



Critical Incident Policy

St. Peter's College Secondary School aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. As stated in the School Ethos *"In St. Peter's College there is a genuine attempt on the part of all to create a school community, of equality, fairness and care"* The school has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students during the normal course of the school day and in the event of a critical incident.

Such policies would include:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Meitheal Programme
- Code of Behaviour
- Guidance and Counselling Policy
- S.P.H.E Programme

Definition of Critical Incident

St. Peter's College recognises a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school, and disrupts the normal running of the school". Critical incidents may involve students, staff, the school or the local community.

Examples of a critical incident might be:

- The death of a member of the school community, through sudden death, accident, suicide or terminal illness
- A serious accident or tragedy in the school community
- Serious damage to the school through fire, flooding vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- A physical attack on a staff member or student
- Intrusion into the school

Aim of Plan

The aim of the Critical Incident Plan is that in the event of such an incident as outlined above, the plan will help staff and management to react quickly and effectively and to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. The plan will also help the school to return to normality as soon as possible and limit the effects of the incident on staff and students.

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.

Physical Safety

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of St. Peter's College 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 substance 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
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific area 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
- 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
- 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 in 2010, for post primary schools
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or support teacher), 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

Critical Incident Management Team:

St Peter's College has set up a Critical Incident Management Team consisting of the following personnel:

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principals
- The School Secretary
- The School Chaplain
- The School Guidance Counsellor

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.

The Principal will act as Team Leader or in his absence one of the Deputy Principals.

Role of Team Leader:

- The team leader alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting of the team
- Co-ordinates/delegates tasks of the other team members.
- Liaises with The Board of Management and the Department of Education and Skills
- In case of bereavement, liaises with the bereaved family

Other areas of responsibilities, which may be delegated by the team Leader to other members of the team would include:

- Contacting Emergency support services
- Briefing and advising the staff and noting their feelings and concerns
- Organising the supervision of students in the school
- Keeping staff updated on information/developments /progress
- Meeting students to brief them on the situation
- Taking care of “Vulnerable students/vulnerable teachers”
- Liaising with external agencies for support or referrals
- Liaising with school organizations such as Parents’ Council, P.P.U. & Students’ Council
- Meeting with individual parents or groups of parents
- Visiting bereaved families or families closely associated with the incident
- Preparing a Press release and liaising with the media
- Preparation of an “Incident Room”

Record Keeping:

All team members will keep written records of phone calls, letters, meetings interventions etc.

Confidentiality:

The school is conscious of its responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements.

Critical Incident Management Team

School Principal	Mr. Robert O’Callaghan
School Deputy Principals	Mr. John Banville and Mr. Seán Foley
School Secretary	Ms Linda Ennis
School Chaplain	Fr. Aodhan Marken
School Guidance Counsellors	Mr. Tom Gleeson and Ms Rowena Lacey

The Critical Incident Management Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.

Keyroles Assigned by Team Leader

Name of Team Member	Task
School Principal	
Deputy Principals	
Secretary	
Chaplain	
Guidance Counsellors	

Emergency Telephone Numbers

Gardai	053 91 65200
Ambulance	999
Wexford Hospital	053 91 5300
The Presbytery	053 91 22055
Fire Brigade	999 053 91 96585
Dept of Education and Skills	01 889 6400 09064 42700
NEPS Psychologist	01 8892492
Health Centre Grogan's Road	053 91 23522

Support / Additional Material

Short Term Action and Roles Assigned

1st DAY

TASK	NAME
Gather accurate information	
Contact appropriate Agencies	
Convene a meeting with key staff	
Arrange supervision of students	
Hold Staff meeting	
Organise time table for the day	
Inform Parents/guardians	
Inform students	
Make contact with the bereaved family	
Dealing with the media	

Medium Term Actions and Roles Assigned

24 – 72 Hours

TASK	NAME
Review the events of the first 24 hours	
Arrange support for the individual / groups / parents / students / teachers (staff)	
Plan the re-integration of staff and students	
Plan visits to injured	
Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements etc.	
Attendance and participation at funeral service	
School Closure	

Beyond 72 Hours

TASK	NAME
Monitor students for continuing signs of stress	
Evaluate response to incident and amend critical incident plan appropriately	

Formalise plan for the future	
Inform new staff and pupils	
Decide on appropriate way to deal with anniversaries	

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parents/Guardians

The school has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our students/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury

(Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. *(Elaborate)*

It is possible that your son may have some feelings that he may like to discuss with you. You can help your son by taking time to listen to him and encouraging him to express his feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to his age.

If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at school *(Details)*

Principal.

Sample letter requesting consent for Involvement of outside professionals.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following the recent (tragedy/ death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to boys either in small groups or on a one to one basis, and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate

Your son has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (X). If you would like your son to receive this support, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by
If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school.

Principal.

I/We consent to having our son meet with

I understand that my son may meet x in an individual or group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Student: _____

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Signed: _____
(Parents /Guardians)

Useful Contact Telephone Numbers

Barnardos (Dublin)	01 450355
The Samaritans	116 123 01 6710071
Childline	1800 666 666
Parentline	1890 927 277 01 8733 500
Aware (Dublin)	01 6766166 1890 303 302
National Suicide Bereavement Support	024 95561
Rainbows (Dublin)	01 4734175
Bereavement Counselling Service	01 8391766
HSE Bereavement Counselling	051 848711
Bríd Carroll	087 2420251

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~nsbsn>

Irish website for people bereaved by suicide, lists support groups.