying health conditions/pregnant staff members and facilitate this group accordingly	
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STAGE TWO: MITIGATION/ DELAY PHASE - WHERE A SIGNIFICANT RISK IS PRESENT (A direct case within the school or local community or	- School to follow Guidelines as laid down by government/HSE recommendations - Exclusion from school for an extended period (as recommended by HSE guidelines on self-isolation) of those students/staff presenting with symptoms	CIMT Leader/Principal , Deputy Principal, Assistant principals, Class Teachers,
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increased likelihood of such)	- Staff or visitors presenting with any symptoms to be sent home - Relevant agencies to be contacted where deemed necessary - Consider additional cleaning/deeper cleaning and increase cleaning of common touch points (handles, tables and taps) - Consider additional social distancing measures including limiting or cancelling scheduled school trips/matches/events/assemblies . - Core reminders of hygiene procedures - encourage hand washing amongst student population prior to leaving home, prior to eating and at regular intervals throughout the day. - Year heads Increase monitoring of students for absences and examine reasons why - Communicate the most up-to-date information to key stakeholders: students, staff and parents.	Administrative Staff and Ancillary Staff, Students
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STAGE THREE: CONTAINMENT/ ISOLATION PHASE RESULTING IN	- CIMT to meet and discuss specific procedures to be put in place prior to school closure - All major stakeholders to be informed as to the developing	CMIT Leader, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals,
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WHOLE SCHOOL CLOSURE	situation (staff, students, parents and other facilitators) - The IT Department will ensure the setting up of all staff and students for remote learning on online teaching platform endorsed by WWETB. - All necessary equipment and learning materials to be removed from school by staff and students - Any vulnerable students to be aided by relevant teachers/year heads/councillors prior to the start of the remote T and L/containment phase - Each class teacher will assume responsibility for shutting down all electrical equipment within their classrooms and securing their working areas. - Auxillary staff to aid the process of the closure of the school building - The School Management Team/Critical Incident Team will facilitate the progression of T and L by whatever means necessary (regular video conferencing meetings with team members, emailing and contacting students, parents and other involved parties) - The IT Department will have a key role to play in ensuring the	Class Teachers, IT Department, School Chaplain, School Councillor, Administrative Staff, Auxillary Staff, Students and Parents
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	smooth running of remote Teaching and Learning, dealing with any issues as they arise - Year heads will monitor the T and L and well being of their year groups and report to principal on a regular basis - Class teachers will assume responsibility for ensuring continuity of learning with their class groups remotely and flag any issues with Principal, Deputy principal or relevant year heads. - Staff will be encouraged to provide any relevant online learning links to support students at home - The school's various online platforms: website, facebook etc. will be utilised to full advantage in order to regularly update stakeholders of ongoing developments - The School's Well Being team will endeavour to encourage and facilitate the well being of staff and students throughout the period of enforced closure - The administrative team will facilitate continuity and continue in their usual roles though outside the school building if deemed necessary. - Students will be expected to engage in T and L remotely and	
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	submit work where appropriate via the online platform in use. No paper copies of work will be received by teachers during the time of the containment. - - -	
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<i>STAGE FOUR:</i> POST-PEAK/POST ILLNESS SCHOOL RE- OPENING PHASE	- School will follow all relevant guidelines and procedures as recommended by DES/HSE and other relevant agencies when embarking on the phase of school re-opening. - Prior to opening all relevant stakeholders will be made aware of details of school re-opening. - The CIMT leader/Principal will dictate the approach to be taken to facilitate this process. - As with the mitigation/delay phase all relevant hygiene procedures will be put in place to encourage the smooth transition from remote T and L back into the physical building including - _ - Possible deep cleaning and hygiene products made available as deemed necessary -Advice pertaining to social distancing and any other safety measures will be strictly adhered to by staff and students - The CIMT willll be cognisant of overall well-being of the entire school body following the period	CIMT Leader/Principal , Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, School Chaplin, School Councillor, School Wellbeing Team, Administrative Staff, Auxillary staff.
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	of enforced containment and any necessary steps will be undertaken to ensure that this is catered for and dealt with appropriately. -	
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Ratified by Board of Management

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Cllr. Joe Kelly
Chairperson

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Ms. Fiona McDonnell
Principal