

# Ashbourne CNS

## Critical Incidents Management Policy

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### Version Control

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### Document Ratification

Function	Title	Version	Date
Board of Management	Chairperson	0.1	XX/XX/XXXX

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## Ashbourne CNS Policy on Critical Incidence Management

### 1. Overview

At Ashbourne CNS we are committed to our core values of courage, creativity, collaboration and care. Our school celebrates diversity of belief, language and cultural traditions and we all learn to respect, trust and encourage each other every day. We listen to each other and negotiate our differences. This makes it easy for us accept, respect and include every person for who they are.

'Learning is the Heart of our Community' and we are dedicated to the holistic development of every child. Our practice is informed by Glasser's Caring Habits, Growth Mindset and a Restorative approach. By focusing on inter and intra-personal skills we seek to enhance relationships in our community and with the community. This holistic approach acknowledges that 'learning takes place in a relationship' and seeks to help children develop the resilience, self-esteem and relationships needed to overcome the many challenges on the road to adulthood.

We combine socio-cultural building blocks with high-quality approaches to teaching and learning in order to develop each child's academic, social, moral, emotional, spiritual and creative capabilities. Thus, enabling each child to reach their full potential and play an active part in the local community and wider civic society.

Education is a partnership, and at Ashbourne CNS experienced teaching professionals, students and parents work together with members of the wider community in a welcoming educational environment which is safe, happy, stimulating, inclusive and reflective of the diverse modern society in which we live.

At Ashbourne CNS we seek to provide a safe physical, psychological and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, background or ability. We promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We seek to prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of social justice.

#### 1.1 Clarification of Key Terms used in this document

LMETB: Louth Meath Education and Training Board

CNS: Community National School

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ISM: In-School Management

NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service

CIMT: Critical Incident Management Team

### 2. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rationale and process of managing a critical incident. The policy is governed by information contained in the document entitled Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016) and Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES 2019).

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals within the school community who are responsible for the drafting, updating, approval and distribution of school policies.

#### 3.1 Aims and Objectives

- To provide a framework for the management of a critical incidence.
- To outline the definition of a critical incident.
- 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.
- To help limit the effects of a critical incident on students and staff.
- To enable us to effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

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### 4. Policy

#### 4.1 Definition of a critical incident

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school (NEPS 2016).

#### 4.2 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.
- Morning supervision in the school yard.
- Traffic management plan for the school campus.
- Front door secured during school hours.
- School doors secured during class time.
- Increased supervision during yard time and excursions.
- Rules of the playground and designated areas of play assigned.
- Assemblies.
- Safety statement in place and updated annually.
- Staff induction.

#### Psychological safety

The management and staff of Ashbourne Community National School aim to use available programs 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 role in SPHE.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures.
- Some staff members are trained in the Friends for Life Program, and this is available to the children who the school feels would most benefit from this.

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- 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, and some are trained in interventions for suicidal students.
- The school has links with a range of external agencies – such as NEPS, CAMHS, HSE Primary Care Services, and Rainbows.
- 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. See DES Circulars 0022/2010 (Primary) or 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 on 2007 for primary schools available on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (the Principal), concerns are explored, and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. This is set out through the Listen Protect, Connect, Model and Teach approach in helping students in time of crisis or emergency set out in R23 pages 92-94 of Responding to Critical Incidents 2016 by NEPS. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

#### 4.3 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. 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.

Team leader: Principal

#### Role

- 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; SEC.
- Liaises with the bereaved family.

NB: LMETB Director of Schools will take the lead in the absence of the Principal- the team leader.

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### Garda liaison: LMETB Director of Schools

#### Role

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

### Staff liaison: Principal

#### Role

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, and 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 the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

### Student liaison: Teacher 1

#### Role

- May co-ordinate information from teachers about students they are concerned about.
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately).
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder).
- Maintains student contact records (R1).
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

### Community/agency liaison Principal

#### Role

- 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.
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support.
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies.
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges.

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- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

### Parent liaison Teacher 2

#### Role

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader.
- Arranges parent meetings, if held.
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'.
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy.
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and 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).

### Media liaison LMETB Director of Schools

#### Role

- 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 School Secretary/Principal

#### Role

- 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, emails and texts.
- Photocopies materials needed.
- Maintains records.



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#### Record keeping School Secretary/Principal

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.

School Secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

Contact details for the Critical Incident Management Team are in Appendix A

Critical Incident Action Plan Template is in NEPS 2016 R20), page 86.

#### 4.4 Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of Ashbourne Community National School have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, e.g., 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 rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name:	Designated Purpose:
<i>Staff Room</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Junior infants' room</i>	Meetings with students
<i>GP area</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Principal's Office</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Principal's Office</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Principal's Office</i>	Meetings with other visitors

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4.5 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 the principal. The plan will be updated annually.

4.6 Emergency contact list

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST	
AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	Ashbourne Garda Station: +353 1 801 0600
Hospital	<u>Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown</u> <u>+353 1 646 5000</u>  Beaumont Hospital, Dublin 9 +353 1 809 3000
Fire Brigade	999 / 112
Local Minor Emergency Unit	ROCDOC, Unit 6, Ashbourne Retail Park, Ashbourne 0818 543 999
HSE Community Care Team	Ashbourne Primary Care Centre, Unit 12 Killegland Walk, Declan Street, Ashbourne Tel: 01 6914600

Child and Family Centre	Ashbourne Primary Care Centre, Unit 12 Killeglad Walk, Declan Street, Ashbourne Tel: 01 6914600
Tusla	Trim Family Resource Centre, 22 Mornington Drive, Trim, Co Meath 046 9438850
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services, Trim Primary Care Centre Knightsbridge Village, Longwood Road Trim, Co. Meath 046 – 9420803
School Inspector	Jennifer Rush - Divisional Inspector - (01) 889 6553 0871882468 inspectorate@education.gov.ie
NEPS Psychologist	NEPS Drogheda- (041)9876940
DES	<a href="https://www.education.ie">https://www.education.ie</a>
INTO	Telephone: +353 1 804 7700 LoCall: 1850 708 708
Clergy	Fr. Vinod Kurian IC (Parish Priest) +353 42 9334410
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057

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### 4.7 Approval

Policy is drafted by Principal and Deputy Principal in consultation with staff and Parents Association. It is then approved and reviewed by the Board of Management on a regular basis.

### 4.8 Accessibility

All policies will be converted to PDF format and stored on the school OneDrive. A version will also be stored in Microsoft Word format for editing, updating and review purposes.

Policies will be published in PDF format on the school website. Confidential policies or policies that are only relevant to school staff will be shared and stored on the school OneDrive as mentioned above.

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### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 5.1 Ashbourne CNS Staff

Ashbourne CNS staff members involved with the development of school policies will be responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy "Critical Incidents Management Policy".

#### 5.2 Principal

Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and is accountable to the Board of Management. The school principal will be responsible for the implementation of all school policies and all associated actions involving school policies.

#### 5.3 Parents Association

The Parent's Association is consulted for their feedback on this policy. Their feedback is presented to the Board of Management for discussion prior to ratification.

#### 5.4 Board of Management

The Board is responsible for the ratification of all policies.

### 6. Policy Review

The Review date for the Critical Incidents Management Policy will be set at every year.

The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that the Critical Incidents Management Policy is within its review date, and she/he will update and review accordingly.

A record will be generated of all school policies and corresponding review dates.

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7. Appendices

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES 2019)

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/24725/07cc07626f6a426eb6eab4c523fb2ee2.pdf#page=null>

Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines for schools (NEPS 2016)

<https://www.cypsc.ie/fileupload/Neps%20Critical%20Incidents%20Guidelines%20Schools.pdf>

**BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for  
This Policy**

**BOM Ratification**

*Critical Incidents Management Policy*

<b>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</b>	<i>11/05/2023</i>
<b>Proposed By:</b>	<i>John Ferris</i>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<i>Michael McMill</i>
<b>Signed:</b>	<i>John J. Ferris</i> (Chairperson, BOM)
<b>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</b>	<i>May 2025</i>

**LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board**

<b>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</b>	
<b>Signed</b>	(Chairperson)

