

# **Critical Incident Policy**

## **Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland, Co. Kerry.**

**Adopted by the Board of Management**

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson of Board of Management**

**Date:**

**Review Date:**      **Reviewed on November 27, 2014.**

## **Critical Incident Policy**

### **Defining a Critical Incident**

A Critical Incident is any incident or sequence of events, which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school. Critical Incident team will meet to decide whether it's a critical incident or not.

### **Overview and Aim**

The goal of the Critical Incident Management Policy (CIMP) for Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland is to provide a caring, safe and supportive environment, which respects the whole school community, so that all those involved will emerge from any critical incident knowing that there are structures in place that will help them deal appropriately with the event.

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 affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Though the Principal obviously exercises a pivotal role in the school's response to a critical incident, Best Practice recommends the formation of a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) composed of key school personnel, in providing a supportive role. The role of NEPS is to support schools in supporting students and staff.

The rationale for this plan is to enable the school to identify risks and to have a communication plan in place that can be effectively put into action when an accident occurs in the school. It will be used in conjunction with all other school policies and procedures in promoting positive mental health and in creating effective care systems in the school.

### **Prevention**

Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland is committed to the welfare of its students. This is currently evident in the relationship between staff and students. Our School curriculum addresses issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, prevention of alcohol and drug misuse, self-

esteem and bullying. All staff has been made aware of the ‘*Children First Guidelines and Procedures*’ and the Principal is the designated liaison person. The school’s pastoral care team meet on a weekly basis. School policies are up to date and regularly reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders. All staff attend continuous professional development at regular intervals thereby ensuring recent developments in education and health and safety are complied with.

## Objectives

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1. A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) exists in Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the Critical Incident Policy and Plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This will contain a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to his/her role to be used in the event of an incident.
2. Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland will endeavour to communicate clearly and appropriately with all the relevant stakeholders to its Critical Incident Policy and Procedures. (CEIST, Board of Management, Parents’ Association, Staff)
3. The management and staff of Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland. have a responsibility to protect the privacy and name(s) of the person(s) involved in any incident and will be sensitive around the dissemination of any information.
4. Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland. will develop a good working relationship with the local media based on respect for all parties involved in the communication of events and crisis situations.

## Roles and Responsibilities in the Critical Incident Management Team

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Team	Responsibility
<b>Team Leader – K.Broderick</b>	<p>Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting informing them of all relevant facts. Delegates and coordinates the tasks of the team.</p> <p>Informs and liaises with the Board of Management, NEPS, Túsla, DES and with the local Gardaí (where appropriate).</p>
<b>Staff Liaison – P.Kelliher</b>	<p>Briefs staff at the earliest opportunity. Students will be supervised at these times. The facts, as known, will be disclosed to the staff members who will be given an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions. Staff will be briefed on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students. Materials for staff (from critical incident folder) will be provided. Staff will be updated as appropriate.</p>
<b>Student Liaison - A.Prendiville, E.Cosgrave,S.Moloney</b>	<p>Inform students of the facts of the incident, coordinate information from subject teachers regarding students whom they are concerned about, alert other staff to vulnerable students, provide materials for students from critical incident folder, keep records of students seen by external agencies, organisation and supervision of 'quiet room' (Year Heads' Office to be used with a small group &amp; Social Activity Room if number of students too large)</p>
<b>Parent Liaison – K.Broderick,</b>	<p>Liaise with the family, visits the family with the Principal, may arrange a meeting of parents, manages the 'consent' issues in</p>

<b>Veronica Ross Dowd</b>	accordance with agreed school policy, ensures that sample letters are typed up and stored on the school system ready for adaptation, sets up S. Moloney's Office for meeting with parents, maintains a record of parents seen, meets with individual parents, provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder).
<b>Office Staff</b>	Alert Year Head regarding late arrivals.
	Plan for Return

## The Critical Incident Management Team

<b>Team Leader</b>	<b>K. Broderick</b> ( <i>Principal</i> )
<b>Staff Liaison/Garda Liaison</b>	<b>P. Kelliher</b> ( <i>Deputy Principal</i> )
<b>Counselling Coordinator</b>	<b>M. Kennelly</b> ( <i>Career Guidance</i> )
<b>Students' Liaison</b>	<b>A. Prendiville, E. Cosgrave, S. Moloney, N.O'Shea</b>
<b>Parents' Liaison</b>	<b>K. Broderick, Veronica Ross Dowd</b>
<b>Community Liaison</b>	<b>K. Broderick</b>
<b>Media Liaison</b>	<b>K. Broderick</b> ( <i>Principal</i> )
<b>Relevant Year Head</b>	<b>As appropriate</b>
<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Office Staff</b>
<p>The following staff/agencies may be involved as the CIM team see fit:</p> <p>Pastoral Care team, Student Liaison officer, NEPS, School Secretary and Caretaker</p> <p>Other staff members may be asked to be part of the team as deemed appropriate.</p>	

## Procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident - Day One:

### **Principal and Deputy Principal**

1. Gather the facts of the incident (who, what, when, where).
2. Contact appropriate agencies, if necessary (Emergency services, Health Service Executive, Community Care Services, NEPS, DES, Board of Management, and CEIST).
3. Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team (**Staff Study**).
4. Debriefing at end of day for Critical Incident Management Team at 4.00 p.m.

### **Critical Incident Management Team**

**Full details of the agenda page 20&21 of *Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines for schools*.**

1. Agree a statement of facts for staff, students, parents and media.
2. Inform all staff of incident -Staff communication via short memo which includes detail of staff meeting outside school hours (**8:30a.m. Or 12:45p.m. Or 3:45 p.m.**)
3. Delegate responsibilities to the CIMT members.

### **All Staff**

1. Decide on how, and what facts will be shared with students. (Signed relevant sheets from pack here)
2. Inform staff of what outside agencies have been contacted.
3. All staff share factual information with student population.
4. Maintain the normal routine as far as possible for classes not immediately affected.

Identify high risk students. Relatives and close friends informed separately. (Children with SEN, Neighbours, refer to Pastoral Care list). Late arrivals, children who are absent.

1. Review the events of the first 24 hours.
2. Check how everyone is coping.
3. Katherina Broderick & Pdraig Kelliher to hold information meeting with year head.
4. Arrange support for students, (**pg 27 Guidelines**) providing a suitable room for this to happen (Year Head room)– subject teacher makes referrals.

5. It is recommended that school management will endeavour to have a male and female teacher on corridor supervision.

## Procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident - Day Two/Three:

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### Principal and Deputy Principal

1. Convene Critical Incident Management Team – staff study - 8.00 am
2. Convene staff meeting at 8:30 a.m. (Decide who will contact absent staff, a friend of absent staff member to make said contact). Staff agenda will be included in critical incident pack.

### Critical Incident Management Team

6. Review the events of the first 24 hours.
7. Check how everyone is coping.
8. Katherina Broderick & Padraig Kelliher to hold information meeting with year head.
9. Arrange support for students, (*pg 27 Guidelines*) providing a suitable room for this to happen (Year Head room)– subject teacher makes referrals.
10. It is recommended that school management will endeavour to have a male and female teacher on corridor supervision.

### All Staff

1. Look for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students (M. Kennelly).
2. **Designated staff member to liaise with family/families involved in incident. In the case of bereavement arrange with the family the school's involvement in the funeral/memorial service. (K. Broderick and V. Ross Dowd)**
3. Teachers who are uncomfortable with providing support will not be required to do so. (They request Guidance Counsellor & SPHE Coordinator to arrange )
4. Seek parental approval for support meetings with outside agencies.

## Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

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Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	All subject teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)(R13 Guidelines)	Principal & Pastoral Care Team & Year Head
Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family	Principal, Year Head & Pastoral Care team
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM & Pastoral Care Team
Review response to incident and amend plan	BOM & CIMT

Plan for the return of absent students and staff

Plan for reintegration of siblings, close relatives, injured students etc., involved in the incident is developed by the Pastoral Care team and the relevant year heads.



## Evaluation

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Evaluation is a vital part of the process of maintaining a viable critical Incident Strategy. Crisis management can only develop with analysis of past incidents, feedback in the light of past responses and systematic evaluation of all protocols in place.

Issues to be aware of in the light of effective evaluation include:

- The confidence of the Crisis Management Team in their roles in the event of an incident.
- Was internal communication effective between staff?
- Were all staff furnished with accurate facts and kept updated on a consistent basis?
- Was the overall communication strategy successful?
- Was information disseminated quickly to avoid speculation and rumour?
- Was there adequate and effective communication with the family involved?
- What lessons could be learned from an analysis of this strategy?
- Was feedback obtained from staff as to whether they felt sufficiently equipped to deal emotionally and physically with the incident?
- Was there sufficient guidance and support to individual teachers, staff and students?
- Were students adequately supervised during the Crisis Meeting?
- Was there sufficient Pastoral Care provided to deal with the incident?
- Was communication with the media effective?
- Have all necessary referrals to support services been made?
- Were external support agencies met with for feedback in the aftermath of the incident?
- Were all expenses incurred met and dealt with in a timely manner?
- What amendments need to be made to any further crisis management incidents in the light of the review of this incident?

## Emergency Telephone Numbers

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Garda		999 or 112
Fire		999 or 112
Ambulance		999 or 112
Kerry Ambulance Control Centre		7121866
Tralee Garda Station		7102300 / 7122022
Tralee General Hospital		7184000 / 7126222
Tralee General Hospital Acute Unit		7184802
Health Service Executive Community Services (HSE South)		7184500 016352500 045880400
Senior Social Worker/Designated Officer		7121566
Kerry Adolescent Counselling		7181333
National Education Psychological Service		01-8738600 / 7180671
Eileen Devitt		087 9634634
Dept of Social and Family Affairs		7149500
National Education Welfare Board		01-8728600
Dept of Education		090-6483600 01-8896400
<b><u>DOCTORS:</u></b>		
Dr. Anita O'Sullivan		066 7141055
Dr. Justin Joyce		066 7141044
Dr. Pat Daly		066 7121288
Dr. Anne Fleming		066 7142384
<b><u>GARDAI:</u></b>		
Castleisland	-	066 7141204
Tralee	-	066 7122022 / 7102300

**PRESBYTERY:**

Castleisland	-	066 7141241
Barnardos		01-4530355
Barnados Bereavement Counselling for Children		021-4310591
The Samaritans		1850 609090
Childline		1800 666666
Parentline		1890 927277
Aware		1890 303 302
National Suicide Bereavement Support Network		024-95561
Rainbows		01 4734175
The Bereavement Counselling Service – Dublin		01-8391766
Bereavement Counselling Service		01-6767727
I.S.P.C.C.		01-6794944
Diocesan Advisors Tomas Kenny		064 6632644
Childcare Manager HSE Oliver Mawe		066 7195620
Press office in DES Sarah Miley		087 7020941
State Exams Commission		09064 42700
Inspector for SEC Sean O’Broin		0906 442700
KDYS Castleisland		066 7142648

## Local Primary Schools

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS****CASTLEISLAND**

Presentation Primary School	Ms. Leona Twiss	066 7141147
Scartaglen Primary School	Mairead Bean Ui Bhrosnachain	066 7147104
Kilmurry, Cordal	Ms. Therese Kearney	066 7142356
Scoil Ide, Curranes	Mrs. Cait Nolan	066 7142021
Gael Scoil	Mr. Tomas O Connor	066 7142022
Castleisland Boys National School	Mr. Denis Griffin	066 7142420

**KNOCKNAGOSHEL**

St. Mary's, Knocknagoshel	Ms. Maire Collins	068 46011
Loughfouder	Mr. M Herlihy	068 46500
Knockaclaurig		068 44555
Brosna	Ms. M. Scanlon	068 44577

**C URROW**

Scoil Mhuire & Naomh Treasa	Mrs. Margaret Hanifin	066 9764616
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**BALLYMACELLIGOTT**

Clogher	Mrs. Sinead Murphy	066 7137166
Nohoval	Mr. M. Bolger	066 7137516
St. Brendan's N.S.	Mr. Sweeney	066 7137448
Flemby, Ballymacelligott	Mr. Roche	

**FIRIES**

Firies	Ms. Eileen Brosnan	066 9764496
Knockaderry	Mrs. Aine Daly	066 9764729
<b>ANABLA</b> Inchcullane, Kilcummin	Mr. Paddy O'Sullivan	064 43233



# Appendices

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## Appendix 1

### Sample Teacher Communication Text Message

#### Student Death

Dear Staff,

It is with great sorrow that I inform you of the death of one of our student's \_\_\_\_\_ in class \_\_\_\_\_, due to a car accident. This is a huge loss for \_\_\_\_\_'s family, our school and the community. The School's Critical Incident Management Team has met to plan our response.

Principal

Appendix 2

Sample Teacher Communication Text Message

Teacher Death

Dear Staff

It is with great sorrow that I inform you of the death of one of our teacher's \_\_\_\_\_ due to a car accident. This is a huge loss for \_\_\_\_\_'s family, our school and the community. The School's Critical Incident Management Team has met to plan our response.

Principal

### Appendix 3

#### Sample Announcement to the Media – Student Death

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the Principal of Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland. We learned this morning of the death of \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_ year student in our school. This is a terrible tragedy for \_\_\_\_\_'s family, our school and the wider community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathies, thoughts and prayers are with \_\_\_\_\_'s family and friends.

We have been in contact with her parents and they have requested that we respect their need for privacy at this very difficult time. Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan. Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) are supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time. The school staff has been helping students to deal with the death. The school has been open to parents and guardians to support them and offer advice and guidance. We would ask you to respect their privacy at this challenging time.

Thank You



## Appendix 4

### Sample Letter to Parents – Student Death

Dear Parents/Guardian

Over the weekend, the school learned of the sudden death of \_\_\_\_\_, one of our students. We are all deeply saddened by this loss. The school has support structures in place to deal with this tragedy.

Our Pastoral Care team has been working closely with counsellors from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). It is possible that your daughter may have feelings that she may like to discuss with you. You can help your daughter by taking time to listen to her and encourage her to express her feelings.

It is important to let her know that her feelings, concerns and reactions are normal and that she will experience a number of emotions over the next few days and weeks. If you have any additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact the school.

I anticipate that the next few days will be difficult for everyone, however school will continue as usual.

Principal

## Appendix 5

### Sample Parent Communication Text -Student Death

Today, with great sadness we learned of the death of \_\_\_\_\_  
one of our \_\_\_\_\_Year students. Our thoughts and prayers are  
with \_\_\_\_\_'s family and friends during this difficult time. Further  
communication will follow in due course.

Principal

## Appendix 6

### Sample Community Notice (to be read at Mass)

The community of Castleisland is extremely saddened to hear of the death of \_\_\_\_\_ who was a \_\_\_\_\_ year student in Presentation Secondary School.

I am sure all of us will make every effort to comfort and support \_\_\_\_\_'s family as they attempt to come to terms with their traumatic loss. We remember her in our prayers in Mass today and we extend our heartfelt sympathies to her family, relatives, teachers and classmates.

## Appendix 7

Sample letter requesting consent for Involvement of outside Professionals

Dear Parent/Guardian

Following the recent (tragedy/death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to the students either in small groups or on a one to one basis, and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (x). If you would not like your daughter to receive this support, please sign the attached slip and return it to the school by-----.

If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school.

Principal

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I/We do not wish our daughter meet with \_\_\_\_\_

I/We understand that my daughter may meet x in an individual/group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_