



**St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark**

**RN: 19259W**

## **Critical Incident Management Policy**

V.1 March 2020

V.2 November 2023

**Policy Ratified: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Policy Review: November 2023**

**Signed:** *Arthur Hutchinson*

**Arthur Hutchinson, Chairperson BOM**

At the time of drawing up this policy, all details and the enclosed information are correct. It is possible that between now and the review date, changes may have to be made to the provisions, policies and procedures of the school. This may be due to external changes required by the Department of Education (DE), the school patron or other agencies. Mandatory policies will be available on the school website and up to date information will be posted regularly.

---

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Review and Research .....	3
What is a Critical Incident? .....	3
Aim .....	3
Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in school.....	4
Physical Safety.....	4
Psychological Safety .....	4
Critical Incident Management Team CIMT: .....	5
Record Keeping .....	7
Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations .....	7
Critical Incident Rooms .....	8
Consultation and communication regarding the plan .....	9
Short Term Actions – Day 1.....	11
Medium Term Actions – (Day 2 and following days) .....	11
Follow-Up – Beyond 72 hours.....	12
EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST .....	13

---

## Introduction

St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark aims to protect the well-being of its pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The BOM, through the Principal and **Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**, has drawn up a **Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)** 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)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools – Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DE, DOH, HSE 2025)

## What is a Critical Incident?

The staff and management of St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark recognize 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 through fire, flood, vandalism etc
- The disappearance of a member of the school community

## Aim

The aim of 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 affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

---

## Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in 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

Specific Examples:

- Evacuation plan formulated.
- Regular fire drills occur.
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- School Code of Behaviour

### Psychological Safety

The management and staff of St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark 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 eth 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 student are available
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies
- Inputs to schools 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 DE Circular 00022/2010.
- 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 2007 for primary schools.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (ie 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 (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.

Key roles have been identified and assigned as follows:

### **Team Leader: Bernadette Gunning (Principal) with Arthur Hutchinson (Chairperson, BOM)**

#### **Role**

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DE; NEPS; SEC
- Liaises with bereaved family

### **Garda Liaison: Bernadette Gunning (Principal) with Arthur Hutchinson (Chairperson, BOM)**

#### **Role**

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

### **Staff Liaison: Emer Mulvaney (AP 1) & Siobhan de Frein (AP 1)**

#### **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**

- **Infants: Audrey McHale**
- **1<sup>st</sup>& 2<sup>nd</sup> Class: Eileen Duffy**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Class: Dee Cunneen**

- 
- **5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Class: Martha Lamont**

**Role**

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students
- Provides material for students (from their Critical Incident Folder)
- Maintains student contact records (R1)
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet room' where agreed

**Parent/Community/Agency Liaison: Michaela Marnell (Deputy Principal) with BOM Parent Nominee**

**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
- 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
- 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: Bernadette Gunning (Principal) with Arthur Hutchinson (Chairperson, BOM)**

**Role**

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (eg students being interviewed, photographers on the premises etc)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with relevant teacher unions etc
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

---

**Administrator: Suzanne O'Toole, School Secretary**

### **Role**

- Maintenance of up-to-date telephone numbers of
  - Parents/guardians
  - Teachers
  - Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Where necessary, phone calls may not be taken initially, but instead a notice on website, or message on answer phone, or text messages may be required until clear information is to hand.
- Ensures that templates are in the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies material 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.

### **Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations**

Management and staff of St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequence of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, eg: the term suicide will not be used unless there is solid information that the 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

Designation of rooms will depend on the nature of the event, and whether or not the pupils are in school at the time.

<b>Critical Incident Rooms [when pupils are in school]</b>	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
<b>Room Name</b>	<b>Designated Purpose</b>
Staffroom	Main room for staff
Classrooms & Hall	Meetings with students
Room 1A (Divide this class to other classes) & Principal's Office	Meetings with parents
Principal's Office	Meetings with media
Purple Building Resource Rooms	Individual sessions with students
Principal's Office	Meetings with other visitors

<b>Critical Incident Rooms [when pupils are not in school]</b>	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
<b>Room Name</b>	<b>Designated Purpose</b>
Staffroom	Main room for staff
Hall	Meetings with students
Classroom on Red Corridor	Meetings with parents
Classroom on Red Corridor	Meetings with media
Room 1A	Individual sessions with students
Classroom on Red Corridor	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. 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 [team member].

The plan will be updated annually.

<b>Critical Incident Management Team</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Team Leader</b>	Bernadette Gunning & Arthur Hutchinson	087 205 9947 087 254 4476
<b>Garda Liaison</b>	Bernadette Gunning & Arthur Hutchinson	087 205 9947 087 254 4476
<b>Staff Liaison</b>	Emer Mulvaney & Siobhan de Fréin	086 377 0052 087 235 8912
<b>Parent/Community/Agency Liaison</b>	Michaela Marnell & BOM Parent Nominee	087 696 6471
<b>Student Liaison</b>	Audrey McHale Eileen Duffy Dee Cunneen Martha Lamont	087 992 7799 086 609 1410 087 976 0650 086 310 8436
<b>Media Liaison</b>	Bernadette Gunning & Arthur Hutchinson	087 205 9947 087 254 4476
<b>Administrator</b>	Suzanne O'Toole	086 310 4832

## Short Term Actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	
Who, what, when, where	
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	
Contact external agencies	
Arrange supervision for students	
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	
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	
Inform parents	
Hold end of day staff briefing	

## Medium Term Actions – (Day 2 and following days)

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

---

---

## Follow-Up – Beyond 72 hours

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class Teachers
Liase with agencies regarding referrals	
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM, staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan as necessary	

## Emergency Contact List

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	
Community Garda: Gavin Fleet	086 318 8934
Hospital	
Fire Brigade	
Local GPs	
HSE	
Child & Family Centre	Ballyogan Family Resource Centre 41 Ballyogan Ave Carrickmines Dublin 18 01 2953219
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	1800 700 700 Mental Health Info Line: 1800 111 888
School Inspector: Caitríona Ní Bhriain	Caitriona_NiBhriain@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist: none assigned 2023/24	none assigned 2023/24
DE	
INTO	01 8047700
Clergy/Parish: Fr Gerry Kane PP	086 822 0956
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
Barnardos	01 473 2110
The Samaritans	116 123
Childline	1800 66 66 66
AWARE	1800 80 48 48
Pieta	1800 247 247
Hugg (for people who have lost a loved one to suicide).	01 5134048
Rainbows	01 4734175
National Suicide Bereavement Counselling Service	