Presentation Secondary School Listowel

Co. Kerry

Critical Incident Policy

Date of policy adoption

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Presentation Secondary School, Listowel

Signed Shane ó Dónaill Date 15/9/2026.

Chairperson, Board of Management

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

The key to managing a critical incident is planning. Schools are strongly advised to develop a policy in relation to critical incident response. NEPS also encourages schools to develop a Critical Incident Management Plan, outlining who will do what in the event of a tragedy.

The templates outlined below are designed as an aid to schools in drawing up a policy and plan. Each school will need to look at its own particular context and circumstances and draw up its own unique policy and plan. Additional guidance is contained in Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016) R19-21 P.79-90.

Presentation Secondary School Listowel aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

MISSION STATEMENT

Context

Ours is a Presentation secondary school, inspired by the vision of Nano Nagle, and in response to her we welcome and cherish all our students irrespective of ability or background.

We aim to develop a vibrant community based on Gospel values such as justice, truth and honesty, in accordance with the ethos of the school and our agreed Code of Behaviour.

Mission

We aim to assist in the development of the full potential of each person in a vibrant, inclusive, and safe environment, where the dignity of each member of our school community is recognised, affirmed and valued.

Inspired by these values we dedicate ourselves to the continued development of our Presentation School.

The Board of Management, through Katerina Broderick, Principal has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Review and Research

The CIMT have consulted resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE 2011)
- Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)

Define what you mean by the term 'critical incident'

The staff and management of **Presentation Secondary School Listowel** 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 affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have 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

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Pre-opening supervision in the school
- Supervision of students in the building at all times

Psychological Safety

The management and staff of Presentation **Secondary School Listowel 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
- Helping Hands Programme
- Staff have access to training for their role in SPHE
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/post primary school student are available
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – list these agencies
- 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. See DES Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary) or 0023/2010 (post-Primary)
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is a care system in place in the school using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published on 2007 for primary schools and 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on www.education.ie
- 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. (*Edit*a summary of this support is set out in R 23)
- 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.

Team leader: Katherina Broderick
Role

- 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 (State Examinations Commission)
- Liaises with the bereaved family

(Note - It is important to consider who will take the lead in the absence of the team leader.)

In the absence of the team leader, Marguerite Linnane will become the team leader

Garda liaison: Katherina Broderick
Role

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

Staff liaison: Katherina Broderick/Marguerite Linnane
Role

- 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 EAS (Employee Assistance Service) and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison: Aisling O'Dwyer
Role

- At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from class 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)
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room which will be in the Prayer room

Community/agency liaison: Margaret Daly
Role

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
  - Key parents, such as members of the Parents 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
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent liaison: Marguerite Linnane
Role

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if requested
- 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 Boardroom for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison: Katherina Broderick and Marguerite Linnane
Role

- 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)
- Note: Staff members are advised not to engage with media/social media including whatsapp or engage in any discussions in relation to the incident.

Administrator Office Staff: Elaine O'Mahony/Bridie Stack/Jayne Gleeson
Role

- will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.
- 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 texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

- 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.
- Will have a key role in record-keeping e.g receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of **Presentation Secondary School Listowel** have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, e.g., 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 following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	**Designated Purpose:**
Canteen	Main room for meeting staff
Base Rooms	Meetings with students
Boardroom	Meetings with parents
Hall	Meetings with media
Deputy Principal's Office/SEN Office/The Prayer Room/ The Hair & Beauty Room	Individual sessions with students
Guidance Office	Meetings with students and other visitors

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 access to the plan on Team/Staff Communications/policies.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Katerina Broderick and Marguerite Linnane

The plan will be updated annually August 2023

Critical Incident Management Team	
Role	**Name**
Team leader	Katherina Broderick
Garda liaison	Katherina Broderick
Staff liaison	Marguerite Linnane
Student liaison	Aisling O'Dwyer/Relevant Year Head(s)
Community liaison	Margaret Daly
Parent liaison	Marguerite Linnane
Media liaison	Katherina Broderick/ Marguerite Linnane
Administrator	Jayne/Bridie/Elaine

Short term actions – Day 1

Task	Name
Gather accurate information	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane
Who, what, when, where?	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane Time: 8am Place: Boardroom
Contact external agencies	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane/Margaret Daly
Arrange supervision for students	Margaret Daly
Hold staff meeting **Time:** **Where:** **Who will call absent staff/friend(s) of staff member:**	All staff 8.30am Canteen Norma Dowling
Agree schedule for the day	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane
Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)	Year Heads and Aisling O'Dwyer
Compile a list of vulnerable students **Arrange support for students (p27 Guidelines)**	All subject teachers inform Aisling O'Dwyer
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media	Katherina Broderick, Marguerite Linnane & Gemma O'Loughlin

Inform parents	Katherina Broderick and Marguerite Linnane
Hold end of day staff briefing in the Canteen @4pm/1.15pm	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane
CIMT will meet to review following the staff meeting in the Canteen	CIMT

Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1 at 8am	Team leader Katherina Broderick
Meet external agencies	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane/Margaret Daly
Meet whole staff at 8.30am	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Aisling O'Dwyer/Marguerite Linnane/Margaret Daly
Visit the injured	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Katherina Broderick /Marguerite Linnane
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

Follow-up – beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Subject teachers, Year Heads & SNAs
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Katherina Broderick, Marguerite Linnane & Aisling O' Dwyer
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	The Management and Leadership Team
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Year Heads and Aisling O' Dwyer
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	068 50827
Hospital	066 718 4000
Fire Brigade	999 or 112
Local GPs	Dr. Ashley: 068 21100 Dr. O'Donoghue: 068 21100 Dr. Dinan: 068 22520 Dr. Foley: 068 22520 Dr. McKiernan 068 22520 Dr. Maharg: 068 22520 Dr Daly: 068 24976 Dr. Damion Thomas: 068 21488
HSE	01 635 2000
Community Care Team	066 7184500
Child and Family Centre	068 23584
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	066 710 4857
School Inspector	01 8896553
NEPS Psychologist	TBC
DES	01 889 6400
Clergy	068 21188
State Exams Commission	090 644 2700
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

Appendices

Appendix 1

Sample Teacher Communication - Staff Communications on Teams

Student Death

Dear Staff,

It is with great sorrow that I inform you of the death of one of our students _____ in class _____, due to a car accident. This is a huge loss for _____'s family, our school and the community. The School's Critical Incident Management Team has met to plan our response.

Principal

Appendix 2

Sample Teacher Communication - Staff Communications on Teams

Teacher Death

Dear Staff

It is with great sorrow that I inform you of the death of one of our teachers _____due to a car accident. This is a huge loss for_____'s family, our school and the community.

Principal

Appendix 3

Sample Announcement to the Media – Student Death

My name is _____ and I am the Principal of Presentation Secondary School, Listowel. We learned this morning of the death of_____, a _____year student in our school. This is a terrible tragedy for_____'s family, our school and the wider community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathies, thoughts and prayers are with_____'s family and friends.

We have been in contact with her parents and they have requested that we respect their need for privacy at this very difficult time. Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school has implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan. Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) are supporting and advising teachers in their efforts to assist our students at this time. The school staff has been helping students to deal with the death. The school has been open to parents and guardians to support them and offer advice and guidance. We would ask you to respect their privacy at this challenging time.

Thank You

Appendix 4

Sample Letter to Parents – Student Death – issued on Compass

Dear Parents/Guardian,

Over the weekend, the school learned of the sudden death of _____, one of our students. We are all deeply saddened by this loss. The school has support structures in place to deal with this tragedy.
Our Pastoral Care team has been working closely with counsellors from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). It is possible that your daughter may have feelings that she may like to discuss with you. You can help your daughter by taking time to listen to her and encourage her to express her feelings.

It is important to let her know that her feelings, concerns and reactions are normal and that she will experience a number of emotions over the next few days and weeks. If you have any additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact the school.
I anticipate that the next few days will be difficult for everyone, however school will continue as usual.

Principal

Appendix 5
Sample Parent Communication Text -Student Death – issued on Compass/Text message

Today, with great sadness we learned of the death of _____ one of our _____Year students. Our thoughts and prayers are with_____'s family and friends during this difficult time. Further communication will follow in due course.
Principal

Appendix 6

Sample Community Notice (to be read at Mass)

The community of Listowel is extremely saddened to hear of the death of_____ who was a _____ year student in Presentation Secondary School.
I am sure all of us will make every effort to comfort and support _____'s family as they attempt to come to terms with their traumatic loss. We remember her in our prayers in Mass today and we extend our heartfelt sympathies to her family, relatives, teachers and classmates.

Appendix 7

Sample letter requesting consent for Involvement of outside Professionals

Dear Parent/Guardian
Following the recent (tragedy/death of .....) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to the students either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis, and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (x). If you would not like your daughter to receive this support, please sign the attached slip and return it to the school.

If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school.

Principal

I/We do not wish our daughter individually meet with _____
I/We understand that my daughter may meet x in a group session.
Name of Student:_____
Class: _____
Date of Birth: _____
Signed:_____

Appendix 8
Statement for all staff if met by Media

The school is following its Critical Incident procedures and a statement will be issued at an appropriate time.

Amendment:
In the event of the school operating distance learning at a time of a critical incident.
Parents/Guardians will be informed that a briefing for students will take place following appropriate advice from relevant authorities. Critical incident Steps/procedures as outlined in school critical incident policy will be adhered to following all appropriate advice.