



SCOIL CARMEL JNS
Critical Incident Management Policy

www.scoilcarmeljns.com

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Introduction

This policy has been drafted by members of staff of Scoil Carmel JNS, in consultation with the Parent Association (PA) and in accordance with the guidelines 'Responding to Critical Incidents in Schools' published by NEPS in 2021. In Scoil Carmel JNS, we aim to protect the well-being of our pupils and staff by providing a safe, happy and nurturing environment as outlined in our school Mission Statement. A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has been established to steer the development and implementation of this plan.

Review and Research

All members of the CIMT have completed the NEPS 'Responding to Critical Incidents In Schools' training. The CIMT has engaged with resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.neps.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from COVID-19 Information Booklet for Schools (NEPS 2020)
- 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 Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

Aim

The aim of the policy and the CIMT is 'to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable them to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to pupils and staff'. This plan will also help ensure that, the event of a critical incident, the effects on the pupils and staff will be limited. It will support our staff, pupils and parents through a critical incident and help the school community return to normality as soon as possible.

What Is A Critical Incident?

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school. Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils or staff members, their family members or members of the local community. Examples include:

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death
- Major illness/outbreak of disease
- Criminal incidents
- Major accidents, serious injury involving pupil(s) or staff on or off the school premises
- A physical attack on a staff member and/ or staff members



- An intrusion into the school
- Civil unrest, war (foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happened in their country of origin)
- Fire, natural and technological disaster
- Disappearance or unauthorised removal of pupil from school or home
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- An accident/ tragedy involving members of the school/ wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- World events that may affect the pupil body and/ or staff

Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School

Scoil Carmel JNS, through curricular, pastoral and policy development, has put systems in place to nurture and support the physical and psychological safety of all members of our school community.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team include the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the In School Management Team (ISM), the chairperson and teacher nominee of the BoM and the school secretary. Members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has remote access to the schools' Critical Incident Management folder on the GDrive as well as a hard copy on file which includes all of the following:

1. A list of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) and their key roles
2. A copy of the key responsibilities of each team member
3. A list of rooms for use during a critical incident
4. An emergency contact list
5. School staff contact list
6. A copy of the BoM members and contacts
7. A Critical Incident Action Plan

Key Roles and Personnel

Critical Incident Management Team	
Role	Name
Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irene Quinn
Garda Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irene Quinn
Staff Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irene Quinn and Maria Jones
Pupil Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orla Ryan• Sinéad Puirseil• Sheela Tynan• Carol Plower



Community Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carol Fitzmaurice
Parent Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irene Quinn and Maria Jones
BoM Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irene Quinn and Martina O’Keeffe
Media Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irene Quinn
Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Secretary

Key Responsibilities Of Each Role

Team Leader – Principal (Irene Quinn)

- Alert the team members to the crisis and convene a meeting
- Co-ordinate the tasks of the team
- Liaise with the BoM, DE, NEPS and other agencies
- With the Deputy Principal, liaise with the family concerned, as appropriate
- The Deputy Principal Maria Jones will assume this role in the absence of the team leader

Garda Liaison – Principal (Irene Quinn)

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

Staff Liaison – Deputy Principal (Irene Quinn and Maria Jones)

- Lead briefing meetings for staff on facts as known, give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions and outline the routine for the day
- Advise staff of the availability of the Spectrum Life: <https://www.spectrum.life>
- Advise staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils
- Provide materials for staff, where necessary (from the Critical Incident Folder)
- Keep records of pupils seen by external agency staff
- Look after setting up and supervision of ‘quiet’ room where agreed

Community/ Agency Liaison – Carol Fitzmaurice

- Maintain up to date lists of contact numbers that might be required such as emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Update team members on the involvement of external agencies
- Liaise with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Check credentials of individuals offering support
- Co-ordinate the involvement of these agencies
- Remind agency staff to wear lanyards



Pupil Liaison – Orla Ryan (N1), Sinéad Puirseil (N2), Sheela Tynan (R1) and Carol Plower (R2)

- Coordinate information from teachers about pupils they are concerned about
- Alert other staff about vulnerable pupils
- Provide materials for pupils from the Critical Incident folder
- Maintain pupil contact records
- Prepare the P.E. hall as necessary

Parent Liaison – Principal and Deputy Principal (Irene Quinn and Maria Jones)

- Visit the family concerned
- Arrange parent meetings, if necessary
- Meet with individual parents, if necessary
- Maintain a record of parents seen
- Manage the consent issues as they arise
- Ensure that sample letters are typed up on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Provide appropriate materials for parents (from the Critical Incident Folder)

Media Liaison - Principal (Irene Quinn)

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. pupils being interviewed, photographers on the premises etc.)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the DE and the relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (if deemed necessary and as agreed by BoM in consultation with the Patron)

Administrator – School Secretary

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of parents, teachers and emergency services
- Take telephone calls and note those that need to be responded to
- Ensure that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Send out letters and emails that are prepared by the SLT and/ or outside agencies
- Photocopy materials needed
- Maintain records
- Set up rooms for meetings with parents, staff and pupils as necessary

Record Keeping

All records maintained in relation to a critical incident will be done in line with the GDPR practices and procedures in Scoil Carmel JNS. 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.

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The management and staff of Scoil Carmel JNS 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. Staff are aware that the confidentiality around all aspects of a critical incident is key. They will be guided by NEPs and the family concerned, where relevant, in the use of language around a critical incident.

Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes:

Principal's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with CIMT
Staff Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main room for meeting staff
PE Hall or Classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with pupils
PE Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with parents/ guardians
Room 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual sessions with pupils
Principal's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with media
Principal's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and Communication Regarding the Plan

All staff and a parent focus group were consulted in the preparation of this policy and plan. Each member of the CIMT has access to a remote and hard copy of the plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Assistant Principal Carol Fitzmaurice.

Critical Incident Action Plan

Short Term Actions – Day 1

- Gather accurate information - Who, what, when, where?
- Contact emergency services
- Convene a CIMT meeting
 - Agree statement of fact
 - Delegate responsibilities
 - Organise school routine keeping it as near normal as possible
 - Decide if support from professional agencies is required
 - Agree how to inform parents – see letter templates
 - Agree on phone line to be kept open for emergency contact
- At the CIMT meeting
 - It may be agreed that parents will be informed first and asked to speak with their children
 - Agree on how to inform pupils with due consideration given to their age
 - If pupils are to be given information, it will be factual and delivered in



- class groups. Pupils will be invited to ask questions, tell stories and express feelings.
- Pupils will be helped to realise that these feelings are normal and natural
 - A period of silence and reflection will be organised
 - Post CIMT meeting
 - Contact external agencies
 - Arrange supervision for pupils
 - Inform staff and/ or hold meeting for all staff
 - Agree schedule for the day
 - Inform pupils, if appropriate to do so (close friends and pupils with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)
 - Compile a list of vulnerable pupils
 - Contact/ visit the family affected
 - Inform parents
 - Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media if appropriate
 - Hold end of day staff briefing for CIMT and staff
 - Request school closure from BoM where necessary

Medium Term Actions – (Day 2 and following days)

- Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of Day 1
- Meet external agencies where appropriate
- Meet whole staff
- Arrange support for pupils, staff, parents/ guardians
- Visit the person/ family concerned
- Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements
- Agree on attendance and participation at a funeral service
- Make decisions about any school closures

Follow-Up – Beyond 72 hours

- Monitor pupils for signs of continuing/ newly emerging distress
- Plan for return of bereaved pupils(s)
- Liaise with external agencies regarding referrals
- Add important dates to school calendar and decide on memorials and anniversaries
- Review response to incident and amend plan in consultation with staff and BoM

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

This policy will be reviewed in: March 2025

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Principal