



Presentation Secondary School

Castleisland

Co. Kerry



Critical Incident Policy

Defining a Critical Incident

A Critical Incident is any incident or sequence of events, normally involving death, which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school. Some typical incidents would be:

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, permanent injury, terminal illness or suicide.
- A life threatening accident involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises.
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the school causing serious personal injury.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community that has a significant impact on the school community.

Overview

The goal of the Critical Incident Policy 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.

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. 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 Team (CIT) composed of key school personnel, in providing a supportive role.

The role of NEPS is to support schools in supporting students and staff.

Presentation Secondary School is committed to the welfare of its students. This is currently evident in the relationship between staff and students, and supported by many other programmes anti-bullying, peer support, Mentoring Initiative, SPHE, Pastoral Care structures and a Pastoral Care Team, links with outside agencies and procedures for referral (NEPS).

Prevention

Physical safety

The school has:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard

The Role of other Professionals/Agencies

Roles and Responsibilities in the Critical Incident Management Team

Team	Responsibility
Team Leader	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. Informs and liaises with the Board of Management, NEPS, Túsla, DES and with the local Gardaí, HSE (where appropriate).
Staff Liaison	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.
Student Liaison	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' (Wellbeing Room to be used with a small group & M7 if number of students too large)

Parent Liaison	Liaise with the family, visits the family with the Principal, may arrange a meeting of parents, manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy, ensures that sample letters are typed up and stored on the school system ready for adaptation, sets up in the Meeting Room in the M Building for meeting with parents, maintains a record of parents seen, meets with individual parents, provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder).
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The Critical Incident Management Team

Team Leader	P. Dargan (<i>Principal</i>)
Staff Liaison/Garda Liaison/ Outside Agencies	P. Kelliher (<i>Deputy Principal</i>)
Counselling Coordinator	E. Clarke (<i>Guidance</i>)
Students' Liaison	V. Ross-Dowd, E. Clarke, E. Cosgrave, A. Leen, T. Dooley, M. Lane-Cronin, S. Moloney. R. Nagle, E. O'Shea
Parents' Liaison	P. Dargan, P. Kelleher
Community Liaison	P. Dargan (<i>Principal</i>)
Media Liaison	P. Dargan (<i>Principal</i>)
Relevant Year Head	E. Cosgrave, A. Leen, T. Dooley, M. Lane-Cronin
Administrator	Office Staff
<p>The following staff/agencies may be involved as the CIM team see fit:</p> <p>Student Support 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.

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 (**8:15a.m. Or 12:45p.m. Or 3:45/3:20p.m.**)
3. Delegate responsibilities to the CIMT members.

All Staff

1. Decide on how, and what facts will be shared with students.
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.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident

Day Two & Three

Principal and Deputy Principal

1. Convene Critical Incident Management Team - **7:30 am**
2. Convene staff meeting at **8:15 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

1. Review the events of the first 24 hours.
2. Check how everyone is coping.
3. Pierce Dargan & Padraig Kelliher to hold information meeting with Year Heads.
4. Arrange support for students, (*pg 27 Guidelines*) providing a suitable room for this to happen – subject teacher makes referrals.
5. 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.
2. Principal and Deputy Principal 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.
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.

Beyond 72 hours: Follow-up

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	All Staff
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, SENCO

Plan for return of bereaved student(s)(R13 Guidelines)	Principal & Student Support Team & Year Head
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Principal, Year Head & Student Support Team
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM & Student Support 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.

Evaluation

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

Garda	999 or 112
Fire	999 or 112
Ambulance	999 or 112
Kerry Ambulance Control Centre	066 - 7121866
Tralee Garda Station	066 - 7102300 / 7122022
Castleisland Garda Station	066 - 7141204
Kerry University Hospital	066 - 7184000 / 7126222
Kerry University Hospital Acute Unit	066 - 7184802
Health Service Executive Community Services (HSE South)	066 - 7184500 01 - 6352500 045 - 880400
Senior Social Worker/Designated Officer	066 - 7121566
Kerry Adolescent Counselling	066 - 7181333
National Education Psychological Service	01 - 8738600 / 7180671
Dept of Social and Family Affairs	066 - 7149500
National Education Welfare Board	01 - 8728600
Dept of Education	090 - 6483600 01 - 8896400
<u>DOCTORS:</u>	
Dr. Anne Fleming	066 - 7141295
Dr. Pat Daly	066 - 7141228
Dr. Anita O'Sullivan	066 - 7141055
Dr. C. O'Giollagain	066 - 7141044

GARDAI:

Castleisland

066 - 7141204

Tralee

066 - 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 - 303302

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

John Hegan
Chairperson
H/D. October 2022.

Pierce Doran
PRINCIPAL
04/10/22

Appendices

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

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: _____