



Document:	Cork ETB Youthreach Critical Incident Policy
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This policy should be read in conjunction with:	<a href="#">NEPS Responding to Critical Incidents in Centres – Guidelines and Resources for Youthreach and Community Training Centres, March 2017</a>

## Aim of Policy:

The aim of the CETB Youthreach Critical Incident Policy is to outline our approach to preventing and managing critical incidents in Youthreach centres; ensuring that every centre is prepared and has a plan in the event of critical incidents occurring.

## Definition of a critical Incident:

The staff and management of Cork ETB Youthreach Centres recognise a critical incident to be “an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the centre”. 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 centre community through sudden deaths, accident, suicide or terminal illness
- A serious accident or tragedy in the centre community
- Serious damage to the centre through fire, flooding vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the centre community
- A physical attack on a staff member or student
- Intrusion into the centre

## Section 1: Prevention

Cork ETB Youthreach Centres aim to prevent critical incidences putting measures in place to protect and ensure the safety of students and staff. These include promoting a supportive and caring ethos in the centres, providing physical and psychologically safe environment and by implementing the following policies in addition to this Critical Incident Policy:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Well Being Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- RSE/SPHE Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Page 2 of 15



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Additional supports in the centres include:

- An ethos of care
- Developed links with a range of external support agencies
- Key working sessions
- Personal counselling
- Guidance counselling
- SPHE and RSE
- Staff training on SPHE, Child Protection, mental health promotion and health and safety
- Information sessions on mental health for students
- Staff are aware of the [Employee Assistance Programme](#)

## Section 2: Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)

Planning is key to managing a critical incident is effectively. The aim of the Critical incident Management Plan is to help centre management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable staff 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 enable staff to effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Each centre will have developed a specific Critical Incident Management Plan for their centre based on the template in Appendix 1.

All staff should be consulted, and their views canvassed in the preparation of this plan. Students and parent/guardian representatives should also be consulted and asked for their comments.

This plan should be presented to all staff. Each member of the critical incident team should be provided with a personal copy of the plan, the Cork ETB Youthreach Critical Incident Policy and the [NEPS Responding to Critical Incidents in Centres – Guidelines and Resources for Youthreach and Community Training Centres, March 2017](#)

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the centre coordinator.

The plan will be updated annually at the beginning of each academic year.

### Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A Critical Incident team is established with key roles identified. The critical incident management team includes the coordinator, resource persons, counsellor, key workers and others co-opted by the coordinator and/or Cork ETB as appropriate.

Generally, the Centre Coordinator and Resource Persons play a key role in the CIT. The learning support practitioners such as counsellors and key workers will have a particularly valued contribution.

The CIMT may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary. The coordinator will act as team leader where appropriate or in their absence Resource Persons on cover.

## Section 3: Managing a Critical Incident

### General Principles

The following general principals should be followed when dealing with a critical incident:

- Students should be supported by people they know and trust. External professionals should be used primarily to advise and support staff.
- Routine is very important at a time of tragedy.
- It is ok to be upset.
- In the case of a bereavement, close friends of the deceased should be informed first and separately. This information is best delivered by someone they know in a safe, familiar environment.
- Stick to the facts and avoid rumours.
- Staff should be supported in what to say and how do deal with a situation.
- A designated quiet room is recommended
- Be aware of cultural or religious sensitivities
- Make early and regular contact with the affected family/ies

See [NEPS Responding to Critical Incidents in Centres – Guidelines and Resources for Youthreach and Community Training Centres, March 2017](#) for further details

### Responding to a Critical Incident.

The following sections of the [NEPS Responding to Critical Incidents in Centres – Guidelines and Resources for Youthreach and Community Training Centres, March 2017](#) should be referred to as appropriate

- Section 4: Responding to a critical incident: Immediate actions p.13

Page 4 of 15



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- Section 5 Responding to a critical incident: Medium-term actions p. 18
- Section 6 Responding to a critical incident: Follow-up and long-term actions p. 21
- Section 7 Responding to a suicide / suspected suicide p. 23
- Section 8 Responding to a road traffic accident or violent death p. 28
- Section 9 Dealing with traditional and social media during a critical incident p. 31
- Section 10 Critical incidents during certificate examinations p. 34

### 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.

If the centre has an admin support that person will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

### Confidentiality and good name considerations:

Cork ETB has 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 centre 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. Cork ETB Data Protection Policy will be adhered to at all times.

## Appendix 1: Template – Critical Incident Plan

This plan has been created in the event that a critical incident occurs in [insert name of centre]

### Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

Critical Incident Management Team		
Role	Name	Phone
Team leader:		
Garda liaison		
Staff liaison		
Student liaison		
Community liaison		
Parent liaison		
Media liaison		
Administrator		

### Role of Team Leader:

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates/delegates the tasks of the other team members
- Liaises with the AEO, Board of Management, CETB
- In the case of bereavement, liaises with the bereaved family
- Liaises with the Gardai
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared

### Staff liaison:

#### Role

Page 6 of 15



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- 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 the availability of the Inspire support service and gives them the contact number.

**Student liaison:****Role**

- Co-ordinate information from teachers and keyworkers 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
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed or available

**Community/agency liaison:****Role**

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
- Parents/guardians  
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
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

**Parent liaison:****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 centre policy

- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the centre'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:

#### 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 centre management)

### Administrator:

#### 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 centres system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

### Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of (*\*Edit\* Name of Centre*) 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.

<b>Critical Incident Rooms</b>	
In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes	
<b>Room Name:</b>	<b>Designated Purpose:</b>
	Main room for meeting staff
	Meetings with students
	Meetings with parents
	Meetings with media
	Individual sessions with students
	Meetings with other visitors

### Short term actions – Day 1

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Gather accurate information</b>	
<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	<b>All staff</b>
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	

<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	
<b>Inform parents</b>	
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	

## 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	
Meet whole staff	
Arrange support for students, staff, parents	
Visit the injured	
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	
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	
Plan for return of bereaved student(s)	
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and students
Review response to incident and amend plan	Staff/BOM

## EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

AGENCY	CONTACT NUMBERS
Garda	
Hospital	
Fire Brigade	
Local GPs	
HSE	
Cork ETB Designated AEO	Nuala Glanton 087-9879942
Cork ETB Head Office	021-4273377
Community Care Team	
Child and Family Centre	
Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	
School Inspector	
NEPS Psychologist	
DES	

Jigsaw	
Pieta House	
Clergy	
State Exams Commission	
Employee Assistance Service	1800 411 057



## Appendix 2: Additional Resources

### [National Office for Suicide Prevention](#)

### [National Educational Psychological Service Contacts](#)

- [NEPS Responding to Critical Incidents in Centres – Guidelines and Resources for Youthreach and Community Training Centres, March 2017](#)
- [Suicide Prevention in the Community - A Practical Guide](#) (HSE 2011)
- [Suicide Prevention in Schools – Best Practice Guidelines](#), (IAS, National Suicide Review Group (2002)
- [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)
- [Well-Being in Primary Schools – Resource Materials](#)