

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

St. Mary's High School,
Midleton, Co Cork

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Relationship to School Mission Statement

This policy contributes to the care and welfare of the school community in active partnership with the whole school community as outlined in the mission statement

Mission Statement

St. Mary's High School, Midleton is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School for girls only which was founded to care for the poor and disadvantaged in every sense, and to give priority to religious and moral education.

In accordance with this tradition, it seeks to:

- Provide a broad curriculum catering for the needs of all students and to prepare them for their role as citizens of Europe and the World
- Help each student achieve her full potential in academic, personal, social and moral development and to provide for Pastoral Care and Remedial Education as required
- Foster the personal and professional growth of staff reflecting change in society
- Establish and welcome the investment of the total school community
- Agus chun ár n-oidhreacht, gur dlúth chuid di ár greideamh agus béasa agus bealaí ár dtíre, a chur ar aghaidh.

St. Mary's High School is committed to:

- Witness of Gospel values
- Curriculum innovations
- Leisure education
- Media education
- Civil, social and political education
- Social, personal and health education
- Equality
- Respect for the environment
- Justice

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in the school. The team has a supportive role to the Whole-School Community in response to all emergencies.

Rationale behind this policy

The purpose of the CIMT is to prevent/respond to any significant trauma that may occur in the life of the school. The key to managing any critical incident is planning. This helps staff maintain a sense of control and enables staff to act quickly and effectively. The policy seeks to limit the negative/harmful effects of trauma on students and staff and helps school life to return to normal as soon as possible. The policy applies to all teaching and non-teaching staff, students, parents /guardians with the approval of Board of Management (BOM)

Definition of an Emergency/Critical Incident

Any incident or sequence of events, which disrupts the normal everyday running of St. Mary's High School and overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school.

Examples include:

- An accident involving student(s)/staff member(s) on or off the school premises
- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, terminal illness, accident, suicide
- Physical attack on student(s)/staff member(s)
- Serious damage to school building as a result of fire, vandalism, etc.
- Disappearance of a member of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community which impacts on the school

Role of Senior Management (Principal, Deputy Principal)

- Oversee the plan/CIMT
- Facilitate in-service to staff, parents
- Facilitate implementation of relevant programmes in the curriculum
- Liaise with family, media, BOM and DES (NEPS) as required
- Supportive presence to others in the school
- Review of process

Roles within the CIMT

Staff Liaison Person

- Offer staff support
- Responsibility for staff briefing
- Monitor signs of concern
- Maintain relevant staff contact details
- Co-ordinate in-service to staff regarding issues of loss, emergency management and suicide

Student Liaison Person

- Promote links between staff and students
- Maintain and update student contact details regularly (with parent liaison)
- Observe vulnerable students (in liaison with year heads/class & subject teachers)
- Organise student support/counselling
- Assist with development of programmes associated with loss, crisis management and suicide

Parent Liaison Person

- Co-ordinate and participate in parent support
- Maintain and update parent contact details regularly (with student liaison)
- Offer support regarding coping with loss

Network/Community and Media Liaison Person

- Maintain and update emergency/external agency contact details list regularly
- Contact with local/external agencies i.e., NEPS, social workers etc.,
- Develop template of media briefs/press release statements in event of ongoing emergency

Staff assigned to CIMT roles

Overseeing the CIMT – Donnchadh Ó'Briain, Mary B.Walsh

Staff Liaison	Mary B. Walsh
Student Liaison	Niamh Daly Leona Hennessy
Parent Liaison	<u>Donnchadh Ó'Briain</u>
Network/ Community Media Liaison	Donnchadh Ó'Briain

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY/CRITICAL INCIDENT

Checklist – Day of incident

1. Gather the facts – Who? What? Where? When?
2. Contact appropriate agencies e.g. Gardai, hospitals, parents
3. Convene the CIMT and key staff
4. Agree statement of fact – to be drafted and outlined to staff, non-teaching staff, students, parents, BOM, media. What can be said?
5. Organise for the supervision of students
6. Decide student groups and venues for announcement
7. Read agreed statement to staff at meeting
8. Distribute agreed statement for all enquiries via, phone, school gate, reception, etc.
9. Read/Announce agreed statement to students – to be communicated in sensitive manner, highlighting supports available and indicating actions planned
10. Identify 'at risk' students
11. Log all incoming and outgoing telephone calls relevant to situation
12. Organise timetable for the day
 - timetabled teachers will supervise class groups
 - allow students to support each other in groups
 - identify vulnerable students
 - inform students where extra support is available e.g. GC
13. If appropriate, inform Parents/Guardians by letter of incident and supports available
14. Make contact with the family concerned
15. Organise support for individual students, class groups as appropriate
16. Establish contact with absent staff

MAINTAIN THE SCHOOL ROUTINE WHEN AT ALL POSSIBLE

Checklist – Day Two

1. Check in with CIMT
2. Review Events – check how people are coping
3. Confirm arrangements for support meetings for parents/ students/staff
4. Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, staff and parents if necessary
5. Plan for re-integration of students and staff into regular school routine (e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relatives)
6. Plan a visit to injured – home/hospital (parent liaison and school management)
7. Liase with family regarding funeral arrangements/memorial services
8. In accordance with parents wishes, decide on attendance and participation at funeral/memorial service
9. School Closure – only in the most critical of circumstances where the school community is unable to or prevented from functioning

Checklist – Long Term

1. Monitor students for signs of continuing stress
2. Evaluate response to incident and amend the CIMT Plan appropriately
3. Inform new staff/schools students regarding policy and/or incidents where appropriate
4. Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries (within school context) in consultation with parent/guardians
5. Ensure contact details for Students, Parents/Guardians, Teachers and Auxiliary Staff, BOM, and Parents Associations are updated regularly.
6. Details for CIMT file: Contact details of 1st year students; new students and staff should be received within two weeks of entering the school
7. A shadow team to be established
8. Staff to be encouraged to attend training in CIMT Management
9. Review the policy on an annual basis
10. Regular provision of programmes regarding loss, emergency management and suicide
11. Regular monitoring of vulnerable students by the care group

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The monitoring, review and evaluation process will focus mainly on whether provision of this policy has been implemented. The policy will be reviewed after an incident and updated on a regular basis.

Policy approved on: 24/10/2017
For Review: October 2019

Consultation Support Documents

Irish Association of Suicidology, Suicide Prevention in Schools – Best Practice Guidelines, pg. 31-37

Caroll B. & T. Crawford, Putting the Student First – A School Response Health Service Executive, Mid-Western Area Initiative