

Belvedere College S.J. aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management, through the Headmaster Mr. Gerry Foley, has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (the 'CIMP') as one element of the school's policy in this regard.

Review and Research

The Critical Incident Management Team (the 'CIMT') has consulted a number of resource documents available to schools on www.education.ie and www.nosp.ie including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 201 6)
- 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 Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOH, HSE 2013)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)
- Child Protection Guidelines https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Child-Protection/child_protection_guidelines.pdf
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

Definition of a 'Critical Incident'

The staff and management of *Belvedere College* regard a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school". Critical incidents may involve one or more students or 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 causing significant distress or upset*
- *An accident involving members of the school community*
- *An accident/tragedy in the wider community*
- *Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc. which has caused serious distress to the school community*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*

Aim

The aim of the CIMP is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of a critical incident, to enable the College to maintain control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the 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 College

We have put systems in place to help to build resilience in staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of critical life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical safety measures

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur, both planned and unplanned
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked and issues are dealt with as they arise
- Pre-opening supervision in the school yard
- Building entrances are secure but not locked so evacuation is possible during school day and operation hours.

Psychological safety measures

The management and staff of *Belvedere College S.J.* 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 College and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is integrated into the work of the College. 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 roles 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 the primary/post primary school student are available
- Information is provided on mental health, in general, and on specific areas, such 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 developed links with a range of external agencies e.g. Jigsaw, Crosscare, Insight Matters
- 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 0023/2010 (Post-Primary)
- The College has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance therewith
- There is a care system in place in the College using the "Continuum of Support" approach which is outlined in the NEPS documents published on 2007 for primary schools and 2010 for post primary schools. See also Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools (2014). These documents are available on www.education.ie

- Students who are identified as being ‘at risk’ are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor or support teacher), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- In advance of an incident, CIMT will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc)
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team are selected on a voluntary basis and retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team 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		Headmaster (Deputy Principal in HM absence)
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Role

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Alerts Chair of the Board
- Coordinates the tasks of the team and may delegate responsibilities for certain activities as deemed appropriate
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; NEPS; SEC; Jesuit Communications Office
- Liaises with the bereaved family and/or those directly affected e.g. Form Tutor/Year Head
- Liaises with the Emergency Services, where appropriate
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.
- 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)

School co-ordinators		Deputy Principal & HR & Office Manager.
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Role

- 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
- Co-ordinates the Liaison Staff as identified.
- Liaise with Parents’ Association or Past Pupils’ Union where necessary
- 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 support and gives them the contact number.
- Assigns appropriate YH/FT/SEN Co-ordinator/SDP co-ordinator as part of CMT if deemed appropriate
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral

Site Liaison		Facilities Manager
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Role

- Liaises with team leader and School co-ordinators on site safety
- Manages security of site
- Communicates with Team Leader on school closure.

Staff Liaison		Guidance Counsellor
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Role

- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Co-ordinates information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies

Student Liaison		Chaplain
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Role

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed
- Provides a presence for students who may need support

School Community Liaison/CIMT Liaison		Headmaster's Secretary
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Role

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
 - Key parents, such as members of the Parents' Association
 - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records
- Manages diary of CMT for the duration of the incident.

Parent Liaison		Deputy Principal Rector
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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)

Administrator		School Secretary School Receptionist
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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 schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts

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, material used etc.

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

Confidentiality Considerations

ALL PUBLIC COMMUNICATION IS ONLY THROUGH HEADMASTER (OR DEPUTIES IN HIS ABSENCE

Management and staff of *Belvedere College* 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. College staff will bear this in mind and will 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 unless it has been legally established that a murder has, in fact, been committed. The term ‘violent death’ may be used instead. Members of CIMT do not use social media or discuss matters with others outside the group.

Critical Incident Rooms	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
Room Name	Designated Purpose
<i>Lecture Theatre</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Chapel</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Lecture Theatre</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Belvedere House</i>	Meetings with media
<i>Staff offices</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Belvedere House</i>	Meetings with other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

All staff are consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent/guardian representatives are also consulted and asked for their comments. The College 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 shall be informed of the details of the plan by the Critical Incident Team Leader.

The plan shall be reviewed annually.

Critical Incident Management Team for PUBLICATION	
Role	Name
Team leader	<i>Headmaster</i>
School Co-ordinators	<i>Deputy Principal/HR Manager</i>
Staff liaison	<i>Guidance Counsellor</i>
Student liaison	<i>Chaplin</i>
School Community Liaison/CIMT Liaison	<i>Headmaster's Secretary</i>
Parent liaison	<i>Deputy Principal/Rector</i>
Site Liaison	<i>Facilities Manager</i>
Administrator	<i>Receptionist</i>