

St. Michael's School

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY



St. Michael's School aims to protect the well-being of its pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. In line with our Mission Statement, we provide a secure, healthy and caring environment which values the uniqueness of each person.

The Board of Management, through the School Principal has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy (CIMP) as part of the school's overall policies and plans, in line with best practice, NEPS Guidelines (2016), and the Department of Education's Looking at Our School 2022 (LAOS) framework, particularly in relation to wellbeing, leadership and the management of safe, supportive learning environments.

Definition of a 'critical incident'

The staff and management of St. Michael's School recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school". Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.
- An accident involving pupils or staff on or off school premises.
- 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.
- Unauthorised removal of pupil from school or home.
- Reports of threats to the School Community, e.g. bomb threat.
- An intrusion into the school.
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or pupil(s) by an intruder(s).

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Policy (CIMP) is to help school management and staff to respond 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.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We endeavour to put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical safety –

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Supervision of pupils at arrival and dispersal times
- Front door locked during school hours
- Active staff supervision at all times, including break/lunch times.
- Staff to wear hi-vis on playground so they are easily identifiable
- Playground rules, zones and active supports

Psychological safety

The management and staff of St. Michael's School aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of students, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management; resilience; conflict management; problem solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/post primary school student are available
- Information is available online on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, Tusla Education School Support (TESS) Educational Welfare Officer, Tusla, Child and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers. See DEY Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary) or 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with the Bi-Cinealta policy
- There is a care system in place in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published in 2007 for primary schools and 2010 for post primary schools. These documents are available on Special Education Needs a Continuum of Support.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the Principal, concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency. (Please refer to 'Responding to Critical Incidents', NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for School, R23, page 92).
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has access to a copy

of the policy and plan and where applicable, materials particular to specific CIMT roles, to be used in the event of an incident.

Team leader: Sharon Gorevan (Principal) *(Note - in the absence of the team leader Ms. Muldoon, Deputy Principal will assume this role)*

Role

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; Department of Education and Youth; NEPS; SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda liaison – Sharon Gorevan (Principal)

Role

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

Staff liaison – Mr. Gareth Jones (Assistant Principal II) & Joan Ryan

Role

- 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 makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

Pupil liaison – Ms. Ciara Wilkinson (Assistant Principal II) & Joan Ryan

Role

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable pupils (appropriately)
- Provides materials for pupils (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains pupil contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of ‘quiet’ room where agreed

Community/agency liaison – Ms. Karen Quinn (Assistant Principal II)

Role

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent liaison – Ms. Patricia Muldoon (Deputy Principal) & Joan Ryan

Role

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage ‘questions and answers’

- Manages the ‘consent’ issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school’s system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison – Ms. Karen Quinn (Assistant Principal II) /Sharon Gorevan (Principal)

Role

- 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)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the SEC; relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator – School Secretary

Role

- Maintenance of up-to-date telephone numbers of
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers, SNAs, Bus Escorts, Ancillary staff
 - Board of Management members
 - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

All remaining members of the In-School Management Team who have not been assigned a specific role as part of the CIMT may be asked to assume any of the above roles in the absence of the designated staff member.

The school will support members of the Critical Incident Management Team and relevant staff to engage with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) eLearning course *Responding to Critical Incidents (NEPS eLearning Course for Schools)*, available via the Centre for Education Support and Change (CESC) website: <https://www.cesc.ie/neps>, to build capacity in preparedness, response and recovery.

Record keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of St. Michael’s School have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that pupils do so also, e.g. the term ‘suicide’ will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, *and* that the family involved 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.

Critical Incident Rooms	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Assembly Hall</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Assembly Hall</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Assembly Hall</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Assembly Hall</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Prayer Room</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Assembly Hall</i>	Meetings with other visitors
<i>Prayer Room</i>	Quiet Room for pupils/ staff

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

Staff were given opportunities to contribute to the development of this policy and plan, and their views were considered in the process. Pupils and parent/guardian representatives were also invited to share feedback where appropriate. The final policy and plan have been shared with all staff, and members of the Critical Incident Management Team. New staff will be made aware of the plan and supported by the Principal/Deputy Principal in becoming familiar with its key elements.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Sharon Gorevan</i>	018201859
Garda liaison	<i>Sharon Gorevan</i>	018201859
Staff liaison	<i>Gareth Jones & Joan Ryan</i>	018201859
Student liaison	<i>Ciara Wilkinson & Joan Ryan</i>	018201859
Community liaison	<i>Karen Quinn</i>	018201859
Parent liaison	<i>Patricia Muldoon & Joan Ryan</i>	018201859
Media liaison	<i>Karen Quinn/Sharon Gorevan</i>	018201859
Administrator	<i>School secretary</i>	018201859

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Team Leader
Who, what, when, where?	CIMT
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Team Leader
Contact external agencies	Community Liaison

Arrange supervision for students	Student Liaison
Hold staff meeting	Staff Liaison
Agree schedule for the day	Team Leader
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Student Liaison
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Student Liaison
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Media Liaison
Inform parents	Parent Liaison
Hold end of day staff briefing	Staff Liaison

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	Community Liaison
Meet whole staff	Staff Liaison
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Relevant CIMT member
Visit the injured	Relevant CIMT member
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Parent Liaison
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Parent Liaison
Make decisions about school closure	Board of Management (BOM)

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Community Liaison
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Student Liaison
Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family	Parent Liaison
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

Critical Incident & Wellbeing Resources

- Catalogue of Wellbeing Resources for Post-Primary Schools (Department of Education – Publications) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/catalogue-of-wellbeing-resources-for-post-primary-schools/>
- Catalogue of Wellbeing Resources for Primary Schools (Department of Education – Publications) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/catalogue-of-wellbeing-resources-for-schools/>
- Guidance for School Staff – Psychological First Aid (Primary & Post-Primary) (Department of Education – NEPS Resources and Publications) <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/collections/national-educational-psychological-service-neps-resources-and-publications/>
- Guidance on Social Media Use and Critical Incidents (Department of Education – NEPS Resource Materials) <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/collections/national-educational-psychological-service-neps-resources-and-publications/>
- Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (NEPS, 2016) (Department of Education – NEPS Resources and Publications) <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/collections/national-educational-psychological-service-neps-resources-and-publications/#responding-to-critical-incidents>
- Responding to Self-Harm in Schools: Guidance for School Staff (Department of Education – NEPS Resources and Publications) <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/collections/national-educational-psychological-service-neps-resources-and-publications/>
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS & National Suicide Review Group, 2002) (Irish Association of Suicidology) <https://www.ias.ie>
- Suicide Prevention in the Community: A Practical Guide (HSE, 2011) (Health Service Executive) <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/nosp/resources/>
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (2013) (Department of Education / Department of Health / HSE – Policy and Education Reports) <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/collections/policy-and-education-reports/>
- Well-Being in Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (2015) (Department of Education / Department of Health / HSE – Policy and Education Reports) <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/collections/policy-and-education-reports/>
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018/2019) (Department of Education – Wellbeing Section) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9a7d8-wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice/>

Policy Statement

The school will ensure that all relevant external agencies, including NEPS, HSE, Inspectorate, Patron, Trustees, Diocesan Advisers and Parish/Clergy (where appropriate), are contacted in a timely and coordinated manner in line with NEPS guidelines.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required. It was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on 24th June 2026.



Signed:

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 24th June 2026

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Chairperson, Board of Management	Ms. Niamh Murray Email: chairperson@stmichaelsholyangels.com
Local Garda Station	Ballyfermot Station 01-6667200
Hospitals	Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown, 01-6465000 Temple Street Hospital 01-8784200 Children's Hospital Crumlin 01-4096100 Tallaght Hospital 01-4142000 St. Jame's Hospital 01-4166600
Emergencies Services (Gardai/Fire/Ambulance)	999 or 112
Local GP	Claddagh Surgery – Ballyfermot Primary Care Centre • Dr. John O'Brien • Dr. Niamh Walsh (GP – Claddagh Surgery) ☎ 01 795 6012 Chapelizod Medical Centre • Dr. Eoin O'Connor • Dr. Anne O'Donnell ☎ 01 626 4678
HSE Primary Care	Rathdown Road 01-8825000 Cherry Orchard Hospital 01-6206300
Community Care Team	Corduff 076-6956700 Blanchardstown 01-8297233
Tusla	www.tusla.ie Duty Social Worker National / General Contact • Tusla National Office Tel: 01 7718500 Email: info@tusla.ie ☎ Out-of-Hours Emergency • Tusla Out-of-Hours Social Work Service Tel: 0818 776 315
Child and Family Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	Ballyfermot 01-7782085 Clondalkin 01-7782050 Castleknock 01-7782122 Lucan 01-7782080
School Inspector	Ms. Lisa Walsh Lisa_walsh@education.gov.ie

NEPS Psychologist	Daragh O'Brien daragh_obrien@education.gov.ie 0761108789 or 0761108673
Patron	Archbishop Dermott Farrell-Archbishop's House, Drumcondra, Dublin 9 01 837 3732
Education Secretariat	Very Rev. Monsignor Dan O'Connor Office: Education Secretariat, Archdiocese of Dublin- 51 Home Farm Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, D09 W5W4: 01 808 7528 Email: dan.oconnor@dublindiocese.ie Website: https://www.dublindiocese.ie/education/
Trustees	Provincial: Sr. Aine O'Brien, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul – St. Catherine's Provincial House, Dunardagh, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94 P2K3 01 288 2669; Email: info@daughtersofcharity.ie Website: https://daughtersofcharity.ie
Diocesan Advisors – Archdiocese of Dublin	Sr. Anne Neylon (Diocesan Advisor – Primary Schools) Email: anne.neylon@dublindiocese.ie ; 01 808 7526 Sr. Maureen Matthews (Diocesan Advisor – Primary Schools) Email: maureen.matthews@dublindiocese.ie ; 01 808 7531 Office: Education Secretariat, Archdiocese of Dublin 51 Home Farm Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
DEY	0906-483600
INTO	01-8722533
Clergy	Fr. Eugene Taaffe, Parish Priest – Chapelizod Parish- Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Chapelizod, Dublin 20) 087 2525196; Email: eugene.taaffe@dublindiocese.ie Fr. Cornelius Nwaogwugwu, CM (<i>Vincentian Priest</i>) 086109 1226 or 01 821 9892 Email: cornelius.nwaogwugwu@dublindiocese.ie -Castleknock College, Castleknock, Dublin 15
State Exams Commission	0906-422700
Employee Assistance Service (EAS), Spectrum Life Available: 24/7, 365 days Counselling & mental health support Legal / financial / family supports	Freephone: 1800 411 057 WhatsApp / SMS: Text “Hi” to 087 369 0010 Email: eap@spectrum.life Website / App login: https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login  Website: https://www.spectrumlife.ie
Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention-HSE Dublin	0879010541