

## St. Macartan's NS Critical incident policy

St. Macartan's NS 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 the principal and staff, has drawn up a critical incident management plan (CIMP) as one element of the school's policies and plans.

The staff and management of St. Macartan's 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 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 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.

### **Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team will meet to review and update the policy and plan as necessary. 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.

Role	Name
Team Leader	Ronan Tighe
Garda Liaison	Michelle Duffy
Staff Liaison	Anne Britton
Student Liaison	Patricia Britton
Parent Liaison	Máire Stuttard
Community Liaison	John Fallon
Media Liaison	Ronan Tighe
Administrator	Theresa Doherty

The role of each team member is outlined in Appendix 1.

**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. School Secretary 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. Macartan's have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the implications of any public statements. Only the Team Leader/ Media Liaison may issue public statements regarding any incident. 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, meetings will be held in the following venues:

- Staff Room- staff
- Hall - students
- EAL room- parents
- Staff Room- media
- Library- individual sessions with students
- Staff- 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 of the plan.

All new and temporary staff will have access to the plan in the "Sub" Folder.

The plan will be updated bi-annually, from October 2013.

This policy was ratified by the board of management on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

**St. Macartan's NS**  
**Critical Incident Plan**

**Short Term Actions-Day 1**

<b>Action to be Taken (In order)</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
If on-site incident, secure site.	Ronan Tighe (RT)
Gather accurate information-Who, when, what, where?	RT
Convene CIMT meeting	RT
Contact External Agencies	Gardaí-Michelle Duffy (MD), NEPS-Patricia Britton(PB), Anne Britton(AB)-Ambulance, Máire Stuttard (MS)-Doctor,Priest-RT
Arrange Student Supervision	PB
Hold Staff Meeting	ALL STAFF
Agree schedule for day	ALL STAFF
Inform Students (some separately if necessary)	PB
Compile list of vulnerable students	MS
Contact/visit bereaved family	RT/AB/MS
Media Statement	RT
Inform Parents (Text or Letter)	Theresa Doherty (TD)
End of day staff briefing	ALL STAFF

**Medium Term Actions- Day 2 and following Days**

<b>Action to be taken (In Order)</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
CIMT Review meeting	RT
Meet external Agencies	Same contact people as above
Staff Meeting	ALL STAFF
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Students- PB, Staff-AB, Parents-MS
Visit the injured	RT/AB/MS
Liaise with bereaved family re funeral	MS
Organise funeral attendance/participation	John Fallon
Decide re school closure	Board of Management (BOM)

**Follow-up: Beyond 72 Hours**

<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
Monitor students for distress	Class Teachers
Liaise with agencies	CIMT
Plan for return of bereaved students	CIMT with relevant teachers
Memorials/Anniversaries	BOM/All staff, parents, students
Review incident response	Staff/BOM

## **Appendix 1**

### **Roles of the CMIT**

#### **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

The Deputy Principal will take the lead in the absence of the team leader.

#### **Garda liaison**

- Liaises with the Gardaí
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy 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 the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) and gives them the contact number.

#### **Student liaison**

- At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

#### **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 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**

- 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**

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

**Administrator**

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
  - Parents or guardians
  - Teachers
  - 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 faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

## Appendix 2

### Critical Incident Emergency Contacts

**EMERGENCY- Gardaí, Ambulance, Coast Guard**

**999 or 112**

<b>Person/Organisation</b>	<b>Number(s)</b>
Gardaí (Bundoran)	(071) 9841203
Doctor-Bayview Clinic	(071) 9841250/9841445
Fr. Munster	(071) 9841290
NEPS- Ann Conway Simoes	(071) 9141322
HSE Information Service	1850 636 313
Sligo General Hospital	(071) 9171111/9174506 (A&E)
HSE Donegal Local Office, Ballyshannon	(071) 9834000/9852607
Donegal Child & Family Social Services	(074) 9723540
Teacher Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057