

Holy Family Secondary School



Critical Incident Management Policy

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Appendix 2: Policy Review Timeline

Holy Family Secondary School staff, the Parents' Association, the Student Representative Council, the Board of Management, amongst others, were consulted during the formation of the policy.

Ratified by Board of Management on: 20th November 2018

Proposed Next Policy Review date: As required

Chairperson, Board of Management
Mrs Teresa Brophy

Secretary, Board of Management
Mrs Sarah Allen

Representative of the Diocese
Fr. Joe Mc Dermott

Signed as dated and effective as dated: _____

1. Link to Mission Statement

This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states;

‘We promote the Christian virtues of faith, hope, love, gentleness, respect and tolerance, and we emphasise togetherness and family. Guided by these Christian virtues, and dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, it is our mission to provide a safe, caring, inclusive learning environment in which to foster the spiritual, intellectual, academic, aesthetic, physical, emotional and social development of each pupil so that she may fulfil her own unique potential and may leave our school with the capacity and the willingness to contribute to the building of a society characterised by these Christian virtues’ Our pastoral care provision is highly valued at Holy Family Secondary School as a means of helping to develop and foster our pupils’ holistic education.

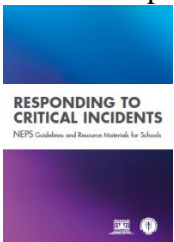
2. Rationale

Holy Family Secondary School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

3. Scope of this policy

The CIMT (Critical Incident Management Team) 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)



- 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 2015)

The policy also operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the following;

- The Education Act, 1998
- The Education Welfare Act, 2000
- Equal Status Act, 2000
- The Equality Act, 2004
- Children First Act 2015

4. Important Terms

The staff and management of Holy Family Secondary 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

5. Aims

The aim of the CIMP is to help school management and staff to react practically and reasonably 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._____

6. Responsibilities and Standard Operating Procedures

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, active supervision throughout the school day.
- Public entrance doors are secure and are accessed by a keypad

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Holy Family Secondary 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 The Children First Act and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures as a 'mandated person'.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies such as NEPS. 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) or 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system, the HFSS Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Team (PCSW) in place in the school, supported by the Learning Support, Guidance and Chaplaincy teams which use the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published on 2007 for primary schools and 2010 for post primary schools.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor), 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 – the CARA Team in HFSS

A CIMT called the CARA TEAM has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan.

The CARA team is comprised of the following staff members;

- Senior Management Team (Principal and Deputy Principals)
- School Guidance Counsellors Team link(s)
- School Chaplaincy Team link(s)
- Learning Support Co-ordinator
- Wellbeing (including SPHE) Co-ordinator

Team leader: Principal *A Deputy Principal will take the lead in the absence of the team leader*
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
- Liaises with the Gardaí
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared

Staff liaison: Deputy Principal

Role

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, and outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff
- 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.
- Emergency support
- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents Association
- Manages the ‘consent’ issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up

Media liaison: Deputy Principal

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, where being necessary, by school management)

Student liaison; Career Guidance Counsellors Team Leader

Role

- May co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about.
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately) and provides materials for students
- Maintains student contact records
- Looks after setting up and supervision of ‘quiet’ room where agreed
- 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: School Chaplaincy Team

Role

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage ‘questions and answers’
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Administrator: HFSS School Administration Team

Role

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of parents or guardians, teachers, emergency
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to;
- Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
 - Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
 - Photocopies materials needed

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 Receptionist will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality, GDPR and good name considerations

Management and staff of Holy Family Secondary 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

Room Name: Designated Purpose:

Main room for meeting staff:	STAFFROOM
Meetings with students:	ORATORY (group)
Meetings with parents:	PRINCIPAL’S/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS’ OFFICES
Meetings with media:	CONFERENCE ROOM
Individual sessions with students:	COUNSELLING ROOMS
Meetings with other visitors:	PRINCIPAL’S/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS’ OFFICES

7. Consultation and communication regarding the plan

School partners were consulted in the formation of this plan. Members of the CARA team have received training from TUSLA and NEPS in preparing for critical incidents and formulating this plan. The key document for schools; *Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)* was used as a direct reference in formulating this plan for HFSS.

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/Latest-NEPS-publication-Responding-to-Critical-Incidents-Guidelines-Resource-Materials-for-Schools-2016-.html>

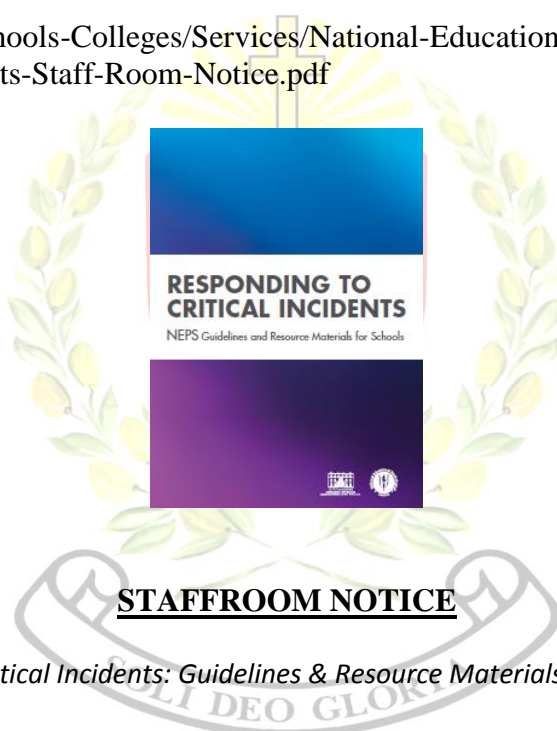
This plan is made available to all on our school website (policy downloads section) www.holyfamily.ie and by paper copy on request. A staffroom notice has been posted.

Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been circulated to all staff. Each member of the critical incident team (our CARA team) has a personal copy of the plan.

8. Staffroom Notice

The key document for schools; *Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)* was used as a direct reference in formulating this staffroom notice. (pdf)

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Responding-to-Critical-Incidents-Staff-Room-Notice.pdf>



Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines & Resource Materials for Schools (2016)

National Educational Psychological Service the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) has been involved since its establishment in supporting school communities when critical incidents occur. This service is available to all schools.

The primary role of NEPS is to advise and support the teachers and other adults who work daily with students and who know them well. Best practice indicates that in the aftermath of a critical incident, students need to be with people they know and trust. NEPS provides immediate, short term support, information and advice to staffs, it does not provide counselling.

NEPS new publication, *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines & Resource Materials for Schools (2016)* 3rd edition has updated and combined the 2007 *Guidelines for Schools and Resources Materials for Schools* into one single publication.

The publication is based on up to date research and the wealth of experience of NEPS psychologists and schools who have been involved in responding to critical incidents. It is available on the Department of Education and Skills website at www.education.ie under NEPS.

The revised Guidelines:

- Outline how schools can be proactive in developing policies and procedures that promote mental health.
- Offers templates, advice and information on how schools can prepare for critical incidents by identifying a Critical Incident Management Team and having a Critical Incident Management Plan.
- Gives a practical step by step guide to schools in how to respond effectively when an incident occurs in order to minimise the potential traumatic effect on the school community. This includes a new aid to guide teachers when meeting with students in the aftermath of an incident. Currently youth suicide rates in Ireland are the fourth highest in the European Union (WHO 2013).

Concerns about youth suicide have led to increasing demands for schools to assume a role and responsibility in the prevention and management of suicidal behaviour among young people. The revised publication has an extended section on Suicide/Suspected suicide including information on suicide contagion. Social Media is now part of everyday communication and information sharing. Most students are avid and competent users. It can play a significant part in the aftermath of a critical incident. The revised Guidelines offers guidance to school on the use of social media in the aftermath of a critical incident. It also has an up to date list of useful websites and helplines. NEPS extends its sympathy and admiration to all the schools and families who have shown wonderful strength, compassion and resilience at times of tragedy.

NEPS

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS->

9. Actions – SHORT TERM - Day 1

Task Name	
Gather accurate information	Who, what, when, where?
Convene a CIMT (CARA) 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	All staff

Actions- MEDIUM TERM (Day 2 and following)

Task Name	
Convene a CIMT (CARA) meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
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

Actions- FOLLOW UP – beyond 72 hours

Task Name	
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers

Liaise with agencies regarding referrals

Supporting vulnerable students/school personnel with return to school Chaplaincy
Liaise with vulnerable family
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)

Decide on memorials and anniversaries BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan Staff/BOM

10. EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Garda	(045) 440180	Emergency 999
Naas Hospital	www.naashospital.ie	045 849500
Fire Brigade	(045) 431370	
TUSLA		
Duty Social Worker	(045) 920000	www.tusla.ie
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Kildare (076) 6958580	
NEPS Critical Incident	(01)8892700	neps@education.gov.ie
Educational Welfare Officer (EWO at TUSLA)	(045) 899306	
DES	www.education.ie	
State Exams Commission	www.examinations.ie	090-644 2700
Employee Assistance Support (INSPIRE)	1800 817433	

11. Sample Announcement

This can be used as a template by schools to be emailed, posted on the school social media site or given to the media. It may help to decrease the number of media calls and callers to the school. In some instances it is not appropriate to provide names or information that might identify individuals. This announcement will need to be changed based upon confidentiality issues, the wishes of the victim's family and the nature of the incident.

My name is (*EDIT*Name) and I am the Principal of (*EDIT*Name) School. We learned this morning of the death of (*EDIT*one of our students or Name of student). This is a terrible tragedy for the (*EDIT*Family Name)family(ies), our school and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with the (*EDIT* Family Name) family and friends.

(*EDIT*Name) was a (*EDIT* e.g. 5th year boy) and will be greatly missed by all who knew him/her.

We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time. Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school have implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and (*EDIT*insert other information if relevant) have been with us all day supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time. The teachers have been helping students to deal with the tragic event.

The school has been open to parents, to support them and to offer them advice and guidance. We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time. Thank you.

Appendix 1: Policy Review Timeline

YEAR OF REVIEW: **Academic 2018-2019**

PROCESS STAGE	DATE	NOTES
Identification Primary Planning Meeting	August 2017	SMT Planning meetings
Scoping document (DRAFT 1)	Sept/Oct 2017	SMT training on same DP training at Tanaiste PDST workshops
Discussion document finalised (DRAFT 2)	17 th December 2017	BOM first ratification of CIMT plan for HFSS.
Circulation of discussion document to focus group (staff) (DRAFT 2)	September/October 2018	Annual review. CARA team formed CARA Team will review CIMP Members of SMT and some CARA team trained in recent updates TUSLA/NEPs training.
Consultation with HFSS SRC, Senior Prefect Team, Parents' Association (DRAFT 3)	November 2018	Circulated to all staff
Review by Planning Team (DRAFT 4)	20 th November 2017	Discussed at Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Team. Circulated to all staff.
Consultation with Board of Management (FINAL DRAFT)	20 th November 2018	
Implementation date	Effective as ratified	20 th November 2018

