



St. Kevin's G.N.S.

**Critical Incident
Management**

Plan & Policy

Critical Incident Policy & Plan

St. Kevin's G.N.S.

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Initiate and establish structures

We have established a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) which will take responsibility for putting a Critical Incident Management policy and plan in place, (CIMP)

St. Kevin's aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, through Jillian Ní Ghliasáin, has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the schools policy and plan.

The staff and management of St. Kevin's school have formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students, and the creation of a supportive and caring ethos in the school, in ordinary time as well as in the event of a critical incident. They have established a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

Review and Research

The CIMT should consult resource documents previously provided to schools. These include:

- *When Tragedy Strikes: Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools* (INTO/Ulster Teachers Union 2000)
- *Responding to a Critical Incident: Pack for Schools* (NEPS 2003)
- *Responding to Critical Incidents; Guidelines for Schools* (NEPS 2007)
- *Guidelines for Schools on How to Respond to the Sudden Unexpected Death of a Student* (ASTI 1997)
- *Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines* (IAS, National Suicide Review Group 2002)

Critical Incident

The staff and management of *St. Kevin's G.N.S.* recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the

school”.¹ 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, accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death*
- *An intrusion into the school*
- *An accident involving members of the school community*
- *An accident/tragedy in the wider school community*
- *Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*

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.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have 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
- Staff regularly familiarise with plan.
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- School doors locked during class time
- Rules of the playground
- Children not allowed open exit or main external doors.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of St. Kevin’s G.N.S. 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 issues 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 alcohol and drug prevention. Promotion of mental health is included in this provision.

¹ Source: Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools – NEPS. 20070

- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures are familiar to all staff
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/post primary school student are available.
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and interventions for suicidal students.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – Rainbows, Community Garda, St. Kevin’s Family Resource Centre, E.H.B., NEPS, Accord, Substance abuse, TUSLA
- 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 Section 7 of *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools*)
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system in place in the school
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or support teacher), 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
- 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 a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

The key roles which need to be covered are as follows Team leader

- Garda liaison
- Staff liaison.
- Student liaison
- Parent liaison
- Community liaison
- Media liaison
- Administrator

Outlined below are some points on the key responsibilities of each role. A note on helpful qualities for each role can be found in the text box. We will adapt to own circumstances and needs

Team leader

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

A person who carries authority and can make decisions during a crisis (e.g., school closure, attendance at memorial services, etc.)

Gárda liaison

(This may be seen as part of the team leader's role)

- Liaises with the Gardaí
- Ensures that information about deaths is checked out before being shared

Staff liaison

- 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 day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually. Advises them of availability of EAS (Employees Assistance Scheme) and gives them the contact number.

A staff member known and trusted by the staff.

Community/agency liaison

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the parents council
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to 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

Someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community

Parent liaison

- 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

Someone known to parents. This person should be comfortable speaking before a large group and have skills to manage emotional reactions of individual or groups of parents.

- 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

- 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 relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Someone with good interpersonal skills who would be comfortable talking to the media by phone or in person. A person who is able to set limits without being offensive

Administrator

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - ❑ Parents or guardians
 - ❑ Teachers
 - ❑ Emergency support services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

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.

Ann Diffley will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff of St. Kevin's G.N.S. have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, 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,

- *Staff room* will be the main room used to meet the staff,
- *Resource room(s)* for meetings with students,
- *Hall or Library* for parents/guardians
- *Learning Support room* for press,
- *Resource room* for individual sessions with students, and
- *Staff room* for other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan.

Our school’s final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.

Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy stored in a Red critical incidence folder.

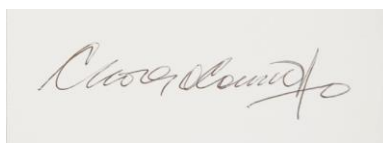
All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Marie Linehan

The plan will be updated annually in November.

This statement has been ratified by the B.O.M. of St. Kevin’s Girls’ National School.

This plan was updated and ratified on the 25th April 2024

Chairperson of B.O.M.



Principal:



Critical Incident Management Plan

Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name
Team Leader	Miriam Dignam
Garda Liaison	Miriam Dignam
Staff Liaison	Laura Mc Donnell/Emma Mc Carthy
Student Liaison	Caoimhe O'Flaherty/ Annette O'Brien
Parent Liaison	Marie Linehan/ Adrienne Byrne.
Community Liaison	Mary Clare Collins/E. Garvey
Media Liaison	Miriam Dignam/Ann Diffley
Administrator	Marie Linehan/ Pauline Maher

Emergency Contact List

(To be displayed in staff-room, school office and Principal's office etc)

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
GARDA	6666000
Community Policing Garda Shane Egan	6666020 0852866266
HOSPITAL	4142000
FIRE BRIGADE	4594233
LOCAL GPs	Dr. A. O' Reilly 4520890 Dr. Hugh Durkin 4513589
District Nurse HSE/Community Care Team/ Family Centre	Marie Twoomey Junction House 9214801(29) Mary Mercer Tallaght 4585700
DES INSPECTOR-	Margaret Dunning
NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST Hilary Virtue	0874575320 01-8650412/ hilary_virtue@education.gov.ie
DES	8734700
SENO- Ruth McKernan	01-6033367
PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY	4523805/4515570
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE	1800 411 057
Chamber House- Duty Social Worker	01-4686289 (#2)
EWO- Tom Dermody	0879362946

Checklist for reviewing the policy and plan

- Has serious consideration been given to your school's approach to prevention?
- Has your school defined a critical incident and given examples?
- Have key roles been clearly identified and the tasks clearly outlined?
- Have staff members been nominated to each of the roles/tasks?
- Are the personnel suitable?
- Has each of the team compiled their emergency pack (photocopies of relevant handouts) in progress.
- Has contact been made with external agencies?
- Is the Emergency Contact List (**R22**) appropriate and complete?
- Are letters, press releases readily available on school headed paper, for adaptation to suit the particular circumstances? In progress.
- Are telephone number contact lists up-to-date?
- Has all the staff been consulted about the plan/policy?
- Has a date been set for a review of the plan?
- Who will be given copies of the plan? All staff
- Where will copies of the plan be kept? In Team Site