

Critical Incident Management Policy



School: Our Lady of Good Counsel School

Policy Area: Critical Incident Management

Date of Original Ratification: April 2009

Review History

Review Date	Details
January 2011	Policy Review
January 2012	Policy Review
January 2013	Policy Review
September 2015	Policy Review
January 2016	Change of Chairperson
September 2017	Change of Chairperson
September 2025	Change of Chairperson
September 2026	Board of Management Review

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is:

- To enable the school to respond effectively to a critical incident.
- To minimise the impact of a critical incident on pupils, staff, families, and the wider school community.
- To ensure appropriate communication, support, and information-sharing following a critical incident.
- To facilitate the continuation of educational provision and school operations where possible.

2. Background

The development of a Critical Incident Management Plan commenced during the 2008/2009 school year. A sub-committee comprising teachers, parents, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), and members of the Board of Management drafted the plan.

Following consultation with staff, the Board of Management and the Parents' Association, the plan was finalised and ratified by the Board of Management on **21 April 2009**.

Copies of the plan are maintained:

- In the school office.
- In the Principal's Critical Incident Folder.
- By the Deputy Principal.
- By the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

3. Mission Statement

Our Lady of Good Counsel School aims to promote the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, physical, and sensory development of each child while maintaining and respecting their rights and dignity at all times. The school endeavours to achieve this by providing a structured and supportive environment that facilitates learning within the context of individual abilities and accommodates different learning styles.

In the event of a critical incident, the school is committed to supporting and informing all members of the school community in a manner that promotes wellbeing, recovery, and resilience.

4. Prevention and Preparedness

4.1 Physical Safety

The school promotes a safe educational environment through:

1. Access Control System.
2. Visitor sign-in and sign-out procedures.
3. School Safety Statement.
4. Termly fire evacuation drills.

5. Annual maintenance of fire safety equipment.
6. Administration of Medication Policy.
7. Special Care Plans for pupils with medical needs.
8. Regularly maintained First Aid supplies.
9. Trained First Aid personnel.
10. Risk assessments.
11. Behaviour Support Plans.
12. Secure and enclosed school grounds.
13. Designated vehicle drop-off area.
14. Staff and visitor car park.
15. High levels of supervision.
16. Monthly Health and Safety reviews.
17. Access to local evacuation centres (e.g., local church or Scoil Barra).
18. Fire safety training.
19. Manual handling and client-lifting training.
20. First Aid training.
21. School Tours Policy, including Missing Child Procedures.
22. CPI –Dynamis training.

4.2 Psychological Safety

Support may be sought from the Enable Psychology and Social Work Departments or NEPS where appropriate. Supports may include:

- Assistance in assessing the significance and impact of an incident.
- Information and professional advice.
- Consultation with school personnel.
- Identification of pupils requiring additional support.
- Referral guidance where specialist intervention is required.

The following policies also support psychological wellbeing:

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy.
- Behaviour Management Policy.
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Procedures.
- Continuous professional development in behaviour support and wellbeing.

5. External Support Services

Organisation	Contact Number
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Community Gardaí, Ballincollig	021 4871222
Ballincollig Garda Station	021 4871222
Department of Health	01 6354000
CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)	021 4357447
Scoil Barra	021 4873459
NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service)	01 8892700
Local GP	021 4872555
INTO	1800 708 708
Local Clergy	021 4871206
Fr. Paul Thettayil, Chaplain, Brothers of Charity	087 7518030
Employee Assistance Programme	1800 411 057

Contact details should be reviewed annually.

6. Definition of a Critical Incident

A critical incident is:

Any incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the normal functioning of the school community.

Critical incidents are managed through the school's Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT).

7. Examples of Critical Incidents

Examples may include:

- The death of a pupil, staff member, parent, or member of the school community through accident, illness, sudden death, or suicide.
 - A serious accident involving members of the school community.
 - A physical attack, threat, or intrusion.
 - Serious damage to the school building.
 - A major fire, flood, or other emergency.
 - A traumatic event affecting the wider community.
 - A significant transportation accident involving pupils or staff.
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8. Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The CIMT includes:

- Principal –Aisling Power
- Deputy Principal -Nollaig Moynihan
- Assistant Principal/Post Holder -Ray Murphy
- Chairperson of the Board of Management.-Billy Murphy
- Teacher Representative- Una Murphy
- SNA Representatives –Ellen Murphy
- Parent Representatives Lorraine Desmond (also Parent)
- School Secretary –Colette Hernan and Tanya Buttimer.

Membership may be reviewed annually.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Team Leader (Principal- Aisling)

The Principal will:

- Alert team members to the incident.
- Convene meetings.
- Coordinate all actions and responses.
- Maintain contact with emergency services and relevant agencies.
- Liaise with the Board of Management.
- Communicate with families where appropriate.

Deputy Team Leader (Deputy Principal)

- Supports the Principal.
 - Assumes leadership responsibilities in the Principal's absence.
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Staff Liaison Officers

(Principal, Deputy Principal, SNA Representative)

- Communicate information to staff.
 - Coordinate staff support.
 - Assist with implementation of the response plan.
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Supervision Coordinator

(Nollaig Moynihan or ray Murphy)

- Organises supervision of pupils.
 - Coordinates relocation of classes if required.
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Parent Liaison Officer

(Principal, Board Representative or Parent Representative)

- Communicates relevant information to parents and guardians.
 - Coordinates family support where appropriate.
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Community Liaison Officer

(Principal, Chairperson or Community Representative)

- Liaises with community agencies and local organisations.
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Media Liaison Officer

(Chairperson and/or Principal)

- Acts as the sole point of contact with the media.
 - Ensures all information released is accurate and approved.
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Administration Team

(School Secretary and nominated staff)

- Maintains records.
 - Updates contact lists.
 - Supports communication and documentation.
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10. Critical Incident Response Plan (On-Site Incidents)

Annual Administrative Tasks

The school will:

1. Maintain up-to-date emergency contact details for pupils, parents, and staff.
 2. Maintain updated Special Care Plans.
 3. Review relevant policies annually.
 4. Update critical incident contact lists.
 5. Ensure staff are familiar with this policy.
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Immediate Response

Staff should:

1. Contact Emergency Services (999 or 112) where necessary.
 2. Provide First Aid within the limits of their training.
 3. Notify the Principal or Deputy Principal immediately.
 4. Secure the area and move onlookers away where appropriate.
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Principal/Deputy Principal Actions

The Principal or Deputy Principal will:

1. Arrange supervision and safety of all pupils.
2. Contact parents/guardians of those directly affected.
3. Notify the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
4. Contact the Brothers of Charity if appropriate.
5. Convene the Critical Incident Management Team.

The CIMT will:

- Establish the facts.
 - Coordinate accurate communication.
 - Contact NEPS and other support services.
 - Inform staff.
 - Communicate with parents.
 - Liaise with affected families.
 - Coordinate media responses.
 - Notify relevant agencies.
 - Consider partial or full school closure if necessary.
 - Arrange staff wellbeing supports.
 - Schedule review meetings.
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Following Day

The CIMT will:

1. Review events and actions taken.
 2. Arrange necessary supports for pupils, staff, and families.
 3. Plan visits to injured persons where appropriate.
 4. Liaise regarding funerals or memorial services.
 5. Continue communication with relevant agencies.
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Longer-Term Response

The school will:

1. Monitor pupils and staff who may require additional support.
 2. Facilitate access to professional services when needed.
 3. Continue engagement with outside agencies.
 4. Record lessons learned from the incident.
 5. Review and update school records.
 6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the response.
 7. Review and amend this policy if necessary.
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11. Critical Incident Response Plan (Off-Site Incidents)

Injury or Serious Illness

Immediate Actions

1. Contact Emergency Services (999 or 112).
2. Administer First Aid where appropriate.
3. Ensure the safety and supervision of all pupils.
4. Contact the school immediately (021 4878370)

If supervision of other pupils becomes difficult, staff should seek assistance from the bus driver, venue staff, Gardaí, or other appropriate personnel until additional support arrives.

Where a pupil or staff member is transported by ambulance, staff should use professional judgement regarding accompaniment, taking account of the supervision needs of the remaining pupils.

Missing Child Procedure

In the event that a child is unaccounted for:

1. Remain calm and note the time.
2. Ensure the safety and supervision of all other pupils.
3. Organise an immediate search by designated staff members.
4. Agree a short timeframe for reporting back.
5. Notify venue staff.
6. Contact An Garda Síochána if the child is not located promptly.
7. Contact the school immediately.
8. Maintain communication with the school and Gardaí.
9. Continue coordinated search efforts while ensuring pupil safety.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures will be reviewed:

- Following any critical incident.
- Following advice from relevant agencies.
- As part of the school's policy review cycle.
- At least every three years, or sooner if required.

Amendments arising from reviews, incidents, legislative changes, or guidance from the Department of Education will be incorporated into subsequent versions of the policy.

Ratification

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel School.

Date of Review: September 2026

Signed: __Billy Murphy
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Aisling Power

Principal

Date: 29/09/2026