



**Coláiste Pobail
Mhá Nuad**

**Maynooth
Community College**

Critical Incident Policy

Maynooth Community College aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times in accordance with our Mission Statements.

The Boards of Management, through the Principal Mrs. McCauley, have drawn up a critical incident management plan (CIMP) as one element of the school's policies and plans. In doing this we have referred to and drawn from the following documents published by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education and Science as updated in January 2008:

- 'Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools'
- 'Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools'

These documents are to be used in conjunction with this plan and a copy of them is to be kept with this document.

DEFINING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

The staff and management of MCC recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school" (NEPS 2003).

Such 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. It should enable us to 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 address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community as outlined in our Health and Safety Statement:

Evacuation plan formulated:

- Regular fire drills occur.
- Fire exits and extinguishers regularly checked (Apex).
- Emergency Contact list displayed in staff-room, school office and Principals office.
- Pre-opening supervision of pupils (8.38 – 8.48 a.m.).
- The Principals must be notified of all trips outside of the school. Lists of all participants are meticulously drawn up and a copy left with the Principal / on display in the Staffroom or put up on VShare and identified as SCH.
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school; promotion of mental health is part of this provision.
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE (in-service provided).

- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs of depression and anxiety.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to a guidance counsellor or support teacher and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (CIMT)

The CIMT is a group of individuals from the staff of a school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs.

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team have been selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet annually (in September) 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.

The CIMT members with their roles as at September 2026 are as follows:

ROLE	NAME	TELEPHONE NO.
Team Leader	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)	016016041
Garda Liaison	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)	016016041
Student Liaison	Ms. S. Cummins Ms. D. Hogan	016016041 016016041
Staff Liaison	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal) Ms. D. Hogan Ms. S. Cummins Ms. N. Donohoe (D Principal) Ms. C. O'Hagan (D Principal)	016016041 016016041 016016041 016016041 016016041
Parent Liaison	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal) Ms. N. Donohoe (D Principal) Ms. C. O'Hagan (D Principal) Year Head / Assistant Principal	016016041 016016041 016016041
Media Liaison	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)	016016041
Administrator	Admin Staff	01 6016041

Outlined below are some points on the key responsibilities of each role - Who will do what? When? And How?

Team Leader – (*authoritative and decision maker*)

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the BOM, ETB, DES, NEPS, SEC.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.
- Keeps in touch with all members.

Garda Liaison – (*usually team leader*)

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

Staff Liaison – (*Known, trusted and liked*)

- 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 contacts them individually

Student Liaison/Counsellor - (*Familiar and trusted figure*)

- Co-ordinates 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).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

Parent Liaison – (*Known to parents, public speaking skills and skills in managing emotional responses*)

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.
- If possible arranges meetings with parents and facilitates such meetings.
- Meets with individual parents.
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up in the school's system and are ready for adaptation.
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder).

Media Liaison – (*comfortable being interviewed, good interpersonal skills, assertive*)

- 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.)
- Will draw up a press statement and give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management).

Community Liaison – (*Someone with good contacts – agencies and individuals*)

- Network with community agencies.
- Co-ordinates community involvement in school.
- Keeps records of involvement.
- Updates team members.

Administrator

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of:
 - Parents or guardians,
 - Teachers and
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to.
- Ensures that templates are on the school system in advance and ready for adaptation.
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes.
- Photocopies materials needed.
- Maintains records.

Task	Name
Gathers accurate information	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)
Who? What? Where? When?	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)
Convenes a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)
Contacts external agencies	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)
Arranges supervision of students	Ms. N. Donohoe (DP) Ms.C. O'Hagan (DP) Mr. P. Brophy (DP) Ms. S. Cummins Ms. D. Hogan
Holds staff meeting	All Staff
Agrees schedule for the day / Makes decision on school closure	CIMT School Management BOM KWETB
Informs students - (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Pastoral Care Team of SMT, Assistant Principals as Year Heads and class tutors.
Compiles a list of vulnerable students	Guidance team and Pastoral Care Team.
Contacts/visits the bereaved family	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal) Ms. N. Donohoe (DP) Ms. C. O'Hagan (DP) Mr. P. Brophy (DP) Relevant Yearhead and member of Guidance Team
Prepares and agrees media statement and deals with the media	Media Liaison
Informs parents	Parent Liaison
Holds end of day staff briefing	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal) Staff Liaison Team

Medium Term Action – (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convenes a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)
Meets external agencies	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal)
Meets whole staff	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal) Staff Liaison Team
Arranges support for students, staff, parents	CIMT and Guidance Team
Visits the injured/ bereaved	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal) Ms. N. Donohoe (D Principal) Ms. C. O'Hagan (D Principal) Year Head
Liaises with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Ms. S. McCauley (Principal) Ms. N. Donohoe (D Principal) Ms. C. O'Hagan (D Principal) Year Head
Agrees on attendance and participation at funeral service	CIMP
Makes decisions about school closure	B.O.M / ETB

Follow –up: beyond 72 hours.

Task	Name
Monitors students for signs of continuing distress	Student Liaison Team
Liaises with agencies regarding referrals	Student Liaison Team and Team Leaders
Plans for return of bereaved student(s)	Student Liaison Team and Team Leaders
Plans for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	CIMT
Decides on Memorials and Anniversaries	CIMT & family of bereaved
Reviews response to incident and amends plan	CIMT

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations.

The management and staff of MCC have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, and that the family 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 plan. Students and parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

THE PLAN FOR REVIEWING THE POLICY

The Principal and staff, or a small group representing staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Management, will review the Policy of MCC every September, having familiarised themselves with the Guidelines.

Where any aspect is highlighted to be reviewed or addressed, the Board of Management, together with the relevant Principal, will prioritise these areas and develop an action plan, with a timeframe, for doing this work.

Formal Adoption of the Code of Behaviour by the Board of Management of Maynooth Community College School:

Signed: John Hurley
Chairperson of BOM

Date: 26th August 2026

Signed: Siobhán McCauley
Principal

Date: 26th August 2026