

**St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School,  
Greystones, Co. Wicklow**

**Critical Incident Policy**

*This Critical Incident Policy was ratified by the Board of Management  
on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020*

# CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

## 1. Introduction

St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. To this end, the Board of Management has drawn up a critical incident management plan.

The staff and management of St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that has potential to overwhelm 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, suicide, violence, terminal illness, or other unexpected death
- An intrusion into the school
- An accident involving a member or members of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the family of a member of the school community or in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.

## **2. Aim**

The aim of the Critical Incident Policy is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident thus, enabling the students and staff, to cope as effectively as possible with the incident and its consequences.

## **3. Context**

The creation of a supportive and caring ethos in the school is of paramount importance. This policy works in conjunction with several other related policies.

### **3.1 Physical safety of Persons and Plant**

The following are examples of measures the school has in place:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Laboratories and technical rooms are locked when not in use
- First Aid kits for matches and trips
- Defibrillators
- Child Protection and Safety policy in place
- Break-time and lunch-time supervision
- All visitors report to the office reception
- CCTV cameras operational throughout the school
- Active links with local Gardaí and emergency services.

### **3.2 Psychological safety (wellbeing)**

The management and staff of St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of students, to provide opportunities for reflection, and to provide appropriate psychological support in the aftermath of a critical incident through the provision of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

- Staff are fully trained in child protection and safety. Staff are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons, under child protection and safety guidelines.
- External agencies, such as NEPS, Túsla and an Garda Síochána, and others are used as professional contacts as appropriate.
- There is a pastoral care system in place in the school.
- Students who are identified as being at risk, are referred to the guidance counsellor. Their concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. The parents and guardians of these students are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to Túsla.

In-house supports consist of the following:

- St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School has a robust anti-bullying policy which is reviewed and amended annually. There is no toleration of bullying in this school.
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a mandatory subject in first, second and third years. The curricular provision includes, 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
- St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School has engaged in the provision of an increase in the provision of wellbeing on the curriculum, particularly at Junior Cycle, ensuring that the mental health of all our students is prioritised.

- St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School has a detailed relationship and sexuality education (RSE) programme in place for senior students (transition year students to sixth year students). This encompasses mental health for transition year students, sexual identity for fifth year students and sexual consent for sixth year students. There are now four teachers fully trained in R.S.E. in this school.
- School management continue to strongly support, facilitate and encourage continuous staff training and C.P.D. which is necessary for continuous improvement in learning and teaching.
- School management ensures that all resources required by staff are available, so that the students are enabled to reach their full potential.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies as listed in the school's SPHE policy.

#### **4. Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team are selected on a voluntary basis and retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team meet annually to review and update the policy, and plan for changes, where appropriate. Each member of the team is provided with 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 (to be inserted once team is in place)

The key roles will be covered as follows:

- School Team Leader and team members
- Garda Liaison
- Staff Liaison
- Student Liaison
- Parent Liaison

- Community Liaison
- Administrator

See **Appendix 1** for the school's Critical Incident Management Team members.

## **5. Critical Incident Management Plan**

When a critical incident occurs, the critical incident management plan will be activated by the Principal and the Deputy- Principal together.

See **Appendix 2** for further details of short, medium and long term action responses to a critical incident.

### **5.1 Critical Incident Rooms**

In the event of a critical incident,

- The library will be used to meet the whole staff, including ancillary staff
- Base classrooms will be used for meetings with students
- The library is the main room used to meet with the parents and or the ancillary office within reception in the event of accessibility issues for any parent
- The Principal's office or the ancillary office will be used for contacting the media, if relevant
- Guidance office/Year-Head office/Ancillary office may be used for individual sessions with distressed students
- Ancillary office may be used for other visitors.

### **5.2 Record Keeping**

In the event of an incident, the CIMT's administrators, Principal and Deputy-Principal will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, materials used, etc. The administrators of the team will forward this information to the other team members as required.

The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc. and will liaise with the CIMT's administrators (Principal and Deputy-Principal). All record keeping is stored in a safe place and is fully compliant with GDPR.

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

Senior Management and staff of St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School 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.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

Appendix 2 Critical Incident Plan Guidelines

Appendix 3 Emergency Contact List

Appendix 4 Support of Students by Teachers

## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Appendix 1: Critical Incident Management Team

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Role in the school</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Team Leaders	Mary O'Doherty Simon Carey	Principal Deputy Principal	<a href="mailto:principal@stdavids.ie">principal@stdavids.ie</a> <a href="mailto:deputy1@stdavids.ie">deputy1@stdavids.ie</a>	Not being published on website version
Student Liaison	Tracy Brady	Counsellor	<a href="mailto:guidance@stdavids.ie">guidance@stdavids.ie</a>	
Administrator	Celina Purcell	School Secretary/ Greystones Resident	<a href="mailto:info@stdavids.ie">info@stdavids.ie</a>	
Staff Liaison	Michelle Bailey	Teacher & Year Head	<a href="mailto:mbailey@stdavids.ie">mbailey@stdavids.ie</a>	
Parent Liaison	Triona Brosnan	Teacher & T.Y. coordinator	<a href="mailto:tbrosnan@stdavids.ie">tbrosnan@stdavids.ie</a>	
Student Liaison	Deirdre Doughty	Teacher & S.E.N coordinator	<a href="mailto:resource@stdavids.ie">resource@stdavids.ie</a>	
Student Liaison	Brían Ó Donnchadha	Teacher & Year Head	<a href="mailto:bodonnchadha@stdavids.ie">bodonnchadha@stdavids.ie</a>	
Staff Liaison	Huw Davies	Teacher & Year Head	<a href="mailto:hdavies@stdavids.ie">hdavies@stdavids.ie</a>	
Parent Liaison	Daniel Boland	Teacher	<a href="mailto:dboland@stdavids.ie">dboland@stdavids.ie</a>	

## Appendix 2: Critical Incident Plan Guidelines

### Short term actions - Day 1

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Gather accurate information	Principal/Deputy Principal
Inform Board of Management	Principal
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Principal
Who, what, when, where?	Principal/Deputy Principal
Contact external agencies i.e. Emergency services, Gardaí, Parents' Association, Local schools (See <b>Appendix 3</b> )	Principal/Deputy Principal
Arrange supervision for students	Deputy Principal
Agree schedule for the day	CIMT
Hold staff meeting	CIMT and all staff
Inform students - close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately ( <b>Appendix 4</b> )	Class Tutors/Year Heads
Outline routine for the day	Class Tutors/Year Heads
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Counsellor/Year Heads/Tutors
Contact/visit the bereaved family (if that is the wish of the family)	Principal/Counsellor/Deputy Principal
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	CIMT and Principal, in consultation with the Board of Management chairperson
Inform parents	Principal/Deputy Principal/Secretary
Hold end-of-day staff briefing	Principal/Deputy Principal/CIMT

### Medium term actions - Day two and following days

Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of Day 1 and check how each team member is coping	Team Leader(s)
Meet external agencies	Principal/Deputy Principal
Meet whole staff and check how staff are coping	Principal/Deputy Principal
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Principal/Deputy Principal/ Counsellor
Visit the injured (with consent of the family)	Class Teachers/Tutors/Year Heads
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal
If applicable, funeral arrangements to be discussed with RE Department/School Choir	CIMT/RE Department/School Choir
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Deputy Principal/CIMT
Make decisions about school closure	Board of Management and Principal

### Long term actions - beyond seventy-two hours

Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class Teachers/Tutors/Year Heads
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Counsellor/Year Heads/SEN department, if appropriate
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Class Teachers/Year Heads/ Counsellor
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family (Photographs)	Principal
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	Principal/CIMT/Staff/Parents and

	students/RE Department
Review response to incident and amend plan	CIMT/Staff/BOM

### Appendix 3: Emergency Contact List

(To be displayed in staff-room, school office and Principal's office)

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>CONTACT NUMBERS</b>
Greystones Garda Station	Not being published on website version
Loughlinstown Hospital St. Vincent's Hospital Tallaght Children's Hospital	
Wicklow Co. Council Fire Service Bray	
Greystones Medical Centre Greystones Health Centre	
Lucena Clinic, Bray Lynn Dara, CAMHS, St. James' Hospital ReachOut	
School Inspector	
NEPS Psychologist (Agnes Behan)	
Department of Education and Skills (DES)	
Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)	
Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI)	
Fr. John (Parish Priest) Fr. Gerard Greystones Parish Office	
State Exams Commission (SEC)	

Reasonable Accommodations	
Túsla	
Employee Assistance Service	

## **Appendix 4: Support of Students by Teachers**

How teachers can support students in school following a critical incident?

- Give facts and avoid speculation
- Allow students to ask questions and express feelings
- Help students realise that overwhelming emotions are natural following a critical incident.

