



Scoil Chóca Naofa

Critical Incident Policy & Plan 2024/25

Critical Incident Policy

At all times, Scoil Chóca Naofa aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment as defined in our Mission Statement. The Board of Management, through the Principal, has drawn up the following Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

The aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

Aim

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Team (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 students and staff". Having a good plan will also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It will enable the school to return to normality as soon as possible.

Definition of Critical Incident

The staff and management of Scoil Chóca Naofa 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, their family members or members of the local community e.g.

- 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.
- The occurrence of an unexpected event – weather or Pandemic e.g. Covid 2020.

Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School

Scoil Chóca Naofa has put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students through our SPHE/RSE programmes, 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

In the area of physical safety, the school has put in place the following:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school.
- Secure doors accessed by bell only during school hours, all visitors to report to office in the first instance. All parents collecting pupils early or coming in after 9.20am are required to sign in/out pupils and wait in lobby until pupil is called from classroom via intercom.
- General school rules under the school's behaviour policy to ensure all pupils have a safe environment.



Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Scoil Chóca Naofa also 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)

- SPHE is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by including 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 has access to training for its role in SPHE
- Staff is 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
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. HSE/Community Care/NEPS/Tús/la/National Disability Team.
- **Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriate nature of the content, and the expertise of the providers.**
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the support teacher assigned to the class. 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 is informed about how to access support for self.

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 access to the schools Critical Incident Management Folder which include all of the following:

- A copy of the Critical Incident Management Team/and the Key Roles
- An emergency contact list/school staff contact list
- A copy of the duties of each team member
- A copy of the Board of Management members & contacts
- An Action Plan Template.

Key Roles and Responsibilities of the CIMT

- Team Leader and Media Liaison
- Garda liaison
- Staff/Student liaison
- Community/Agency liaison
- Parent liaison
- Administrator



The Following are the Key Responsibilities of Each Role

Team Leader - (Linda Daly Principal)

- Alert the team members to the crisis and convene a meeting
- Co-ordinate the tasks of the team
- Liaise with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC
- Liaise with the bereaved family
- 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.)
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

The Deputy Principal will assume this role in the absence of the team leader.

Garda Liaison (Orlaith Tierney APII)

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

Staff/Student Liaison (Ethan Bracken API and Louise O'Grady APII)

- Lead briefing meetings for staff, liaises with other team members to keep staff, student up-dated with information and progression facts as known; give staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions and outline the routine for the day
- Advise staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provide materials for staff (from the Critical Incident Folder)
- Keep records of students seen by external agency staff
- Look after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed
- In the event of an incident will liaise where necessary with relevant teacher unions etc.

Community/Agency Liaison (Doireann Dunne API)

- Maintain up to date lists of contact numbers - members of the Parents Council, emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- 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 name badges
- Update team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent Liaison (Maire Diggin DP and Michelle Carr APII*)

- Visit the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arrange parent meetings if held - Facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Set up room for meetings with parents*
- Meet with individual parents*
- Maintain a record of parents seen*
- Manage the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensure that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Provide appropriate materials for parents (from their Critical Incident Folder)

Administrator (Erin Morley Secretary)

- Maintenance up to date telephone numbers of:
 - Parents or guardians
 - Teachers
 - 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
- Prepare and send out letters, emails and faxes
- 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. The 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 Scoil Chóca Naofa 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. 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 'death by 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 Staff Room will be the main room used to meet the staff
- The Hall for meetings with students
- The Hall for parents
- A SET room may be made available for other visitors should the need arise

Pandemic 2020

On March 12th 2020 all schools in the country were closed without warning due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

In the event of such an event happening again, online teaching will begin using SeeSaw. Teachers will take home any resource books/materials required for distance teaching as the school may not be accessible from day one.

Consultation

This policy will be made available to all staff, including ancillary staff, the BOM and parent representatives before it is approved by BOM.

Signed: _____
Elaine Mahon (Chairperson)

Date: September 2024

**Appendix A: List of Current Staff with Emergency Contact Numbers**

First name	Last name	Emergency Contact
DJ	Bolger	Teresa Bolger 0879174889
Ethan	Bracken	Jessica Leen 087 6345973
Aíne	Burke	Peter Burke 086 8282144
Sharon	Byrne	Pádraig Byrne 086 9788783
Sheena	Byrne	Shane Stone 0876628700 Breda Byrne 0872338984
Ann	Campion	Don Campion 0872909769
Michelle	Carr	Hugh Clarke 0851034630
Aisling	Clancy	Michael Behan 0861725485
Ian	Corbett	Ciara O'Brien 085 7440527
Barry	Cribbin	Breege Cribbin 087 6978537
Rosemary	Cummins	David Cummins 087 2441655
Carina	Curran	Bobby Mulligan 0879265555
Linda	Daly	Cathal Daly: 086-8542792
Shay	Davenport	Sheena Davenport 0872281194
Máire	Ní Dhálaigh	John Hurley 086 2075393
Máire	Diggin	Déaglán Ó Drisceoil 087 8244511
Pamela	Dowd	Noel Dowd 0879803770
Doireann	Dunne	Davy Dunne 087 2812699
Sinéad	Field	Shane Browne 085 1642621
Leah	Fortune	Steph Fortune 0879239597
Louise	Grimes	David Harrington 0860356483
Clare	Heffernan	Padhraic McGhee 086 384 9823
Ruth	Heffernan	Matthew Heffernan 086 1645080
Jennifer	Kehoe	Dad: Kevin Kehoe, 085 7639273
Louise	Kinnane	Michael Kinnane 087 2277674
Orla	Kyne	Enda Kyna 087 8563565
Rose	Marron	Brian McCole 0876537701
Chantal	Martin	Shane Martin 086 0405163
Grainne	Martin	Tony Martin 087 231 9868
Ann	McCabe	Tomás Mc Cabe 0872389824
May	McGuone	Niall McGuone 086 1567585
Erin	Morley	Kevin Morley 086 8342001
Maria	Mulhall	Gerard Mulhall 087 2609186
Suzanne	Murtagh	Ken Murtagh 0877515342
Máire	Ní Loinn	Peter Clarke 087 9644193
Irene	O'Connor	Pat O'Connor 087 2390647
Louise	O'Grady	Bríd O'Grady 089 2007133
Annette	Quinn	Tommy Quinn 086 8048424
Laura	Rattigan	Jim Rattigan 087 9828321
Bernadette	Ryan	Jim Ryan 0872447530
Louise	Scanlon	John Scanlon 086 8116541



Brid	Sheil	Martin Sheil 086 3051960
Lisa	Sheridan	Susan Byrne 086 3104342
Tommy	Sims	Clare Simms 0872958951
Deirdre	Soden	Barry Power 086 3661007
Orlaith	Tierney	Shannon Tierney 083 3980000
Anne	Tilbury	Ian Tilbury 087 2443153
Adam	Tyrrell	Anne Tyrrell 0861706546
Gemma	Tone	James Tone 086 1901899
Daragh	Walsh	Emer Ryan 087 6549770
Susan	White	Alan White 087 6866143
Anne	Wilson	Declan Wilson 086 3719140