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| **CRITICAL INCIDENT**  **MANAGEMENT POLICY** |  |

The following is the Mission Statement for St. Oliver’s N.S. adopted by the staff in 1998.

**“St. Oliver’s respects difference, cares for all, nurtures individual talents**

**and develops self confidence in a safe and caring environment”.**

Our principal objective is to provide for our students a broad and balanced education in all its

aspects - intellectual, emotional, physical, moral and cultural. This objective is achieved within a controlled but relaxed and happy environment.

We aim to do the very best we can for all children who come to our school, to give them a solid grounding in basic academic work and to open their eyes and minds to the world that awaits them. We are proud of the children who are part of our school and hope they go on to become fulfilled adults.

To this end St. Oliver’s NS aims St. Oliver Plunkett National School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, in conjunction with the School Community 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 and www.nosp.ie including:

* Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)
* Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)
* **Definition of a Critical Incident:**

What is a Critical Incident?

As per DES / NEPS guidelines, St. Oliver’s N.S recognises a critical incident to be

“an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running 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
* Outbreak of disease or major illness in school or community.
* Serious injury sustained by a member of the school community as a result of violence on or off school grounds.
* 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**

Recognising that the key to managing critical incidents is planning, St. Oliver Plunkett N.S has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying plan. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.

**Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school :**

We have put systems in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of an incident. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.

**Physical safety:** The following policies and strategies have been put in place in order to maintain the physical safety of all members of the school community.

• Health & Safety Statement.

• Evacuation plan formulated.

• Regular fire drills occur.

• Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked.

• The Fire Alarm is serviced regularly, at least once a year.

• Access only through school Main Gate during the school day-additional gates are locked. Where possible, Main Gate is closed while the front yard is in use at playtime.

• Pupils leaving early will only be released by a member of teaching staff when an authorised adult arrives to accompany the child from the premises. Such departures are recorded in the ‘Sign Out’ book.

• Pupils are not released into the care of persons unknown to school staff without checking with a parent/ guardian.

• Pupils are reminded of playground rules by staff at regular intervals in the context of our School Code of Behaviour.

• Pupils are adequately supervised at all times especially during physical activity and at break time.

**Psychological safety**

The management and staff of St Oliver’s NS 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; helpseeking; bullying; decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision
* SPHE Programmes are included in the curriculum to address issues such as grief and loss, communications skills, anger management, conflict management, problem solving, decision making etc.
* The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
* Our Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour are discussed at regular intervals during the school year.
* Staff are aware and supportive of the variety of needs within their class-o contact with home and HSCL where needed.
* Staff attend ongoing CPD in relation to supporting children-Nurture Traning, Incredible Years Training, Zippy’s Friends.
* Mindful Week
* Mindfulness Courses for Students-Breath Body and Mind training-Barnardos. Yoga Classes
* The school has developed links with outside agencies (S.C.P., N.E.P.S., H.S.E., Tusla Child and Family Agency), which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of students.
* Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
* Parents supported on an ongoing basis through the school-HSCL/Principal, Parenting courses, Meitheal, NEPS support, external services support-this is not an exhaustive list.
* Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school student are available-resources available in Kay’s office
* 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 Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary)
* 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
* 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. A Critical Incident File is available to all members of the CIMT from the office. 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:** Valerie Slattery-Principal/M Hannafin

**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

**Garda liaison** Valerie Slattery

**Role**

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

**Staff liaison** MorganO’Connell/E. Power

**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 the 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** Eileen Fitzgerald

**Role**

* Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
* Provides materials for students (from the critical incident folder)
* Accesses student contact details that are updated each September on Aladdin. If CI occurs during the school day, the contact details on Aladdin will be used.
* Looks after setting up and supervision of ‘quiet’ room where agreed

**Community/agency liaison** HSCL

**Role**

* Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
  + Key parents, such as members of the Parents Council
  + Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
* Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
* Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
* Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

**Parent liaison –HSCL**

**Role**

* Facilitates parent support meeting, if requested.
* Will support parents at whatever level is needed and agreed upon.
* Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
* Manages the ‘consent’ issues in accordance with agreed school policy and with support from Principal.
* Maintains records of parent interaction, if required.
* Provides appropriate materials for parents (from the critical incident folder)

**Media liaison-Valerie Slattery/Michelle Hannafin**

**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 with any necessary agencies.
* Will liaise with staff around Social Media/Press Interviews etc and will aim to ensure a Whole School Response to an Incident is maintained.
* Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews, if required and in conjunction with the Board of Management.

**Administrator** Kay Lyons-Secretary

**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, if required.
* Photocopies materials needed
* Maintains records

**Record keeping**

In the event of an incident the CIMT will retain important records as required. These records will be stored safely following any incident.

**Confidentiality and good name considerations**

Management and staff of St Oliver Plunkett NS have a responsibility to protect the privacy and integrity of people involved in any incident. A Whole School response to a Critical Incident will be discussed and maintained. Our school community agrees that at the time of a Critical Incident, there is no place for comment or representation through Social Media. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also. Advice will be sought in relation to the **wording and description** of an incident and will be in line with best practice from NEPS Guidelines and Resource Material for schools.

**Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

Our ISM team has collaborated on the drafting of this plan. A draft policy has been provided to all staff and input sought. This draft policy has also been made available to parent body through our website. It will be ratified by our BOM once the process is complete. The policy will form part of our Critical Incident file in the office and will be available to access for all staff, through our Shared Drive.

The plan will be updated annually

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| **Critical Incident Rooms**  In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes | |
| **Room Name:** | **Designated Purpose:** (If required) |
| New Staff Room | Main room for meeting staff |
| School Hall | Meetings with students |
| Nurture Room | Meetings with parents |
| Meeting room/Photocopying Room | Individual sessions with students |

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| **Cr** | **itical Incident Management Team** |  |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Phone** |
| **Team leader:** | Valerie Slattery  Michelle Hannafin | 0872747276  0877784041 |
| **Garda liaison** | Valerie Slattery  Michelle Hannafin | 0872747276  0877784041 |
| **Staff liaison** | Morgan O’Connell  Emer Power | 0876762940  0872624714 |
| **Student liaison** | Eileen Fitzgerald | 0871370570 |
| **Community liaison** | HSCL | 0872333349 |
| **Parent liaison** | HSCL | 0872333349 |
| **Media liaison** | Valerie Slattery  Michelle Hannafin | 0872747276  0877784041 |
| **Administrator** | Kay Lyons | 086 3520472 |

**Short term actions – Day 1**

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| **Task** | **Name** |
| **Gather accurate information** | Team Leader |
| **Who, what, when, where?** | CIMT |
| **Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly** |  |
| **Contact external agencies** | CIMT |
| **Arrange supervision for students** | SET |
| **Hold staff meeting** | Team Leader |
| **Agree schedule for the day** | CIMT |
| **Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)** |  |
| **Compile a list of vulnerable students** |  |
| **Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media** | Team Leader |
| **Inform parents** | HSCL/Team Leader |
| **Hold end of day staff briefing** | CIMT |

**This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24th April 2024**

**Signed: John Condon**

**Chairperson**

**Signed: V Slattery**

**Principal.**

**Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)**

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| Task | Name |
| Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1 | Team leader |
| Meet external agencies | Team leader |
| Meet whole staff | CIMT |
| Arrange support for students, staff, parents | CIMT |
| Visit the injured | Team Leader/HSCL |
| Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements | Team Leader/HSCL |
| Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service | CIMT |
| Make decisions about school closure | BOM |

**Follow-up – beyond 72 hours**

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| **Task** | **Name** |
| Monitor students for signs of continuing distress | Class teachers |
| Liaise with agencies regarding referrals | CIMT |
| Plan for return of bereaved student(s) | CIMT |
| Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family | CIMT-if required |
| Decide on memorials and anniversaries | BOM/Staff, parents and students |
| Review response to incident and amend plan | Staff/BOM |

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| **EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST** | |
| **AGENCY** | **CONTACT NUMBERS** |
| Garda | 052 6177640 |
| Hospital | 052 617700 |
| Fire Brigade | 999 |
| Local GPs | 052 6125312 |
| Tusla-Yellow House  Child and Family Agency | 0526177302 |
| Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS) | 052 6189204 |
| School Inspector  Edel Meaney | 087 3298311 |
| NEPS Psychologist | 087 9984348 |
| Parish Priest-St Oliver Plunkett  Fr Nicholas  Fr Hegarty | 087 9100418  086 7361155 |
| Employee Assistance Service | 1800 411 057 |
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