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Critical Incident Management (CIM) Policy

Ethos of the School

Saint Michael's NS is a five-teacher mainstream school in the centre of Limerick City, under the patronage of the Church of Ireland. In line with the Department of Education & Science's (DES) advice that "...a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school...", the Board of Management (BOM), the staff and the wider school community, seek to create a Christian ethos and approach within the school. Children are expected to take part in the whole life of the school.

Philosophy

The philosophy of Saint Michael's N.S. is to educate pupils in a friendly atmosphere and to develop high standards of social and moral behaviour. An opportunity is provided for each child to reach his/her full potential and to develop the capacity to think clearly, creatively and critically. Parents/guardians are encouraged to get to know and understand what is happening within the school through contact and discussion with the Principal and members of staff and to take advantage of the opportunity provided for consultation. Co-operation among the groups within the school community is encouraged, with everyone endeavouring to show mutual respect. It is firmly believed within this school community that children also learn from the example of their elders. Older pupils are given the limited and supervised responsibility of looking after younger pupils.

Relationship to the Ethos of the School

Saint Michael's N.S is a school where moral values such as honesty, fairness, justice, truthfulness, tolerance, concern for and a responsible attitude towards others, is fostered and encouraged. Therefore, the staff of the school strives to create a happy, safe environment for the children, where they feel secure and included, knowing that if they have concerns, they will be listened to with understanding and respect, and that these concerns will be acted upon. The school promotes the development of self-esteem and encourages the child's inner sense of responsibility.

Vision

Every effort is made so that the children and staff may work together in an environment conducive to learning and where trust is built, with the support of the parents/guardians and the Board of Management (BOM).

Aims

The aims of the Critical Incident Management Policy (CIM) of Saint Michael's National School are:

Under the patronage of the Church of Ireland

Saint Michael's National School, 11, Barrington Street, Limerick V94 A0K7

- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on procedures, should a Critical Incident (CI) occur
- To develop pupils' self-discipline and to promote positive and responsible attitude should a CI occur.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To enable the children to interact with peers and adults with a competency in language to express themselves in every situation
- To enable the children to meet with self-confidence and assurance, the demands of life, both now and in the future.

Ba dheas linn go mbeadh an scoil mar áit shona, shábhailta, slán agus shocair do chách. Tá sé mar aidhm againn go shroichfeadh gach leanbh buaic a gcumas go spioradálta, go h-acadúil, go sóisialta agus go fisiciúil. Ba dheas linn chomh maith go mbeadh na leanaí féin-mhuiníneach, go mbeadh meas acu orthu féin agus ar dhaoine eile, go mbeadh meas acu ar a gcultúr, a gceannntar agus a dtír féin agus ar chultúr eile chomh maith.

Saint Michael's NS promotes a psychologically safe environment for the entire school community, pupils, staff and parents/guardians. The Religious Education (RE) and Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) programme addresses issues such as grief and loss, communication skills, self-esteem and coping skills. Issues relating to physical, social, emotional and spiritual health are incorporated into regular SPHE/RE provision.

The BOM and the staff endeavour to create and to maintain a physically safe environment, regularly auditing the Health & Safety Statement of the school environment.

Staff training and resources are provided. Fire Extinguishers are strategically placed around the school building and are serviced annually by AntiFyre Ireland Ltd. All staff and students are familiar with evacuation procedures and fire drills take place regularly (at least once per term).

- The staff of Saint Michael's NS may identify students at risk, collaboratively, and may link with parents and/or external agencies to support such students.
- Staff are familiar with Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and staff have this policy readily available in each classroom for reference.
- Support for staff is available through the Employee Assistance Service/Inspire Workplace Services. (Free Phone 1800 411 057)

Defining a Critical Incident (CI)

A CI is an occurrence which is unusual or overwhelming in the day-to-day life of the school or the school community (cf. Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines & Resource Materials for Schools (2016). Examples of a CI that may arise, include the death of a pupil, staff member or family member within the school

community, a fire in the school, serious damage to school property or an assault on a person/people within the school environment. Staff are familiar with the contents of this policy, derived from good practice, guidelines issued by support agencies, both religious and secular. Sound common sense is evident among this school's staff and should be relied upon should an incident occur which is beyond the experience of any staff member. (A list of the contact details of relevant personnel is available in Appendix F.)

Covid 19 may be a cause of a Critical Incident in our school. On top of the schools Covid Response Plan, the Covid 19 Policy Statement and the schools Risk Assessment for Covid 19, the school will consult with NEPS should a serious outcome arise from Covid 19 that overwhelms the staff and or pupils.

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The CIMT of St Michael's N.S. is made up of the In-School Management (ISM) team.

1. Team Leader: Principal/Deputy Principal
2. Team: Special Duties Teachers (2)

The team will meet annually at the ISM meeting at the beginning of the school year to update and review the plan.

Roles of the Team

Principal: Garda contact, staff contact and media contact.

Deputy Principal: Parent Contact and community/Agency Contact.

Special Duties Teachers: Administrators - document who has been contacted/unable to be contacted etc.)

Development and Communication of the Plan

All staff have been consulted and involved in the drafting of this plan.

Parent Representatives have been consulted on the draft plan.

The Board of Management discussed and ratified this plan.

Guidelines: Short-term, Medium-term and Long-term Actions

Day 1

- Short meeting of the CIMT
- Initial assessment of the incident
- Clarification of the facts
- Contact/consult NEPS Psychologist: Edel Higgins
- Decide on level of response required
- Agree level of involvement with NEPS
- Agree schedule for the day
- Inform students (close friends and students with learning disabilities may need to be told separately)

- Compile list of vulnerable students
- Contact external agencies if appropriate
- Contact/visit the bereaved family
- Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media
- Inform parents
- Review entire day with staff members.

Day 2

- Meeting with CIMT/Staff to review the events of the first 24 hours.
- List tasks for the day and assign roles
- Review schedule for the day
- Go through list of staff/students that may be vulnerable and review how they are doing
- Liaise with bereaved family regarding memorial/funeral arrangements
- Agree on attendance and participation at memorial/funeral service
- Make decisions about school closure
- Develop a plan for monitoring affected students over the next few weeks especially those identified as vulnerable.

Long-Term Follow-up

- Monitor students for signs of continuing distress
- Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
- Plan for return of affected students
- Decide on appropriate memorials (if appropriate)
- Lessons in RE/SPHE
- Review response to incident and amend plan

Particular issues that need to be addressed in the event of a suicide/suspected suicide, road traffic accident or violent death will be in line with DES 2008 guidelines or in the case of Covid 19 – HSE guidelines will be followed.

In relation to dealing with the media, the Principal or Deputy Principal (if Principal is unavailable) and/or the Chairperson (BOM), will prepare a media statement in collaboration with the CIM team and this will be used as the basis of all contact with the media.

Communication and Availability of the Policy

1. The plan is readily accessible to all members of staff with a copy in the school office.
2. New and temporary staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the plan and its availability on the school website.

Administrative Tasks

- Contact Numbers
- An up-to-date list of contact numbers is maintained.
- Relevant phone numbers are available for Parents/Guardians on Aladdin
- Staff
- Emergency Support Services

The Administrator/s will compile and update these lists at the start of each school year prior to the first staff meeting. These lists will be stored in the office.

The list of Emergency Support Services will be displayed beside the school phone in the office.

Resources

Resources that will be prepared in advance of an incident include:

- NEPS Guidelines
- HSE Guidelines
- Checklists for Day 1 and Day 2 and Follow up
- List of Emergency contact details
- Layout of school buildings with exits highlighted – see Appendix H.
- The layout will be displayed in the school hallway.
- A room will be made available should a CI occur.
- In the case of a COVID 19 case a Wellness Room (isolation Room) will be made available
- The school landline will be used as a dedicated phone line should an incident arise.

Information for Field Trips/Outings

- The class teacher will compile a list of all pupils/staff involved and the teacher in charge.
- Parents/Guardians are informed of all trips/outings and staff have their contact details for the day. All permissions for field trips are given now via Aladdin Connect. Local visits are covered for some pupils on the PDF and more recent pupils on the Acceptance Form. A physical contact list is given to teachers by the secretary for use on the day of a trip and this list is shredded once the trip is complete.
- Up-to-date medical information and parents'/guardians' contact details are requested at the start of every school year.

Record Keeping

In the course of a CI, the following records should be kept:

- Copy of relevant and completed Appendices
- List of pupils who received individual support from NEPS
- Parental consent for individual support

- Log of all phone calls made
- Log of all phone calls received
- Log of all offers of help including name of agency involved, contact name & number if applicable
- Any other appropriate and important information resulting from critical incident deemed necessary by the CIMT to record.

These records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Policy until the pupils involved are 21 years of age. The Principal is responsible for these records. Access to these records is restricted as laid out in the Data Protection Policy.

Date of Ratification: 29th MARCH 2022

Signature of Chairperson: 

Dean Niall Sloane

Appendix A

Record of the Critical Incident

Date of Incident:

Parental Consent for Individual Support	List of pupils who received Individual Support from NEPS	Log of calls made	Log of calls received	Log of all offers of help including name of agency, contact name and number

Appendix B

Short-term Actions & Roles Assigned

	Task	Name (Key & Support)
1.	Gather accurate information	Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane, Maria Robinson
2.	Contact appropriate agencies	Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane, Maria Robinson
3.	Convene a meeting with key staff	Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane, Sally Fossitt
4.	Arrange supervision of pupils	Mairéad Doran, Sheelagh Morrow, Sandra Wallace
5.	Hold a staff meeting	Principal with all staff
6.	Organise a timetable for the day	Trisha Coombes, Siobhán Hayes, Ann Marie Mullane
7.	Inform parents	Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane, Very Rev. Niall Sloane
8.	Inform students (if relevant & appropriate)	Class teachers / support
9.	Make contact with the affected family	Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane, Very Rev. Niall Sloane
10.	Dealing with the media (if necessary)	Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane, Very Rev. Niall Sloane

Appendix C

Medium-Term Actions & Roles Assigned (24-72 Hours)

	Task	Name/Group
1.	Review the events of the first 24 hours	In school management
2.	Arrange Support for individual/groups of students, parents etc	SET
3.	Plan the reintegration of students and staff	Assembly / class teachers
4.	Plan visit to injured	Class teacher / Kate Gleeson / other nominated person
5.	If bereavement, liaise with family re. funeral arrangements/memorial service as appropriate	Class teacher / SET, Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane
6.	Attendance/participation at funeral service etc. (if relevant)	Nominated Staff/BOM
7.	School Closure	BOM (decision), Kate Gleeson (communication)

Appendix D

Long-Term Actions & Roles Assigned (72+ hours)

	Task	Name/Group
1.	Monitor students for signs of continuing stress	Class teacher / SETs
2.	Evaluate response to incident and amend CI plan appropriately	Staff/BOM
3.	Formalise plan for the future	Staff/BOM
4.	Inform new staff/pupils	Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane
5.	Decide on appropriate ways to deal with appropriate anniversaries	Staff & parents

Appendix E

Fire Safety

The safety of the pupils in St Michael's N.S. is a priority at all times. The following are the procedures in place in the school to ensure their safe evacuation in the event of a fire in the school premises.

Fire Drills are conducted at least once every term.

A member of the SET team is responsible for activating the fire alarm. The staff member who activated the fire alarm will note the date and time the fire drill took place in the logbook. The logbook is kept in the wall mounted plastic container at the front door.

Each teacher is responsible for safely evacuating the group of children/class in her care. Before the teacher leaves they will check their class toilets. The names of the pupils in each classroom are on a clipboard inside the classroom door and will be taken to call the roll in the yard by the class teacher.

Snas will evacuate with the classroom that they are assigned to at that time.

Rooms 4 & 5 leave by the fire escape door at the north end of the building (across from Room 5) . At the end of the ramp they will turn right and proceed around the back of the building to the assembly area and enter the yard via the school garden.

The teacher in room 5 will check the cleaning cupboard to ensure it is empty.

****Room 4 and 5 also have an emergency exit window which can be used if the alternative option is unsafe.***

Rooms 1,2,3 exit via the double front doors.

****Room 1 have an emergency exit window which can be used if the alternative option is unsafe.***

Any members of staff or visitors in the office leave via the double front doors.

Pupils and teachers in the SET rooms (rooms 9 and 10) or Sensory room (room 11) should leave via the side exit door, located adjacent to the SET rooms.

Any teacher using the school hall (room 12) will exit via the fire exit door in the hall. Teacher in the hall will check the kitchenette adjoining the hall.

****Room 12 (the hall) have an emergency exit window which can be used if the alternative option is unsafe.***

The school secretary will check the staff room and staff toilet before leaving via the double main doors.

*(In a real emergency, pupils may be evacuated through the windows marked **Fire Exit**. However, this is not a safe option for fire drills. In any event, all staff must act in accordance with the "prudent parent" principle.)*

All students are aware of this procedure, as are regular visiting teachers.

All children and staff are to move to the fire assembly point, marked in the playground, as quickly and safely as possible with a roll call done immediately by the relevant member of staff. The secretary will ensure that the caretaker is present for this roll call.

The school is constantly trying to improve the fire safety standards in the school. Children have visited the local Fire Station as part of their studies. Visits from relevant personnel will be invited to the school to talk to pupils and staff. Recommendations will be considered practically by the BOM.

Priority may be given to any individual with a need e.g. broken limb.

All fire drills are evaluated afterwards.

Appendix F

Useful Contact Numbers

HSE	(061) 483719
Dr Barnardo's	01-4530355
The Samaritans	1850 609090
Childline	1800 666666
Parentline	1890 927277
Aware	1890 303302 01-6617211
The Bereavement Counselling Service	061-485800
Rainbows	061-400133
National Suicide Bereavement Counselling	061-400133
National Educational Psychological Service	061-430027
Limerick Diocesan Pastoral Centre	061-400133
Church of Ireland Board of Education	01-232682946
Presbyterian Board of Education	
Methodist Board of Education	
Dean Niall Sloane (Patron)	061-396244 0868288579
South hill Health Centre	061-209985
Cullen Hanley Family Doctors	061-314810

Appendix G

Suggested Guidelines for the Procedure(s) to be used for a Variety of Critical Incident Situations in SMNS

Part 1

1. Fire

- Fire drill - at least once a term
- All emergency exits clear and signed
- All staff - timetable with list of pupils
- All staff - whistle and keys
- Evacuation of school - to date under 90 seconds
- Gathering points clearly marked
- Roll-call when all pupils out of building

2. Visitors

- All doors closed and locked - possible to open them from the inside as emergency exits
- Gates locked when pupils outside including for PE
- Only staff members open the outside doors (unless a staff member instructs a senior pupil to open it)
- No exiting or entering through the emergency doors
- If a visitor appears to act in a suspicious manner, ensure that there is another member of staff nearby
- If in doubt, call 999.
- Remain calm in the presence of aggressive behaviour.
- Notify Gardaí if someone acts suspiciously when on the school grounds.

3. Child Protection

- Familiarise oneself with the Child Protection Policy.
- No pupil is allowed home without parental/guardian permission either in writing or in person. During the COVID 19 pandemic parents/guardians must inform the school via Seesaw and come no further than the intercom at the front gate – see COVID 19 Risk Assessment
- No child is released to a person unfamiliar to a member of staff.

- No member of staff may be on the premises on his/her own with a pupil. (The Gardaí must be notified on 999.) Staff are responsible for their own children outside school hours and must supervise them in such a way that there is no liability to the Board of Management (BOM).

4. Death/Serious Accident

- Remove pupils from vicinity of injured person, pupil or staff.
- Call 999 for ambulance
- Call parent/guardian in the case of a pupil, next-of-kin in case of an adult – this information is available on Aladdin and in the office on the noticeboard.
- Counselling service available from National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Department of Education & Science (DES) and from the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO). Please refer to previous appendices

In all instances where there is a noteworthy incident, the Chairperson of the BOM must be notified.

All staff act “in loco parentis” or as a wise and prudent parent/guardian towards the pupils in the school, and with care towards their colleagues on the staff. Visitors are also treated with Christian respect, as would be expressed by the ethos statement of the school.

Part 2

(Where possible, TWO adults should be present with the pupil(s). Class teachers must send two responsible pupils to fetch a second adult. Then if necessary, pupils in the classroom should be dispersed to other classrooms for supervision.)

For any of the situations outlined below, a member of staff is acting “in loco parentis” or as a wise and prudent parent should act. S/he is also acting in “good faith” and it must be remembered that there are as many styles of parenting/guardianship as there are pupils. Restraint may be necessary to prevent self-harm or injury to others, including staff. This restraint should take place, where possible, when another adult is present as witness.

These situations are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and it is expected that staff use common sense and discretion in any given situation or if an incident not outlined below, occurs, in other words:-

“in loco parentis” or as “a wise and prudent parent/guardian”

Threat of:-

1. **Suicide**

- Remove pupil (or evacuate all the other pupils to adjacent rooms – staff know that if a whole class is sent into his/her classroom without prior warning, that there is a serious situation for which a colleague needs additional help.)
- Remove any dangerous objects (Restrain the pupil where necessary, where possible when a second adult is present as a witness, in order to prevent self-harm.)
- Get someone to call for an ambulance (999) and the parents/guardians.
- Adults stay with pupil in some room apart from other pupils.

2. **Offensive Weapons**

- As above and include Gardaí in 999 call.

3. **Prescribed Substances/Medication**

- As 1 & 2 above
- Advice might need to be sought from medical personnel or school doctor (Dr.Cullen) whether a pupil should be:-
 - placed in a certain position
 - refused or given liquids

4. **Verbal, Physical & Sexual Abuse**

Verbal

- Pupil may be removed from the classroom or the rest of the pupils may be sent to adjacent rooms for supervision.
- Pupil may be sent to another member of staff. Parents/guardians may need to be called.

Physical

- As above.
- Staff need to be aware that they have a duty to protect the pupil him/herself, the remaining pupils and one's own self.
- Restraint or separation may be needed where two or more pupils are engaged in the physical abuse of one another. "In loco parentis" requires that the responsible adult has to intervene where there is a threat of serious injury or to life. (Caution: staff need to call or blow a whistle for help.)

Sexual

- As above
- The "victim" may need counselling. The parents/guardians of the "victim" must be notified as well as the perpetrator.

The above list is a guideline of the procedures that should be taken should an incident occur. The class teacher and the Principal should be informed immediately. All staff have to be informed as to the behaviour of pupils, as all staff supervise pupils on a weekly basis in the playground and at hometime.

As has been the custom, staff use their discretion and experience as to the tone of voice needed to immediately arrest the behaviour.

N.B. Staff need to be aware that some Special Educational Needs pupils may need a differentiated approach. All staff are aware of the pupils who have SEN, though they may not be cognisant of the contents of their assessment reports.

Safety for ALL pupils, staff and visitors to the school, (and when the pupils and staff are off-campus), is the remit of the Board of Management (BOM), as the employers of the staff cohort. The BOM is bound by the legislation in the relevant Health & Safety Acts.

Appendix H

Incident Report

Date of Incident:

Pupils Involved:

Staff member(s) present:

Staff member(s) dealing with incident:

Other adult(s) involved:

Description of Incident:

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Action to be taken:

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Notification to parent/guardian (if any is warranted)

Sanctions imposed (if warranted)

Initials of Staff member: _____ Date of Report _____

Appendix I

Incident Report

Date of Incident:

Pupil(s) Involved:

Staff member(s) present:

Staff member(s) dealing with incident:

Other adult(s) involved:

Description of Incident:

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Action to be taken:

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Notification to parent/guardian (if any is warranted)

Sanctions imposed (if warranted)

Initials of Staff member: -----

Date of Report -----

