

Saint John Bosco Junior Boys' School **Critical Incident Plan/Policy**

Initiate and establish structures

A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has been established which will take responsibility for putting a Critical Incident Management policy and plan in place (CIMP).

Karen Mc Goldrick

Louise Tighe

Angela Sawyer

Rachael Leslie

Marie Duffy

Bernard Farrell

Saint John Bosco Junior Boys' School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a happy, secure, friendly learning environment where children, parents, teachers, ancillary staff and the Board of management work in partnership; where each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness.

The Board of Management, through Karen Mc Goldrick, 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.

Review and Research

The following publications were reviewed prior to the formulation of this policy.

When Tragedy Strikes: Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools (INTO/Ulster Teachers Union 2000)

Responding to Critical Incidents; Guidelines for Schools (NEPS 2007)

Responding to Critical Incidents; Resource Materials for School (NEPS 2007)

Guidelines for Schools on How to Respond to the Sudden Unexpected Death of a Student (ASTI 1997)

What is a 'critical incident'?

The staff and management of Saint John Bosco Junior Boys' 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, 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 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 by Diskin Fire Ltd.
- Pre-opening supervision in the schoolyard is the duty of the parent as outlined in the School Handbook
- Trained School First Aiders
- Parents are required to sign out pupils who leave before the end of the school day.
- Rules of the playground have been established and are displayed around the school.

Psychological safety

The management and staff of Saint John Bosco Junior Boys' 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.

- All staff members has access to training for their role in SPHE
- All 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 school students are available and are kept in the staffroom.
- Information is available to all teachers on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – NEPS, Child & Family Services (Castleknock).
- 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 student liaison for the class will attend with the external provider.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy

- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counselor or support teacher) 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 informed about how to access support for themselves. Employee Assistance Service - Spectrum Life -1800 411057

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT is being established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and 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.

Preparation of CIMP Roles

The key roles, which need to be covered, are as follows:

Team Leader

Karen Mc Goldrick-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; NEPS etc
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda liaison

Karen Mc Goldrick

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

Staff liaison

Rachael Leslie

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known
- Gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings, ask questions and outline 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 aware of vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison

Recommend that two student liaisons (class teacher & one backup in the case of absence) be appointed to each class-Please see the student liaisons below.

Class teacher to recommend a backup

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provide 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

Junior Infants Room 4

Naomi Marica

Rachael Leslie (Prefab 9)

Junior Infants Prefab 9

Rachael Leslie

Naomi Marica (Room 4)

Senior Infants Room 7

Jennifer Moran/Sharon Kelly

Claire Kirwan/Avril Markey (Prefab 8)

Senior Infants Prefab 8

Claire Kirwan/Avril Markey

Jennifer Moran/ Sharon Kelly(Room 7)

First Class Prefab 9

Natalie Murphy

Shauna O’Brien

(Room 1)

First Class Room 1

Shauna O’Brien

Natalie Murphy (Room 6)

ASD Class Prefab 11

Kate Hartnett

Carla Lennon (Prefab 12)

ASD Class Prefab 12

Carla Lennon

Kate Hartnett (prefab 11)

Parent liaison
Angela Sawyer

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arrange parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage ‘questions and answers’
- Manages the ‘consent’ issues in accordance with the agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school’s system and ready for adaptation
- Set up a room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provide appropriate materials for parents (from their Critical Incident folder)

Community / Agency liaison
Louise Tighe

- 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 the credentials of individuals offering support
- Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Media liaison
Bernard Farrell

- 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 with the relevant teacher unions etc.
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

Administrator
Marie Duffy

- 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 and emails
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

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 Administrator will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters/emails, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff 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 following will be the main room for communication with each of the partners.

Staffroom

Meeting staff members

Classrooms

Meeting groups of students/individual students

Assembly Hall

Addressing/meeting a large group(s) of parents

Parish Centre

Meeting the media (Consult with DES & other 2 schools on campus if appropriate)

SET Rooms

Individual meeting sessions with students

Office

Other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

- All staff consulted and their views were canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan.

- Parent representatives were consulted and asked for their comments.
- Our school's draft 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 teachers also have a copy of it.
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Staff Liaison – Rachael Leslie

Timeframe for Implementation

The policy will be implemented from the 15th of September 2025.

The Critical Incident Plan will be updated annually.

Ratification

The Board of Management approved this policy on the 15th of September 2025

Signed: Bernard Farrell

(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: Karen Mc Goldrick

(Principal)