

Holy Faith Secondary School

Belgrove Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3, D03 R528

T: 01-8331507 E: admin@holyfaithclontarf.com

Principal: Audrey Carty

Deputy Principal: Mary Molloy



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CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Holy Faith Secondary School

Clontarf

Dublin 3



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Introduction

Holy Faith Secondary School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, through Ms. Audrey Carty, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Recognising that the key to managing critical incidents is planning, Holy Faith Secondary School has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy (CIMP) and accompanying Plan. Our Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will steer the development and implementation of this Critical Incident Management Policy and Plan. In the event of a critical incident; these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us to ensure that appropriate support is offered to both students and staff to allow a return to normality as soon as possible.

Mission Statement

Holy Faith Schools aim to create a community through which is formed an integrated and self-reliant people who deeply experience God, who have a sense of responsibility to Church and to society, who are critically aware of injustice and of the needs around them, who are eager to build a better world. (Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Holy Faith Sisters.)

Holy Faith Secondary School, Clontarf, aims to provide an excellent, all - round education in a Roman Catholic environment. Through a learning community of faith and justice, based on respect, we seek to form integrated and self-reliant persons, who will be moved to work for a better world.

Definition

The staff and management of *Holy Faith 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*

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.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

Holy Faith Secondary School has 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.

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Physical safety

- The school has formulated a Health & Safety Statement.
- An evacuation plan has been formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Supervision is organised to ensure students are not left unsupervised during class or break times and extra-curricular activities
- School doors are locked during class time and releasable by code, swipe card and automatically in the event that activation of the fire alarm
- Guidelines are in place for the planning of school trips and a policy is in place.

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Holy Faith 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) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are integrated into the work of the school. Issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management; resilience, conflict management; problem solving; bullying; decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse are addressed in the SPHE curriculum. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision.

- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE.
- The school's SPHE/RSE programmes are designed to build resilience in students.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and the name of the Designated Liaison Person and the school Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Staff members are informed around suicide awareness, and some have attended specialist training.
- Staff members are also informed about how to access support for themselves.
- There is a pastoral care system in place in the school. Each class is appointed a class tutor who deals with concerns brought to him/her about students in his/her class. The tutor reports concerns to the year head who brings these to the Student Support Team which meets regularly. The school references the Continuum of Support approach as outlined in NEPS documentation (2010) and Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2021)
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal immediately. Parents are contacted and instructed to have their daughter medically assessed before returning to school. In all cases, the Principal and Deputy Principal are kept informed.
- The school has a Wellbeing Policy, and the pillars of this policy include the development of a strong moral compass and the development of resilience
- At both junior and senior level, the Religious Education (RE) syllabus includes topics, which prepares students to cope with a range of life events including loss. The RE Department responds to a critical incident. Responses may include prayer, reflection and/or Mass.
- Information is provided on mental health in general

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- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies:
 - National Education Psychological Service (NEPS)
 - Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
 - Baldoyle Bereavement Counselling Service
 - Department of Education (DE)
 - Jigsaw
 - Oide
 - State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- 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.
- The school has a clear policy on anti-bullying (Bí Cinneálta) and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.

Confidentiality and other Considerations

The management and staff of 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. 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 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.

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the CIMT will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, materials used etc. Following debriefing with staff an agreed final report will be filed.

Critical Incident Management Team

The CIMT relies on DEY publications for advice on dealing with incidents.

These include:

- RESPONDING TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS
- NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools

In the event of a critical incident, the principal, as team leader, convenes a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team. Duties are apportioned appropriately to the respective members. The team consists of:

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- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Guidance Counsellor
- Year Head of the group of students affected
- Chairperson of the Board of Management
- Wellbeing Co-Ordinator

Where appropriate, in-service training will be provided for members of the team. The members of the team meet as required 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 a critical incident.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Team Leader – Principal**
- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management, DES,
- Liaises with the Gardaí
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked for accuracy before being shared
- 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. Staff members have the option of opting out of direct involvement in dealing with traumatic situations.
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff (from the critical incident folder)
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises staff of the availability of the Employee Assistance Scheme (EAS).

Media Liaison - Principal/ Chairperson BOM

- In the event of an incident, liaises where necessary with the DEY, SEC, NEPS and relevant teacher unions
- Draws up a press statement, gives media briefings and interviews as appropriate.

Day to day running of the school – Deputy Principal

The deputy principal takes over responsibility for the normal day-to-day operation of the school.

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Parent Liaison – Principal/Deputy Principal

- Liaises with NEPS and SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family
- Visits the bereaved family as required
- Arranges parent meetings, if deemed necessary
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up 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 the critical incident folder).

Student Liaison – Year Head/Guidance Counsellor

- Coordinates information from tutors and other staff members about students of concern
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from the critical incident folder)
- Establishes contact with absent students
- Maintains records of students seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of "quiet room" where required
- Briefs Prefects.

Community/Agency Liaison - Guidance Counsellor

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parent School Association
 - 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.
- Coordinates in-house counselling

Administrators - Secretarial Staff

Secretarial staff in Holy Faith Secondary School are responsible for the maintenance of up-to-date contact details of:

- Parents/guardians
- Teachers
- Ancillary staff

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- Emergency services

Staff, parents and students are advised to inform the school of changes in contact details. The Secretarial Staff, in the event of a critical incident, undertake the following: www.holyfaithclontarf.com

- Take and log telephone calls
- Ensure that templates are on the school's IT system in advance and ready for adaptation
- In consultation with other members of the CMIT prepare and send out emails and letters
- Photocopy materials as needed
- Maintain records.

Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
Staff Room	Main room for meeting staff
Assembly Hall	Meetings with students
Assembly Hall Year Head Room	Meetings with parents
Year Head Room Prayer Room	Individual sessions with students
Library	Meetings with other visitors

School Closure

In the event that a funeral was to take place on a school day, the following message will be sent to parents of students:

As a mark of respect to (insert name), the school will close for lessons on the day of the funeral. The school will be open from (insert time) to (insert time) to offer support to students. The school will reopen for lessons on (insert date)

Return to Normal School Activity

Students may need to be reassured that returning to normal activities is not disrespectful but part of managing and coping with any traumatic event.

Class registers, mailing and texting lists may need to be amended.

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent/guardian representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

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

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

The plan will be updated regularly.

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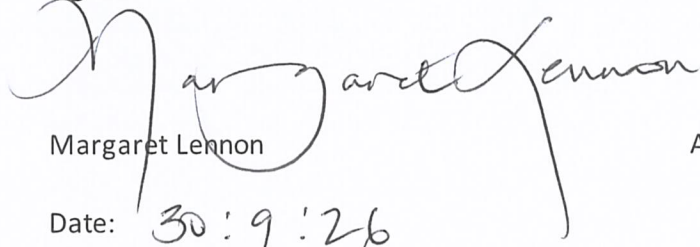
Monitoring and Review Procedures

The Principal and Board of Management will monitor the implementation of the policy.

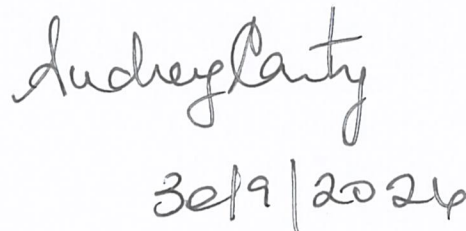
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The policy will be reviewed by the CIMT every year.

Signed:


Margaret Lennon

Audrey Carty


30/9/2024

Date: 30:9:24

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Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:	Audrey Carty	01-8331507 www.holyfaithclontarf.com School Emails will be used
Garda liaison	Audrey Carty	
Staff liaison	Audrey Carty Mary Molloy	
Student liaison	Year Heads • C Mackle • M Peppard • K Conlon • S Ryan • F Coghlan • S Sheerin	
Community liaison	Guidance Counsellor – M Peppard	
Parent liaison	A Carty M Molloy Relevant Year Head	
Media liaison	A Carty Chairperson BOM	
Administrator	School Secretaries	
Wellbeing CO-Ordinator	A O'Donnell	



APPENDICES

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Head
Who, what, when, where?	See Roles & Responsibilities
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Principal
Contact external agencies	Principal / Deputy Principal / Guidance Counsellor
Arrange supervision for students	Deputy Principal
Hold staff meeting	All staff
Agree schedule for the day	Principal / Deputy Principal
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Principal / Deputy Principal / Guidance Counsellor / Year Head / Tutor
Compile a list of vulnerable students	Guidance Counsellor / Year Head
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Principal / Chairperson BOM
Inform parents	Principal / Deputy Principal
Hold end of day staff briefing	All Staff
Liaise with neighbouring and other relevant schools	Principal / Deputy Principal / Guidance Counsellor
Contact / Visit bereaved family. Ask if they would like school involved in church services	Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Head
Contact relevant parish bereavement team	Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Head

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**Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)**

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Principal www.holyfaithclontarf.com
Meet external agencies	Deputy Principal / Guidance Counsellor
Meet whole staff	Principal
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Principal / Deputy Principal / Guidance Counsellor / Year Head
Visit the bereaved / injured	Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Head
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal / Deputy Principal
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Staff
Make decisions about school closure	Principal and BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Guidance Counsellor
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Head
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Head
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	Principal / Year Head / Staff / Students
Review response to incident and amend plan	CIMT / Staff / BOM
High Alert Period	All Staff



EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

www.holyfaithclontarf.com

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda - Clontarf	01 6664800
Hospital - Beaumont	01 - 8093000
Fire Brigade	112
Local GPs – Clontarf General Practice	01 8331426
HSE	01 8772300
NEPS Psychologist – General Number	01 - 8892700
Department of Education	01 – 8734700 01 – 8896400 090 – 6483600 Athlone
Clergy – St John the Baptist Church	01 -8334606
State Exams Commission	090 - 6442700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057
JMB	01 - 2838255
HSE Support Service	01 - 6714711

Margaret Lennon 30/9/26