



Drumcondra N.S., Church Ave, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.  
Tel: (01) 8374886 Email: office@drumcondrans.ie

## Critical Incident Management Policy

(Last Updated/Reviewed: December 2023)

### **Introduction:**

A critical incident challenges the very fabric of the school community. It overwhelms the normal coping capacity of the school and the school community. It is usually sudden and unexpected. It can happen during the school day, during outside school activities or may involve the wider school community. Events will have different significance for different schools and it is important that the significance of the event is measured and not the size. It is important a plan is in place to enable the staff to react quickly and to maintain control.

The following resources are available in the school for consultation in a yellow folder in the cupboard in the office.

- When Tragedy Strikes – Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools. (I.N.T.O.)
- <http://www.into.ie/ROI/Publications/WhenTragedyStrikes.pdf>
- Responding to Critical Incidents – Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (N.E.P.S) 2016:
- <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents.pdf>

### **Definition of a critical incident:**

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which can overwhelm the school's normal coping mechanisms. Some examples of critical incidents include:

- The death of a member(s) of the school community through accident, violence suicide or suspected suicide, or other unexpected death
- An accident involving members of the school community
- An intrusion into the school
- 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

### **Critical Incidents Management Team:**

- Leadership Role Communication Role: (see below)
- Student Liaison/ Counselling Role: (see below)
- Chaplaincy Role: (see below)
- Family Liaison Role: (see below)
- Parents Association Rep: (see below)

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- B.O.M. Rep: (see below)

The first-named person has the responsibility as defined.

The second-named person assists and only assumes responsibility on the absence of the first-named (See Appendix 1)

### **Prevention:**

Through the SPHE curriculum, the staff aim to have systems in place that promote positive mental health, wellbeing and resilience of both staff and pupils, to help them better cope with a range of life events. This includes:

- The creation of a safe environment
- Integration of SPHE across the whole life of the school
- Provision of mental health programmes such as Fun Friends/Friends for Life
- Provision of staff training and resources
- Procedures for identifying students at risk
- Links with outside agencies, as appropriate
- Staff training on Child Protection guidelines
- Support for staff members and clear information on how to access the Employee Assistance Service

### **Management of the Incident:**

During an incident, there are many areas to be taken care of immediately. These include

- Ensuring the safety of the other children on site.
- Immediate first aid and informing the emergency services.
- Setting up a communication point.
- Liaising with the Board of Management, and relevant authorities and support agencies.
- Collecting data and keeping detailed records of the incident and how the management plan was put into place.
- Contacting parents and organising reunion of parents and children.
- Preparing a media statement and keeping the media away from the children.

As soon as possible after the incident, the school should:

- Arrange for all the staff to meet to discuss the situation.
- Agree the information to be given to the children.
- Distribute a prepared statement to the parents.
- Keep in contact with the media through prepared statements.
- Visit the injured and bereaved.
- Plan memorial services and assemblies.
- Make plans for the return to normal routines.
- Monitor the children and refer to support services if needed.

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- Organise a post-incident curriculum to allow the children an opportunity to come to terms with what has happened.
- Arrange review meetings to monitor progress.

The attached appendices contain useful telephone numbers, sample letters and templates to organise the initial response to the incident.

Appendix 1: Critical Incident Management Team/Roles

Appendix 2: Emergency Contact List

Appendix 3: Drumcondra N.S. CIMT Action Plan Short-term Actions - Day 1

Appendix 4: Medium-term Actions- Day 2 and Subsequent Days

Appendix 5: Student Contact Record

Appendix 6: Consent Letter - Individual or Group Support Session

Appendix 7: Advance Parental Agreement to Child Being Seen

Appendix 8: Sudden Death/Accident Notification Letter

Appendix 9: Violent death notification letter

Appendix 10: Sample media announcement

Appendix 11: Employee Assistance Programme Contact Details

First Created: April 2005.

Most recent update: December 2023

Signed: SB Wille (Chairperson) Signed: Karl Lavelle (Principal)  
Date: 12/12/24 (Chairperson) Date: 12/12/23 (Principal)

12th December/2023

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