



Critical Incident Policy

Introduction

In Navan Educate Together N.S we aim to protect the well-being of our students and staff by providing a safe, tolerant and well catered for environment at all times.

The Board of Management through the Principal, the staff and the Parent Teacher Association has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP). They have established a Critical Incidents Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

Review and Research

The CIMT has consulted resource documents available to schools.

These include:

- Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (NEPS 2016)
- Guidelines for Schools on How to Respond to the Sudden Unexpected Death of a Student
- When Tragedy Strikes: Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools (INTO 2000)
- 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 Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 2015)

What is a Critical Incident?

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school.

Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of the local community.

Types of incidents may 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/tragedy involving members of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school property through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- Unauthorised removal of student from home or school
- Civil unrest, war (Foreign nationals may be traumatised by events that happen in their country of origin)
- World events that may affect the student body and/or staff

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 impact on students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to effect 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 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:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Regular Fire Drills occur
- Evacuation Plans in place
- Fire exits and extinguishers regularly checked
- Supervision before school (from 8.50am)
- Main school door locked at all times, use of keypad to enter
- Internal gates locked during school hours
- Code of behaviour Policy
- Red Card System – to inform other adults of emergencies in school
- Line up routines

- Adequate supervision of children at all times
- Pupils leaving early will be recorded on Aladdin and only be released by a member of staff
- Pupils not released into care of persons unknown to school staff
- First aid supplies available and all staff trained
- Medical Response Plan

Psychological Safety:

The management and staff of Navan Educate Together NS 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. 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 are addressed in the SPHE curriculum. 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 know the named Designated Liaison Person.
- Books and resources on difficulties affecting the 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.
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – HSE, NEPs, NCSE, Tusla, Community Garda, CAMHS, etc.
- 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 school has a clear Anti-Bullying Policy and deals with incidents of 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 NEPS documents. Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. Class Teacher or Special Education Teacher), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents/Guardians are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves (information displayed on the staff noticeboard in staffroom).

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team will retain their roles for at least one school year and 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.

Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)

Roles: Navan Educate Together NS have assigned the following roles:

Team Leader – Principal / Deputy Principal (*Eleanor Barker/Patricia Carolan*)

Garda Liaison – Principal / Deputy Principal (*Eleanor Barker/Patricia Carolan*)

Staff Liaison – Deputy Principal / AP1 (*Patricia Carolan/Helen Sparkes*)

Student Liaison – AP2 / AP2 (*Josephine McCallion/Oonagh Gilsenan/Colin Wickham*)

Parent/Guardian Liaison – HSCL / AP2 (*Ellen Cummins/Patrick Kelly*)

Community Liaison – HSCL / AP2 (*Ellen Cummins/Ruth Meade*)

Media Liaison – BoM Chairperson / Principal (*Shauna Marron/Eleanor Barker*)

Administrator – School Secretary / Principal (*Eilish Delahunt/Eleanor Barker*)

Team Leader

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Co-ordinates the tasks of the teams
- Liaises with the Board of Management, Department of Education, Educate Together, NEPS
- Liaises with the affected families
- The Deputy Principal will take the lead in the absence of the Principal

Garda Liaison

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

Staff Liaison

- 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 availability of the Employee Assistance Service and gives them the contact number

Student Liaison

- May co-ordinate information about students they are concerned about
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)

- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of students seen by external agencies
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Parent/Guardian Liaison

- Visits the affected family with the team leader
- Arranges meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers' sessions
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are prepared and available on the school's IT system ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Community Liaison

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of key parents (such as members of PTA), 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
- 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

- 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)

Administrator

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of parents/guardians, teachers, emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response
- Ensures that templates are available on the school IT system and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials as 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 emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc. The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff of Navan Educate Together NS 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 confirmed 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.

Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident,

- Staffroom – will be the main room used to meet the staff
- Hall – for meeting with the whole school
- SET Rooms – for meetings with smaller groups of students
- HSCL room – for parents
- Library – for media
- SET Rooms – for individual sessions with students
- Deputy Principals Office – for other visitors

Note – Depending on the critical incident, classrooms will be used. Classes may be doubled-up thus making rooms available, and rooms Den 2, 3, 4 and 5 (SET rooms) will be used.

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 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 the Principal or Deputy Principal.

The plan will be reviewed and updated if necessary annually, each September.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS – Day 1

Task	Responsibility	Completed
Gather accurate information (who, what, when, where?)		
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly		
Contact external agencies		
Arrange supervision for students		
Hold staff meeting		
Agree schedule for the day		
Inform students – (close students and students with SEN may need to be told separately)		
Compile a list of vulnerable students		
Contact / visit the affected family		
Prepare and agree media statement and deal with the media		
Inform parents / guardians		
Hold end of day staff briefing		

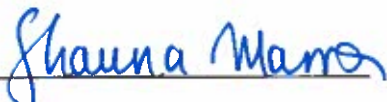
MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS – Day 2 and following days

Task	Responsibility	Completed
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1		
Meet external agencies		
Meet whole staff		
Arrange support for students, staff, parents / guardians		
Visit the injured		
Liaise with affected family regarding possible funeral arrangements		
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service		
Make decision about school closure		

FOLLOW UP – beyond 72 hours

Task	Responsibility	Completed
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress		
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals		
Plan for return of affected student(s)		
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to affected family		
Decide on memorials and anniversaries		
Review response to incident and amend plan		

This policy was reviewed by the CIMT and Board of Management on 7th October 2026

Signed: 
(Chairperson BoM)

Date: 7/10/26

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 7/10/26

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Critical Incident Management Team and Contact Details (For Team Members Only)

Appendix 2: Emergency Contact List