 **Critical Incident Management Policy:**

**School Name:** De La Salle College, Waterford.

**School Address:** Newtown, Waterford.

**School Roll Number:** 64950O

**School Details:** De La Salle Waterford is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship and the patronage of the Le Chéile Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

**School Management:** The Board of Management of De La Salle, Waterford is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

**Mission Statement:**

Inspired by its founder, the mission of the college is to: *“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 Chéile school in the De La Salle tradition De La Salle Waterford seeks to promote the key values of a le Chéile 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 25th. 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. 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. The Board of Management, through Principal Michael Walsh has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan as one element of the school’s policies and plans.

**Review and Research**

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) have consulted resource documents available to schools on [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 (HSE 2011)
* Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, DOE, HSE 2013)
* Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH, HSE 201 5)

**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 disappeanance of a member if 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 Room and IT room, 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
* Bool‹s and resources on difficulties affecting the primary/post 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 developed links with a range of external agencies — NEPS,
  + Inputs to students by external provider5 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, The 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: *(Michael Walsh, 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 *(Tom Bourke, 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 *(Michael Walsh, Principal)***

Role

* Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and asl‹ 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 Principals 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 *(Declan O’Brien 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

* In event of bereavement, remove student from VSware
* 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 *(Eileen Doolan 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
* 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 *(Michael Walsh, 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

- 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 leave 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.

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

**Approval:**

This policy has been distributed to staff, parents and students for their approval.

Amendments have been made after consultation with these stakeholders.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of De La Salle Waterford;

Chairperson: Nora Widger

Date: 27/04/23

This policy will be due for review on:

Date: April 2024

**Appendix 1: Useful Telephone Numbers**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Emergency Contact List** | |
| Agency | Contact Numbers |
| Garda | 051 305300 |
| Hospital | 051 848000 |
| Fire Brigade | 051 849982 |
| Local GPs (Catherine Street Medical Practice) | 051 - 875338 |
| HSE | 051842800 |
| Community Care Team | 051 842924 |
| Child and Family Centre | 051 842881 |
| (CAMHS) | 051 842146 |
| School Inspector | 051 310028 |
| NEPS Psychologist | 051 310028 |
| DES | 090 6483600 |
| ASTI | 01 6040160 |
| Clergy (Fr. John Tracy 051 843209) | 051 878977 |
| State Exams Commission | 090 6442744 |
| Employee Assistance Service | 1800411 057 |

**Appendix 2: Critical Incident Management Team**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Critical Incident Management Team | | |
| Role | Name | Phone |
| Team leader: | *Michael Walsh* | 087 7693186 |
| Garda liaison | *Tom Bourke* | 087 9176200 |
| Staff liaison | *Michael Walsh* | 087 7693186 |
| Student liaison | *Declan O’Brien* | 086 8168010 |
| Community liaison | *Eileen Doolan* | 086 4106221 |
| Parent liaison | *Michael Walsh* | 087 7693186 |
| Media liaison | *Michael Walsh* | 087 7693186 |
| Administrator | *Deputy Principals* |  |

**Appendix 3: Actions**

# Short term actions — Day 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Task |  |
| Gather accurate information | Team Leader |
| Who, what, when, where? | CIMT |
| Convene a CIMT meeting — specify time and place clearly | Team Leader |
| Contact external agencies | Principal/Deputies/CGC |
| Arrange supervision for students | Deputies/Year Heads |
| Hold staff meeting | Team Leader/All staff |
| Agree schedule for the day | Team Leader |
| Inform students — (close friends and students with learning  difficulties may need to be told separately) | Team Leader/CGC’s/Chaplain |
| Compile a list of vulnerable students | Year Heads, Class Teachers, Chaplain, GC’s |
| Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media | Team Leader |
| Inform parents | Team Leader |
| Hold end of day staff briefing | Team Leader |

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/CGC’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 | BOM/Staff, Parents and Students |
| Review response to incident and amend plan | Staff/BOM |