



Educate
Together



CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY (CIMP)

School Address: ETSS Wicklow, Crinion Park, Wicklow Town

Roll number: 68345R

School Patron/s: Educate Together

ETSS Wicklow has a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) and a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP).

Review and Research

The Critical Incident Management Team (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 2016)**
- 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)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

Define what you mean by the term ‘critical incident’

The staff and management of **ETSS Wicklow** 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*
- *A national or international emergency*

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 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

Measures in place:

- School evacuation plan
- Regular fire drills
- Fire exits and extinguishers regularly checked
- Supervision plan
- Rules for classrooms and outdoor areas – e.g. classroom code and protocols for using pathways and steps
- Online learning in the event of school closures

Psychological safety

The management and staff of **ETSS Wicklow** 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 roles in SPHE;
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures;
- 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;
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – DES, JMB, NEPS, TUSLA, ISPCC, Gardai, NPCPP
- 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 (as per DES Circular 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 in 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.
- 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. The team members hold meetings and determine plans of action to deal with emergency situations. This includes a communications plan, meetings, dealing with any media involvement and keeping records.

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 by management.

The plan will be updated annually in the first term of the academic year.

To be reviewed in 2021-2022.