



## **St. Garvan's N.S., Caroreigh Critical Incident Policy**

**Updated January 2019**

St. Garvan's N.S. aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times, to this end we have compiled a Critical Incident policy. This shall be developed, reviewed and implemented by a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT).

### **Critical Incident**

The staff and management of St. Garvan's N.S. recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms 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 involving the wider community.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.

### **Aim of CIMT**

The aims of the CIMT are:

- 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
- to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff.
- to help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited insofar as is possible.
- to enable us to return to normality as soon as possible.

### **Physical Safety**

This area is covered under our Health and Safety Policy.



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### **Psychological Safety**

The management and staff of St. Garvan's N.S. 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 such issues 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 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 Primary school pupils are available.
- Information is available on mental health in general and such specific areas on signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- The school has access to a counsellor should the need arise through NEPS.
- Staff is informed on how to access support for themselves.  
Employee Assistance Service 1800 411057

### **Critical Incident Management Team**

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team shall meet once a year to review and update their 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.

The members of the CIMT shall include:

- Team leader – Principal.
- Staff liaison – Deputy Principal and Staff Rep on Board of Management.
- Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- Family Liaison – Secretary and Chairperson of the Parents Council
- School Secretary.
- In the event of a Critical Incident NEPS and Garda Liaison may be contacted.



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**Leadership Roles** – Team Leader – Principal or Chairperson of B.O.M.

The following steps may be followed if deemed necessary.

- Confirms the event.
- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the Board of Management, Department of Education & Science & NEPS.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.
- Prepares a public statement with the CIMT team, organises designated room to promptly address the media.
- Ensures the provision of ongoing support to staff and students.
- Facilitates any appropriate memorial events.
- Review plan.

\* The Deputy Principal will replace the Principal in their absence.

**Staff Liaison** – Deputy Principal

- Leads briefing meeting for the 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. Is alert to vulnerable members of staff and makes contact with them individually.
- Provides resources for the staff and pupils (from Critical Incident Folder), outlines services available.
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses.
- Keeps record of students seen by external agency staff.
- Looks into the provision and supervision of a “quiet room”.

**Family/Community Liaison** – Secretary and chairperson of Parents Council.

- Co-ordinate contact with families, consults with families around the involvement of the school in funeral service, if necessary.
- Maintains up-to-date lists of contact numbers of key parents, such as members of the Parents' Council, Emergency Support Services and other external contacts and resources.
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.



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- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support, co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies.
- Assists with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident.
- Manages the consent issues in accordance with school policy.
- Maintains records of parents and pupils seen.
- Provides appropriate materials for parents.
- Provides ongoing support to bereaved family, involve as appropriate family in memorial services.
- Updates team members on the involvement of the outside agencies.

### **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, materials used, etc.

The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, photocopying materials and in sending and receiving all letters, etc.

### **Confidentiality**

The management and staff of St. Garvan's N.S. have a responsibility to protect the good name and privacy 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 the 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 Staff Room will be the main room used to meet the staff.

The GP Room will be the room used to meet the students.

The GP Room will be used to meet parents and later to brief media.

SET Room will be used for individual sessions with the students.

SET Room will also be used by other visitors.



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This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson, Board of Management**  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Principal**  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_