



Coláiste Nano Nagle & Central College Limerick Critical Incident Policy 2023 - 2024

Context

Coláiste Nano Nagle and Central College Limerick aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by always providing a safe and nurturing environment in accordance with our Mission Statement.

Coláiste Nano Nagle and Central College Limerick has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) as one element of the school's/college's policies and plans. In doing this we have referred to and drawn from the following document published by the National Educational Psychological Service of the Department of Education and Science (NEPS) as updated in 2016:

This document is to be used in conjunction with this plan.

Defining a Critical Incident

The staff and management of Coláiste Nano Nagle and Central College Limerick recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school/college and disrupts the running of the school” (NEPS). Such 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.

Aim

The aim of the 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. It should enable us to effectively return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos in the Campus

We have put systems in place to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community as outlined in our Health and Safety and Safeguarding Statement:

- Evacuation plan formulated.
- Regular fire drills occur.
- Fire exits and extinguishers regularly checked.
- Pre-opening supervision of pupils (8.15 – 9.00 a.m.).
- The principal must be notified of all trips outside of the school. A risk assessment must be completed, and parental permission sought.
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the school; promotion of mental health is part of this provision.

- Staff have access to all available training for their role in SPHE.
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs of depression and anxiety.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to a guidance counsellor and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The CIMT is a group of individuals from the staff of a school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs.

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team have been selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet annually (in September) 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.

The CIMT members with their roles as of December 2023 are as follows:

Role	Name
Team Leader	Principal
Deputy Team Leader	Deputy Principal
Garda Liaison	Principal
Student Liaisons	Guidance Counsellors Behaviour Support Teacher Secretary CCL
Staff Liaisons	CCL Coordinator Special Needs Coordinator
Community Liaison	CCL Coordinator HSCL
Parent Liaison	CCL Coordinator HSCL
Media Liaison	Principal
Administrators	School Secretary CCL Secretary

If a member of this team is on leave or absent, another member of staff will be slotted in their place.

Outlined below are some points on the key responsibilities of each role - Who will do what? When? And How?

Team Leader

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Coordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the BOM, DES, NEPS, SEC.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.
- Stay connected with all members.

Garda Liaison

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

Staff Liaison

- 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 (from NEPS 2016 guidelines and resources).
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses.
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and contacts them individually.
- Advises them of the availability of the Employee Assistance Scheme and gives them the contact number.

Student Liaison/Counsellor

- Co-ordinates information from course coordinators, year heads and teachers about students they are concerned about.
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately).
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder on SharePoint).
- Maintains student contact records (from NEPS 2016 guidelines and resources).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room, where agreed.

Parent/Guardian Liaison

- Visit the bereaved family with the team leader.
- Arranges meetings, if held.
- May facilitate such meetings and manage questions and answers' sessions.
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy.
- Ensures that sample letters are prepared and available on SharePoint ready for adaptation.
- Sets up room for meetings with parents.
- Maintains a record of parents seen.
- Meets with individual parents.
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from the NEPS 2016 Guidelines and Resources).

Media Liaison

- 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 by school management).

Community Liaison

- 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.
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support.
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies.
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges.

Administrators

- 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 system in advance and ready for adaptation.
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails, and texts.
- Photocopies materials needed.
- Maintains records.

Critical Incident Rooms

Room	Purpose
Library	Whole Staff Meeting
Sports Hall	Students
CCL Canteen	Parents
Individual Sessions with Students	Guidance Counsellor's room/Oratory/Behavioural Support Classroom/Room 31
CCL Canteen/Outside	Media
By Appointment	Other Visitors

Critical Incident Management

Short Term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Principal
Who? What? Where? When?	Principal
Convene a CIMT meeting - specify time and place clearly	Principal
Contact external agencies	HSC
Arrange supervision of students	Deputy Principal Behaviour Support Teacher School Secretary CCL Secretary
Hold staff meeting	All Staff
Agree schedule for the day / Make decision on school closure	CIMT School Management BOM
Inform students - (close friends and student with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Student Support Team Year Heads
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Guidance Counsellors with help from Student Support Team

Contact/visit the bereaved family	Principal Deputy Principal Guidance Counsellors HSC Relevant Year Head(s)
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with the media	Principal
Inform parents	HSC
Hold end of day staff briefing	Principal Deputy Principal CCL Coordinator HSC

Medium Term Action – (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Principal
Meet external agencies	Principal HSC
Meet whole staff	Principal CCL Coordinator Special Needs Coordinator
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	CIMT
Visit the injured/ bereaved	Principal Deputy Principal Relevant Year Head
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangement	Principal Deputy Principal HSC
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	CIMT
Make decisions about school closure	B.O.M

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Student Liaison Team
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Student Liaison Team HSCCL
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Deputy Principal Student Liaison Team
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	CIMT
Decide on Memorials and Anniversaries	CIMT & family of bereaved
Review response to incident and amend plan	CIMT

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters emails, and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretaries will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

The management and staff of Coláiste Nano Nagle and Central College Limerick 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. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, and that the family 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.

Consultation and Communication Regarding the Plan

Policy Adoption

This policy was reviewed by Parent's on 24th November 2023


This policy was reviewed by the Student Council on 27th November 2023

This policy was reviewed by Teachers on 24th November 2023

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7th December 2023.

Next date for updating of the plan is September 2024

Signed: 
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 07/12/2023

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