



**De La Salle College  
Waterford  
Critical Incident Policy**



**Mission Statement:**

*"De La Salle College, Waterford is an all-boys Catholic school. It is a learning community where all students are valued and educated in preparation for a meaningful life"*

**Ethos:**

As a Le Cheile school in the De La Salle tradition De La Salle Waterford seeks to promote the key values of a Le Cheile school as espoused by life St. Jean-Baptiste De La Salle. Graduates of our school are characterised by a keen sense of the following:

- Intellectual Development
- Emotional and Social Development
- Moral Development
- Spiritual Development
- Concern for Others

Personal data collected about prospective students/students and their parents/guardians will be retained and used strictly in accordance with the provisions of GDPR legislation as introduced 25<sup>th</sup>. May 2018. Further details on data protection are set out in the school's Data Protection Policy.

De La Salle College Waterford aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. It is a learning community where all students are valued and educated in preparation for a meaningful life.

**Review and Research**

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) have consulted resource documents available to schools [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie) and [www.neps.ie](http://www.neps.ie) including:

- Responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines and Resources for Schools (NEPS 2016)
- Suicide Prevention in Schools: Best Practice Guidelines (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
- Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide (HSE2011)
- 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 2015)

## **Definition of 'critical incident'**

The staff and management of De La Salle College recognise 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, on-going illness, 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 in the wider community*
- *Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*

The above list is not exhaustive.

## **Aim of Plan:**

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan 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 effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should allow us to enable 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 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**

De La Salle College has recently revised its Health and Safety policy

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked Pre-opening supervision in the school yard, during break time and lunch time
- Safety guidelines for specialist rooms (Labs, Construction Studies, Home Economics, Art, and IT rooms, ASD special class, etc.)

## Psychological safety

The management and staff of De La Salle College 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 issues such as grief and loss; communications 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
- Wellbeing policy
- 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 the primary/post primary school student are available
- Information is provided on mental health in general and on 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 developed links with a range of external agencies - NEPS,
- 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 In 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](http://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.
- 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 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.

De La Salle College has set up a CIMT consisting of the following personnel:

The Principal, the Deputy Principals, The School Guidance Counsellors, the School Chaplain, Year Heads, School Secretaries. (The CIMT may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary).

The Principal will act as Team Leader or in his absence one of the Deputy Principals

#### **Team leader: {Tom Bourke, *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 where relevant

#### **Garda liaison (*Dec/an O'Brien, Deputy Principal*)**

##### **Role**

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

#### **Staff Liaison {Tom Bourke, *Principal*}**

##### **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. (Establish if there are any Staff members absent or on leave to ensure all staff are informed)
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder located in the Principal's office) Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the various supports available e.g. EAS and gives them the contact number.

### **Student liaison (*Eileen Doolan*) Deputy Principal, CGC's Year Head, Chaplain)**

#### **Role**

- At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

### **Parent liaison (*Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain and CGC's*)**

#### **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
- Meets with individual parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

### **Media liaison (*Tom Bourke, Principal*)**

#### **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 (*Deputy Principals*)**

#### **Role**

- Maintenance of telephone numbers of Parents/guardians
- In event of bereavement, removes student from VSware
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students (from their critical incident folder)
- Maintains student contact records.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room, where agreed

### **Community/agency liaison {*Carolyn Ahern Deputy Principal and CGC's*}**

#### **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
  - 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, VSware alerts, phone calls
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

### **Record keeping (*Deputy Principals*)**

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.

Karen, Susan and Charles will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

## **Confidentiality and good name considerations**

Management and staff of De La Salle 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. 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 consent 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.

Students will be informed if the school is making its facilities available for student support outside of normal school hours.

This policy was distributed, where relevant, to Staff, Parents / Parents Association and Students / Student Council for their review and approval.

Amendments have been made, where relevant, after consultation with these stakeholders.

**Adopted:**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **13<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Signed:   
Clare Ryan  
Chairperson, Board of Management

## Appendix 1: Useful Telephone Numbers

<b>Emergency Contact List</b>	
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Garda	051305300
Hospital	051848000
Fire Brigade	051849982
Local GPs (Catherine Street Medical Practice)	051- 875338
HSE	051842800
Community Care Team	051842924
Child and Family Centre (CAMHS)	051842881 051842146
School Inspector	051 310028
NEPS Psychologist	051310028
DES	090 6483600
ASTI	016040160
Clergy (Fr. John Tracy 051 843209)	051878977
State Exams Commission	090 6442744
Employee Assistance Service	1800411 057

## Appendix 2: Critical Incident Management Team

### Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)

Task	Name
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Team leader
Meet external agencies	Team Leader, CIMT
Meet whole staff	Team Leader
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	Team Leader/CGC/Chaplain
Visit the injured	Team Leader, CIMT
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Team Leader, CIMT
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Team Leader
Make decisions about school closure	BOM

### Follow-up - beyond 72 hours

Task	Name
Monitor students for signs of continuing distress	Class Teachers
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Team Leader/CG C's/ Year Head/Chaplain
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	Team Leader/Year Head/ CGC' s/Chaplain
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Team Leader/Year Head/Chaplain/Class Teachers
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	SOM/Staff, Parents and Students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/CIMT