



Cabinately Community School

Critical Incident Policy

Ratified March 2023

School Mission Statement

Cabinteely Community School is a kind, caring and vibrant learning community which supports the wellbeing and the academic, spiritual and creative growth of every student.

We welcome students of all ethnicities, abilities, genders and faith traditions, as equal members of our community

We identify with our Ursuline founders and their love of education.

Our Core Values

Our core values guide our policies, our procedures and how we work with our staff and students. These core values are;

Care - We all need to belong and be cared for in a safe environment in order to learn. Courage - We show courage by making the right choices and committing to learning. Support - We will be the best we can be by working hard and working together

1. POLICY AIM

Cabinteely Community School (CCS) aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment. The key to managing a critical incident is planning. CCS has established a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT), which will take responsibility for steering the development and implementation of a Critical Incident Management Policy and Plan (CIMP).

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To formulate a step by step procedures that will facilitate a quick and efficient response from staff in the event of a critical incident.
- To ensure students and staff are supported in a time of crisis.
- To ensure that normality returns as soon as possible.

1.1 Implementation and Review

Following the implementation of this policy by the Board of Management, copies will be made available to all staff. The school will remind staff of their respective roles in the event of a critical incident.

2. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Management and staff of Cabinteely Community School recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school”.

Incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community.

There may be many kinds of serious crises which may be described as critical incidents. These include but are not limited to:

- death or suicide of a student or staff member through sudden death, accident, violence, suicide, terminal illness or unexpected death
- Serious illness, serious injury, attempted suicide or abuse of a member of the school community
- The disappearance of a member of the school community, a near relative or close friend
- An accident involving members of the school community
- An accident/ tragedy in the wider community
- Disasters caused by nature, accident or criminal activity which impact on the school or its community
- An intrusion into the school – such as a hostage situation
- The threat of an attack by a person(s) verbally or by means of social media/other communication on the school or a member of the school community.

The Principal will decide what constitutes a serious crisis necessitating the implementation of this policy.

2.1 Principal’s Responsibilities

In the event of a critical incident, the Principal (or Deputy Principal in her absence) will;

- Verify the facts
- Convene CIMT and delegate tasks including agreeing a statement
- Contact the chairperson of the Board of Management – Hidai Degani
- Contact appropriate agencies, such as NEPS Psychologist, the Gardaí and any other relevant agencies or services

3. CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (CIMT)

The following are members of the CIMT along with relevant Year Head. The CIMT may co-opt other members of staff to assist them should they deem it necessary.

Name	Role	Phone number
Clare Garrihy	Principal	To be advised
Michelle Lyne	Deputy Principal	To be advised
Hidai Degani	BOM Chairperson	To be advised
Padraig Bishop	Chaplain	To be advised
Suzy Kelly/Orna Giblin	Guidance Counsellors	To be advised
Marie Therese Canavan	Home School Community Liaison	0852620327
Chris O'Brien	Behaviour For Learning Teacher	To be advised
Kelly Ryan	SEN Coordinator	To be advised
Emer Murphy*	1 st Year Year-Head	
Andrew Brown*	2 nd Year Year-Head	To be advised
Richard Lannin*	3 rd Year Year-Head	To be advised
Lorna Mason*	4 th Year Year-Head	To be advised
Kevin Delaney*	5 th Year Year-Head	To be advised
Kelly Ryan*	6 th Year Year-Head	To be advised
Mike Lynch	Health & Safety Officer	To be advised
Other staff co-opted as necessary		

*Year Heads will be called on primarily when their Year Group is directly affected by a Critical Incident. The other Year Heads will assist the CIMT.

Note: In certain circumstances, staff have the right to opt out.

4. STAGES OF RESPONSE

The incident will dictate the nature of the response and judgements will have to be made regarding the appropriate response.

The following are the stages that response may take:

1. Immediate Response (Short Term Actions -1st Day)
2. Medium-Term Actions (24-72 Hours)
3. Long-Term Actions

4.1 Immediate Response (Short Term Actions -1st Day)

A) Establish Facts:

It is important to obtain accurate information about the incident otherwise rumours will take over and add to the distress of those involved. This is to be done by Senior Management.

- What happened, where and when?
- What is the extent of the injuries?
- What is the location of those injured and not injured?
- How many are involved and what are their names?
- Is there a risk of further injury?
- What agencies have been contacted already?

B) Convene a meeting with the Critical Incident Management team to:

- Agree a statement of the facts for staff, students, parents and the media. There will be a written version of this statement.
- Appoint one person to deal with enquiries from the press –usually the Principal.
- Send a letter or text message home to parents.
- Delegate responsibilities to the Critical Incident Management Team.
- Appoint one person to handle phone enquiries and to deal with the media.
- Ensure that a phone line remains open and available for enquiries.
- Organise the timetable/routine for the day. (Adhering to the normal school routine is important if this is possible)
- Organise a staff meeting as soon as possible.
- Organise the supervision of students during staff meetings.
- Decide what appropriate additional professional help is needed and who should be contacted.

C) Hold Staff Meeting

It may be necessary to hold the staff meeting in two parts therefore ensuring staff are available for support of students and for cover/supervision at all times. Auxiliary staff are also to attend the staff meetings. The areas to be covered at the staff meetings are listed below:

- An account of the facts as known.
- An opportunity for the staff to express their views and feelings.
- Discussion with the staff about how the facts will be shared with the students.
- An outline of the routine for the day.
- School closure to be decided (if appropriate) by the Principal in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- Information for the staff about which outside agencies have been contacted or are involved and the supports that will be put in place for both students and staff.
- Information pack to be given to all teaching staff.
- A procedure for identifying vulnerable students and the name of the staff that the students should be referred to i.e., Counsellors, Chaplain or Year Heads.
- The weight of responsibility surrounding a crisis may be enormous. Staff should be aware of the need to support Management and Staff who are directly involved.

D) Inform Parents/Guardians

With regard to students directly involved, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.

- We will compile a list of those to be contacted. This will eliminate duplication of messages.
- One or two members of the CIMT are to be appointed by the Principal to contact relevant parents/guardians.
- We will give parents/guardians relevant, up to date and accurate information.
- We will set a room(s) aside for distressed students to meet with parents and staff.
- We will provide support to parents who arrive to the school as appropriate.
- We will provide relevant telephone numbers for enquiries.

E) Short Term Actions Assigned - Checklist (Day 1)

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	
Contact appropriate agencies	
Communicate news to staff	
Arrange supervision of students	
Hold staff meeting	
Organise timetable for the day	
Enlist staff willing to assist students	
Inform parents	
Inform students	
Make contact with affected family	
Prepare and agree media statement	
Dealing with media	
Arrange get together rooms/ meeting rooms	
Visit families affected	
Hold end of day staff meeting	

4.2 Medium-term Actions (24-72 Hours)

A) Reconvene Key Staff/Critical Incident Management Team.

Possible areas for discussion:

- Review the events of the first 24 hours.
- Need for outside agencies.
- Funeral arrangements/liaise with family
- Handling of media
- Have review staff meeting with all staff if necessary. Ensure all staff where possible are kept up to date on any developments.
- Plan a visit to injured or bereaved.
- Name key staff to visit the home or hospital.
- Establish with parents/family if it is acceptable or appropriate for students to visit bereaved or injured.
- Provide support to staff and students visiting the bereaved or injured.
- Establish contact with absent staff and students.
- Arrange support/counselling for individuals or group(s) of students and staff who have been referred or identified as those most affected.
- Update media where necessary.
- Chaplain will liaise with family, to extend sympathy and clarify the family's wishes regarding the school's involvement in funeral/memorial service.
- Decide what form of representation from the school is appropriate.
- Take into consideration and have regard for different faiths, religions and none.
- Prepare and support students ahead, during and after the funeral.
- Encourage and assist those students who wish to write a personal message of sympathy. Also consider a common expression from the students and or/staff.
- Liaise with family or funeral directors regarding stipulations or arrangements concerning floral or other tributes.

B) Plan for the reintegration of students/staff (absentees, injured etc.)

- Name key persons to liaise with above on their return to school.
- The Principal will decide, in consultation with the critical incident team, if it is appropriate to inform the parents of those students not directly involved in the incident by letter stating the facts and brief details of the incident.

C) Inform Students

- Students will be informed as a year group by their year head or by their class teachers in their class groups. This decision will be made by the Principal.
- Give facts and avoid speculation.
- Inform students of staff and counsellors involved in providing support
- Allow students to ask questions and express feelings.
- Help students understand that overwhelming emotions are natural and normal following a critical incident.
- Class teachers will help identify vulnerable students who may need extra care or need to go home.

- Focus on the friends of a bereaved student as they can be the best source of support. Often the bereaved student may not wish to speak to an adult and may rely heavily on friends. These friends may need support as they attempt to find ways to be of help.

D) Where appropriate, facilitate parents and their children being brought together

- Contact the parents of vulnerable students and arrange for these students to be collected from school if necessary
- Facilitate distressed students and their parents/guardians by providing a private and safe space.
- Provide tea and coffee.
- Where appropriate, offer assistance with transport/taxi

E) Interaction with the Media

In the event of a high profile incident, there may be media interest. If necessary, the Principal will prepare a written statement to include:

- The facts about the incident
- What has been done already
- What is going to be done
- Positive information about the deceased or injured person(s)
- Prepare well if asked to give a live interview
- Consider assigning the task to someone more skilled or familiar with dealing with the media
- Keep the interview factual and brief
- Decline if it is not appropriate or if not prepared
- A room may be set aside for the media if deemed appropriate by the Principal
- Media enquiries are to be dealt with by the Principal
- Brief staff and students on how to deal with unsolicited media attention

F) Medium Term Actions Assigned- Checklist (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a Day 2 CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team Leader
Meet external agencies	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	
Visit the injured/ bereaved / affected	
Liaise with the bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	
Organise timetable for the day	
Agree attendance and participation at the funeral service	
Make decisions about school closure	Principal with BOM

4.3 Long-term Actions

A)

- Monitor students for signs of continuing stress
- Inform new staff or students of the critical incident policy and procedures
- Provide a day of reflection for the class and friends most affected by the incident
- Engage with outside bereavement support agencies if necessary
- Review of curricular provision, e.g., in RE, SPHE, CSPE classes in the area of change, loss, death and other crisis issues
- Provide an annual remembrance service for all those connected to the school community who have died.

B) Follow Up Checklist – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Subject and Class teachers
Liaise with care team regarding referrals	
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	
Decide on memorials / anniversaries	BOM, staff, parents, students
Review response to incident	CIMT/BOM/ Staff, parents and students
Amend plan as required	Staff/ BOM

5. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Evaluate response to an incident and amend the Critical Incident Policy appropriately. This policy will be reviewed after an incident or every five years in the absence of an incident. The plan should be reviewed annually to ensure all information is up to date. The following areas can be considered in an evaluation or review:

- What went well?
- Where were the gaps?
- What was most or least helpful?
- Have all the necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any other business or issues that need to be dealt with?

6. EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

GENERAL	
Garda (Cabinteely Garda Station)	01 666 5300
Community Garda Mobile	To be advised
Ambulance/ Fire Service	999/ 112
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
Dun Laoghaire Youth Service	01 284 4085
Booklet “Where’s Your Head At?” – inCT folder	Various numbers and Services for South Dublin
SCHOOL / EDUCATION	
NEPS Psychologist	To be advised
State Exams Commission	090 644 2700
Chairperson (BOM) Hidai Degani	To be advised
LOCAL SCHOOLS - Primary	
Dominican Primary NS	01 2809011
Harold Boys NS	01 2856193
Kill O The Grange NS	01 289 4578
Holy Family NS	01 2809242
The Harold NS	01 2805708
St Columbanus NS	01 2821220
Guardian Angels NS	01 2833961
St Kevin’s NS	01 2854309
Scoil Mhuire NS	01 2823507
St Joseph’s NS	01 2803504
Scoil Cholmcille Senior NS	01 2855527
St John’s NS	01 2855525
Local Schools – Post Primary	
Clonkeen College	01 2892709
Holy Child CS	01 2855334
Rockford Manor	01 2801522
St Laurence’s College	01 282 6930
LOCAL DOCTORS	
Park Clinic Medical and Dental	01 285 3666
Dr George Beecham	01 285 7294
Johnstown Medical Centre	01 285 5800