



Rosmini Community School Critical Incident Management Plan

Based on Responding to Critical Incidents Resources for Schools: (NEPS) Rosmini Community School aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Our Mission Statement recognises the importance of the whole school experience. The Board of Management has drawn up a critical incident management plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Our aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

Definition

The staff and management of *Rosmini Community 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*

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. 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.

We continue to 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

In order to reduce the likelihood of such an incident taking place during school time a number of measures are in place:

- Students are not allowed off campus during the school day.
- The Health & Safety Policy identifies risks and responsibilities. All teachers are encouraged to carry out a Risk Management assessment for their classrooms.
- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire extinguishers are regularly checked
- An accident report form is completed for any incident
- All staff are committed to the Child Protection Guidelines.
- All staff are advised of health & safety requirements with special rules for practical rooms, workshops and labs.
- A record is kept of pupils with serious medical conditions.
- Teachers conducting sports /activities are advised to apply appropriate safety rules and guidelines.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of *Rosmini Community 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 fully aware of their obligations in relation to Child Protection
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies, such as: HSE; CAMHS; NEPS; GARDAI; Social Care Services etc
- 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 and in line with Circular Letter 43/2018
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a Student Support Team in place in the school
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or 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.

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|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Team Leader | Darrell D’Arcy |
| • Deputy Team Leader | Karen O Donovan |
| • Garda liaison | Darrell D’Arcy |
| • Staff liaison. | Karen O Donovan |
| • Student liaison | Student Support Team Members |
| • Parent liaison | James Turbitt / Chris Gueret |
| • Community liaison | James Turbitt / Chris Gueret |
| • Media liaison | Darrell D’Arcy |
| • Information Management Officer: | Karen O Donovan |
| Administrator: | Mary Wallace |

Team leader

- 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

A person who carries authority and can make decisions during a crisis (e.g., school closure, attendance at memorial services, etc.)

An Garda Siochana, HSE Ambulance Service, Fire Service liaison

- Liaises with the Principal Emergency Services
- Ensures that 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, 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 Employee Assistance Scheme and gives them the contact number.

A staff member known and trusted by the staff

Student liaison

- At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

A trusted and familiar figure to the students.
A bigger school may need a number of such people.

Community/agency 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
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Someone with good contacts with agencies and relevant individuals in the community

Parent liaison

- 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
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and 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 their critical incident folder)

Someone known to parents.
This person should be comfortable speaking before a large group and have skills to manage emotional reactions of individual or groups of parents

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)

Someone with good interpersonal skills who would be comfortable talking to the media by phone or in person.
A person who is able to set limits without being offensive

Information Management Officer

Marks up the Information Management White Boards (Recognised Current Situation, Key Issues, Strategic Aims and Priorities, Actions). This person is a vital part of the team and is expected to interact with and brief all attendees and visitors to the Critical Incident Room. The IMO should also photograph the boards for record and report purposes. *The Boards can also be used by the Media Liaison Officer and Communications Officer to establish the facts in chronological order in advance of media briefing.*

Administrator

- 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 faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

NEPS Psychological Services

- Help school management to assess the significance and impact of the event in a planning context
- Consults with staff to identify and support vulnerable students
- Provides support, information and advice to staff liaison
- Provides an orientation support session / intervention triage assessment for staff
- Provides support and guidance to parent liaison
- In consultation with student liaison identifies appropriate student supports, reviews their needs and facilitates possible onward referral

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 clerical staff 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 *Rosmini Community 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. 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 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 Staffroom will be the main room used to meet the staff

The Guidance room / Chaplain's room will be for individual sessions with students

The class base room will be for group meetings with students

The HSCL will be the room for parents

The Principal's Office will be used for CIM Team

The Deputy Principal's may be used for other visitors

Rooms may be booked in DCU All Hallows if the above are deemed unsuitable in terms of size, location or suitability etc

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION CIMP:

Key staff were consulted, and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan

The College's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff

Each member of the Critical Incident Management Team has a personal copy of the plan

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the staff liaison

The CIMP will be updated annually by the Board of Management at the first meeting of each academic year.

Reviewed and approved by the Board at the meeting of 17th January 2019

Appendix 1

Initial Actions Aide Memoir for CIMT and Team Leader

- o Gather accurate information
- o Who, what, when, where, how, why?
- o Inform Head Office CDET B of incident and update as required
- o Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly
- o Contact external agencies
- o Arrange supervision for students
- o Hold staff meeting
- o Agree schedule for the day

- o Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)
- o Compile a list of vulnerable students
- o Contact/ liaise /visit the bereaved family
- o Prepare and agree media statement and deal with the media effectively – liaise with BOM members
- o Inform parents
- o Hold end of day staff briefing

CIMT Medium Term Actions:

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

CIMT Follow-Up Actions Longer Term:

- o Monitor students for signs of continuing distress
- o Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
- o Plan for return of bereaved student(s)
- o Decide on memorials and anniversaries
- o Review response to incident and amend plan – hold a ‘hot’ de-brief and then a more considered review at a later time

Information Management System

1. Introduction

Information Management is generally viewed as the collection and processing of information from different sources and the effective distribution of that information. It is often characterised by the phrase:

*Getting the right information to the right person at the right place
at the right time.....*

In speaking about the Lockerbie disaster in 1988, Neil Macintosh, Chief Executive of the local authority stated:

**“The quality of the response is only as effective as the
reliability of the information which is available”.**

In a critical incident scenario, particularly in the early stages, the demand for reliable information may outstrip its availability to the Critical Incident Management Team. This leads to what may be termed a demand-provision gap. The information exists but it may not be accessible to the key decision makers at the point and time needed.

The purpose of information in a critical incident is to facilitate decision making. The quality of information is crucial to effective decision making and is recognised as a key determinant of outcome. Decision making based on incomplete information is to be avoided and every effort should be made to generate information that is timely, accurate and as clear as possible.

2. The Information Management System

The system requires three components:

- 1. The selection of suitable personnel to undertake the task.**
- 2. A universally used, generic system.**
- 3. Exchange of information between centres.**

An experienced person with experience of dealing with large amounts of information is given the task of sourcing, questioning, processing and presenting relevant facts about the situation. Although based on a low-tech series of white boards this is not a board marking task. The capability to facilitate the exchange of information between personnel and centres is vital and agreed common formats are required to enable standardisation and efficiency. The Information Manager has to seek information, question it, sort it, group it, prioritise it and then display it. The aim is to display facts, safe deductions and not suppositions. Any gaps should be filled as quickly as possible.

3. The 4 Board Information Presentation System (4 White Boards)

The System is structured into 4 fields, moving from left to right as the display is viewed from the Critical Incident Management Team table:

- o Recognised Current Situation
- o Key Issues
- o Strategic Aim & Priorities
- o Actions

Recognised Current Situation

This board presents a coherent version of the information to hand. Keep the information current, the information will change continuously and needs to be recorded (camera phone or digital camera) as it is amended.

Key Issues

This board displays the important issues that are identified or deducted as emerging from the developing situation requiring consideration and resolution. The key issues board helps the Team Leader to hold focus on the aspects of the incident that the Critical Incident Team needs to address.

Strategic Aim & Priorities

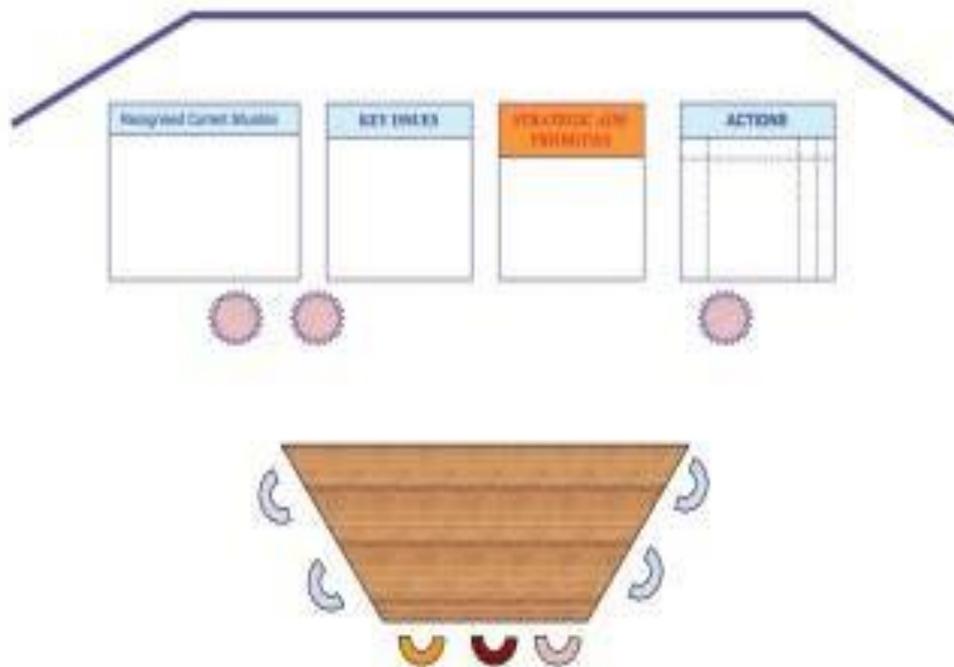
This board displays the issues that are fundamental to the Team Leader. All proposed actions and activities are considered in terms of contribution to achieving this aim, and that extraneous activities do not divert the attention and resources of the group into less beneficial areas. Statements about Priorities should start with an imperative verb. For example, rather than simply list “media” as a Priority the imperative should be to have an “effective media response”.

Actions

This board displays a comprehensive list of decisions / actions taken in the Crisis Management Team Room. It should include the Time, Action, By Whom and Expected Time for Completion. The Actions board provides the means by which actions are placed, monitored, audited and completion recorded. As the actions are completed they can be struck through with a red marker to indicate completion.

4. Practical Tips for Information Managers

- o Do not use permanent markers – white board markers only please!
- o Use black or blue – they are the most legible
- o Make sure that the boards are legible
- o Use a red white board marker to strike through to indicate Actions are complete
- o Use a digital camera to record contents before erasing
- o Have a clock in the photo frame to ensure that time is recorded
- o The boards can be used for Reports
- o The boards are very useful for media liaison personnel to track events chronologically and establish facts



The 4 Information
Management Boards