



Critical Incident Policy

In Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS we aim to protect the wellbeing of all students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The BOM through the Principal, Staff and P.A. has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (C.I.M.P.) as one element of the school's policies and plans.

The 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 OLGC BNS recognise a critical incident as **“an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school”**.

Critical incidents may involve one or more members of the School Community or members of our local community.

Examples of critical incidents

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death.
- Major illness/outbreak of disease
- An accident involving members of the school community.
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community.
- Serious damage to the school building through vandalism, fire, floods.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- Assault on a staff member/pupil.

Aim

The aims of the C.I.M.P. are:-

- To assist school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident.
- To enable us to maintain a sense of control.
- To ensure that appropriate support is availed of and offered to students and staff.

Our C.I.M.P. plan should assist us in ensuring that the effects on students and staff will be limited. It should also enable us to return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school.

Systems are in place to help build resilience in both staff and pupils, thus helping them to prepare to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to help/address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical Safety

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Fire drills occur on a regular basis.
- Fire exits extinguishers and alarm are regularly checked and maintained.
- Entrances to school building are controlled by keypad.
- Rules for playground have been formulated and are displayed.
- Names of pupils being released early must be entered in Day Release Book by Parent/Guardian.

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of OLGC BNS 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.

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, conflict management, problem solving, help – seeking issues around bullying are covered. Alcohol and drug misuse awareness.

Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE

A Child Protection Policy is in place which complies with DES Circular 0065/2011 and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). Copy has been given to each staff member. Details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures are included: (DLP) - Principal, Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) - Deputy Principal.

The Stay Safe Programme is followed in the school.
Books and resources on issues affecting pupils are available.

The school has developed links with external agencies GARDAÍ, NEPS, LOCAL AREA COMMUNITY DOCTOR, LUCENA, HSE, SOCIAL SERVICES.

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Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in light of criteria regarding student safety, the appropriateness of the content and the expertise of the providers. DOS: Circular 0023/2010 SPHE – Best Practice Guidelines for Primary Schools has been circulated to all teachers.

The school has a clear code of behaviour and this is followed when dealing with behaviour issues.

The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance to the policy.

Students who are identified as being at risk are brought to the attention of the Principal where concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance/support is provided. Parents are informed and where necessary/appropriate referral is made to the appropriate agency.

Staff have been made aware of the Employee Assistance Scheme.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. Members of the team have been selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for a period of 2 years to the end of June 2018. Members of the team will meet annually to review and update this policy and plan. Each member of the team has a C.I. folder with a copy of the policy/plan and materials relevant to their role to be used in the event of an incident.

Team Leader: Principal

Checks to ensure information is accurate before being shared. Alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.

Initiates communication of incident to staff through 'chain' and/or School Administration System.

Co-ordinates the tasks of the team.

Liases with B.O.M. Gardaí, NEPS, and DES. Liases with bereaved family.

In the absence of the team leader the Deputy Principal will assume the role.

Staff Liaison: - *Person responsible* **Noelle de Barra.**

Leads briefing meeting for staff on facts as known.

Gives staff opportunity to express their feelings, as questions, outlines routine for the day.

Advises staff on procedures of identification of vulnerable pupils.

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Provides material to staff (from C.I folders)

Keeps staff updated as the day progresses.

Is alert to vulnerable staff and makes contact with them individually.

Advises staff on the EAS and gives them contact numbers.

Student Liaison: - *Persons responsible* **Fidelma Allen, Aoife Behan, Sinéad Cooney, Maureen Mulholland and Lorraine Sheehan.**

Co-ordinates information from class teachers about students they are concerned about.

Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)

Provides material for students (C.I. folder).

Keeps records of pupils seen by external agency staff.

Looks after setting up of “quiet” room where agreed.

Community /Agency Liaison: - *Person responsible* **Cian Geoghegan.**

Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of key emergency support services, key P.A. members. Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.

Checks credentials of anyone offering support.

Co-ordinates involvement of agencies. Issues agency staff with name-badges. Update team members on the involvement of external agencies.

Parent Liaison:-*Persons responsible* – **Principal and Deputy Principal.**

Visits bereaved family with team leader.

Arranges parent meeting if necessary.

May facilitate such meetings and manage question/answer session.

Makes sure agreed/sample letters to parents are typed up and circulated.

Sets up meeting room for parents.

Maintains record of parents seen.

Meet with individual parents.

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Provide materials for parents (from C.I. folder)

Media Liaison

Team Leader and B.O.M.

Secretary

Maintain up to date all telephone numbers of:-

Parents/Guardians

Staff Members

Emergency Services

Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to.

Ensures all templates are on the computer in a folder named Critical Incident in advance for adaptation as necessary.

Prepares and sends/transmits letters, emails, and faxes.

Photocopies material needed

Maintains records

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of all phone calls made/received, letters sent/received, meetings, persons met, interventions used, materials used.

The school secretary has a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

Confidentiality

The management and staff of OLGC BNS have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. Members of staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that pupils do likewise.

Consultation and Communication regarding the Plan

Staff are consulted and their views sought in the preparation of this policy/plan. P.A. were also consulted.

Final approved policy has been distributed to all staff.

Each member of C.I.M.T. has a personal copy.

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All new and temporary staff will be informed of the Plan by Principal.

Plan will be updated annually in the month of June.

This Critical Incident was reviewed in *June 2017*.

Next review **June 2018**.

Implementation is immediate.

■ Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on 19th September 2017.
It is available on the school website.

Signed:.....

Date: 19th September 2017

Michael J. Hunt
Chairperson BOM

Signed:.....

Date: 19th September 2017

Neil Cadogan
Principal