

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

2020 - 2021



Rice College, Ennis, An Edmund Rice School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. It is directly linked to the aspiration in our Mission Statement that all in the school should feel safe and cared for, and is mindful of other policies, such as Pastoral Care, Guidance, Wellbeing, etc. **Rice College aims, through implementation of our Pastoral Care Plan, Wellbeing Promotion, SET Policy, etc. to, as much as possible, prevent the occurrence of a critical incident. In preparation for the occurrence of such an incident, The Board of Management, through Mr. Louis Mulqueen, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.**

Review and Research

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002))
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

Define of the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of Rice College, Ennis recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school". (DES, NEPS) Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include: (this list is NOT exhaustive)

- *The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide, terminal illness or 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 effect 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. It is in keeping with all recommendations pertaining to Wellbeing in schools, and Wellbeing as part of the Junior Cycle Framework. (see Wellbeing Policy) Rice College is also an active participant in the rollout of a new Student Support Team initiative by NEPS. (see Pastoral Care Team/School Support Team Policy) Within the SEN Department, "Support for All" is advocated through the Continuum of Support, 2010. (see Special Needs Policy)

Physical safety

- An evacuation plan has been formulated and a drill takes place twice a year
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard
- Front gate locked during school hours (this is subject to Covid 19 conditions)
- School doors locked during class time (this is subject to Covid 19 conditions)

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Rice College, Ennis* 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 an active part of 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 positive mental health is an integral part of this provision. The school is an participant in the Amber Flag Initiative.
- Staff Wellbeing is also a priority, and interested parties have access to training for their role in SPHE, in SET and in the Student Support Team.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures. Staff are aware that all are 'mandated persons' and know their duties as a result. The Child Safeguarding Statement is prominently displayed inside the front door of our school.
- The Designated Liaison Person is Mr. Louis Mulqueen (Principal); the Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Ms. Claire Culligan (Deputy Principal).
- Information with regard to the SST, The DLP and the DDLP is included in the Student Journal, which is updated annually as appropriate. This information is also prominently displayed around the school.

- 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 some are trained in interventions for suicidal students (eg, Gatekeeper)
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies –eg. An Garda Síochána, local Medical Services, HSE Community Care Services, CAMHS, NEPS
- 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 DES 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy and in keeping with the practices of Restorative Justice (see Anti-Bullying 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 2010. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014) – these documents are available on www.education.ie. Rice College has participated in the roll out, by NEPS, of its Student Support Team Initiative, 2019/2020, and members of that team are given access to relevant CPD.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or SST member), in accordance with guidelines in the Pastoral Care Policy. 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. (see Wellbeing Policy)

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.

Team leader: *Mr. Louis Mulqueen/Ms. Claire Culligan/Mr. Pat Devitt*

Role

- 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; SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda liaison: *Mr. Louis Mulqueen/ Ms. Claire Culligan*

Role

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

Staff liaison: *Ms. Edel Handley*

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.

Student liaison: *Ms. Breda Whelan/Ms. Hazel Fleming*

Role

- Co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- Alert other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provide materials for students
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison: *Ms. Barbara Hanley*

Role

- 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: *Ms. Cora Brooks*

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: *Mr. Louis Mulqueen/Mr. Pat Devitt*

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: *Ms. Barbara Hanley/Ms. Ellen Chambers with the assistance of the administrative staff*

Role

- 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 texts
- 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.

Admin staff 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 *Rice College Ennis* 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 students 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:
Staff Rooms	Main room for meeting staff
Guidance Office (as necessary/appropriate)	Meetings with students
GP Area/Rm 303 (as necessary/appropriate)	Meetings with parents
GP Area/Principal's Office (as necessary/appropriate)	Meetings with media Meetings with parents
Guidance Office/Office of Principal/Deputy Principal)	Individual sessions with students
GP Area/Office of Principal/Deputy Principal/Rm. 303 (as necessary/appropriate)	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent/guardian representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments. 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 be informed of the details of the plan by *Ms. Edel Handley*. The plan will be updated annually.

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	<i>Mr. Louis Mulqueen/Ms. Claire Culligan/ Mr. Pat Devitt</i>	
Garda liaison	<i>Mr. Louis Mulqueen/Ms. Claire Culligan</i>	
Staff liaison	<i>Ms. Edel Handley</i>	
Student liaison	<i>Ms. Breda Whelan/Ms. Hazel Fleming</i>	
Community liaison	<i>Ms. Barbara Hanley</i>	
Parent liaison	<i>Ms. Cora Brooks</i>	
Media liaison	<i>Mr. Louis Mulqueen/Mr. Pat Devitt</i>	
Administrator	<i>Ms. B. Hanley/Ms. Ellen Chambers Admin. Staff</i>	065-6822105

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Mr. Louis Mulqueen Ms. Claire Culligan Mr. Pat Devitt
Who, what, when, where?	Mr. Louis Mulqueen Ms. Claire Culligan Mr. Pat Devitt
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Mr. Louis Mulqueen Ms. Claire Culligan Mr. Pat Devitt
Contact external agencies	Mr. Louis Mulqueen Mr. Pat Devitt Ms. Claire Culligan
Arrange supervision for students	Mr. Pat Devitt
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Mr. Pat Devitt
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Ms. Barbara Hanley Ms. Ellen Chambers
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Ms. Barbara Hanley Ms. Ellen Chambers
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Mr. Louis Mulqueen Mr. Pat Devitt
Inform parents	Ms. Cora Brooks
Hold end of day staff briefing	Mr. Louis Mulqueen Ms. Claire Culligan Mr. Pat Devitt

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader Mr. Louis Mulqueen Mr. Pat Devitt Ms. Claire Culligan
Meet external agencies (when necessary)	Members of CIMTeam
Meet whole staff	Mr. Louis Mulqueen Mr. Pat Devitt/Ms. Claire Culligan Ms. Edel Handley
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Ms. Breda Whelan Ms. Hazel Fleming
Visit the injured (as necessary and appropriate)	Mr. Louis Mulqueen Ms. Claire Culligan Mr. Pat Devitt
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Mr. Pat Devitt Ms. Cora Brooks
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Mr. Pat Devitt/ Ms. Cora Brooks (with the RE Dept.)
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers Student Support Team
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Ms. Breda Whelan Ms. Hazel Fleming
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Student Support Team
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family (as necessary/appropriate)	Student Support Team
Decide on memorials and anniversaries (as necessary/appropriate)	BOM/Staff, parents and students (in conjunction with Student Council Presidents)
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

Mr. Martin Brooks, as a member of the Student Support Team and the Critical Incident Management Team will have a copy of this policy and will be available to step in to any of the above rolls as necessary and appropriate, in the event of a Critical Incident.

**Ms. Hilda O'Connor is Chair of the Rice College Parents' Council.
Mr. Aidan Sweeney is Vice Chair of Rice College Parents' Council.**

Mr. Liam Ashe is Chair of the Rice College BOM.

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Ennis Garda Station	065-6848100
Ennis General Hospital	065-6824464
Ennis Fire Station	065-6846302
Dr. John O'Donnell (GP)	065-6822575
HSE, Sandfield Centre, Ennis	065-6868054
Community Care Team	065-6822575
Child and Family Agency, Unit 3, St. Camillus' Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	061-58688
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Ennis	065-6706601
NEPS Psychologist	065-6865904
DES	090-6483600
ASTI/TUI	ASTI 01-6040160 TUI 01-4922588
Ennis Cathedral	065-6824043 (Parish Office) 065-6869098 (Priest on Duty)
State Exams Commission	090-6442700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057