



# **ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL**

## **Critical Incident Management Policy**

December 2023

# St. Attracta's Senior National School

## Critical Incident Management Policy

The key to managing a critical incident is planning. Schools are strongly advised to develop a policy in relation to critical incident response. NEPS also encourages schools to develop a Critical Incident Management Plan, outlining who will do what in the event of a tragedy.

St. Attracta's Senior National School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a happy, caring and secure learning environment at all times in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential. The Board of Management, through the Principal, Shane Maguire, 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](http://www.education.ie) and [www.nosp.ie](http://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)*

### Definition of the term 'Critical Incident'

The staff and management of St. Attracta's Senior National School 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 effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

### Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

At St. Attracta's Senior National 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*
- *Regular fire drills occur*
- *Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked*
- *Pre-opening supervision in the school yard (possibly include details)*
- *Front gate locked during school hours*
- *School doors locked during class time*
- *Rules of the playground – include details*

## Psychological Safety

The management and staff of St. Attracta's Senior National School 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 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 prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision*
- *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*
- *Books and resources on difficulties affecting the 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*
- *The school has developed links with a range of external agencies such as NEPS, NCSE, PDST etc.*
- *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 Circular 0022/2010 (Primary)*
- *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 using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published on 2007 for primary schools. These documents are available on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)*
- *Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the appropriate staff member; concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents/guardians 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.

### **Team Leader: Shane Maguire**

#### **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
- Mr. Peter Kenny will take the lead in the absence of the team leader

### **Garda Liaison: Shane Maguire**

#### **Role**

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

### **Staff Liaison Shane Maguire**

#### **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 Peter Kenny/Anne O' Leary**

#### **Role**

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

### **Community/Agency Liaison Sue McDonagh/Éilís McDonnell**

#### **Role**

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
  - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Association
  - 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 Anne O’Leary**

### **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 Alice O’ Flynn/Shane Maguire**

### **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 Peter Kenny**

### **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 school’s 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.

Ms. Suzanne Barrett, our school secretary, 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 St. Attracta’s Senior National School 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:

<b>ROOM NAME:</b>	<b>DESIGNATED PURPOSE:</b>
Halla	Main room for meeting staff
Halla for whole school/ Classrooms for individual classes	Meetings with students
Halla	Meetings with parents
Outside of School Front Door	Meetings with media
Room beside Principal's Office	Individual sessions with students
Principal's Office	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 **Shane Maguire**. The plan will be reviewed annually each December.

<b>Critical Incident Management Team</b>		
The plan will be updated annually each December.		
<b>Role: Principal</b>	<b>Name: Shane Maguire</b>	<b>Phone: 01 295 1627</b>
Team leader:	<b>Shane Maguire</b>	
Garda liaison:	<b>Shane Maguire</b>	
Staff liaison:	<b>Shane Maguire</b>	
Student liaison:	<b>Peter Kenny/Anne O' Leary</b>	
Community liaison:	<b>Sue McDonagh/Éilís McDonnell</b>	
Parent liaison:	<b>Anne O' Leary</b>	
Media liaison:	<b>Alice O' Flynn</b>	
Administrator:	<b>Peter Kenny</b>	

<b>Short Term Actions – DAY 1</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Gather accurate information	Senior Management Team (Mr. Maguire, Mr. Kenny, Ms. O' Leary)
Who, what, when, where?	
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Team Leader (Staff Room)
Contact external agencies	Senior Management Team
Arrange supervision for students	Deputy Principal
Hold staff meeting	<b>All staff</b>
Agree schedule for the day	Critical Incident Team
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Team Leader and Deputy Principal
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Deputy Principal
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Chairperson
Inform parents	Assistant Principal 1 in conjunction with Team Leader
Hold end of day staff briefing	Team Leader

<b>Medium Term Actions - DAY 2 and following days</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	<b>Team leader</b>
Meet external agencies	<b>Team leader, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal 1</b>
Meet whole staff	<b>Team leader</b>
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Critical Incident Team
Visit the injured	Senior Management Team and Class Teacher/SNA where appropriate
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Team Leader and Parent Liaison
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Senior Management Team
Make decisions about school closure	<b>BOM</b>



<b>Follow-up – Beyond 72 hours</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Deputy Principal (SENCO)
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Team Leader, Student Liaison (Dep. Principal)
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Assistant Principal 1 (Parent Liaison)
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

<b>EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST</b>	
<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>CONTACT NUMBERS</b>
Garda	<b>999 or 112</b> <b>Dundrum Garda Station</b> <b>01 666 5600</b>
Hospital	<b>St. Vincent's University Hospital</b> <b>01 221 4000</b> <b>Crumlin Children's Hospital</b> <b>01 409 6100</b>
Fire Brigade	<b>999 or 112</b>
Local GPs	<b>Dr. Caoimhe Ryan, Ballinteer Medical</b> <b>01 507 9977</b>
HSE	HSE Ireland 01 6352000
Community Care Team	HSE Ballinteer 01 2164500
Child and Family Centre	Child and Family Agency Unit 9 Nutgrove Retail Park 01 9213400
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Lucena Team C Community Mental Health Team 01 4923596    09:00-17:00
School Inspector	Ursula Cotter Ursula_Cotter@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist	Emily Fitzgerald    Brigid Egan 087 2415691    087 6501622 NEPS Head Office 01 8892700
DES	01 8896400
INTO/ASTI/TUI	Gerry Brown CEC Representative



## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY



Clergy	<b>Canon Liam Belton 087 2769314</b>
State Exams Commission	<b>N/A</b>
Employee Assistance Service	<b>1800 411 057</b>