

Lucan Community College

Coláiste Phobail Leamhcáin
Lucan Community College



Critical Incident Policy

Last Updated: 17 June 2024

Signed: *Paul O'Connell*
Chairperson of board of management

Date: *19/6/24*

Definition of a Critical Incident:

Lucan Community College recognises a critical incident to be “any incident which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the College and disrupts the running of the College”.

Critical Incidents include but are not limited to:

- The death of a member of the college community through accident, violence, sudden death, serious illness, or suspected suicide.
- An accident involving pupils or staff on or off the college premises.
- Serious damage to the college building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or student(s) or intrusion into the college.
- The disappearance of a member of the college community.
- An accident or tragedy in the wider community.

Aim of Critical Incident Plan

The aim of the critical incident plan is to ensure that management and staff will react effectively and promptly to maintain control of the situation. The plan will also assist the college community to return to normal as quickly as possible and limit the effects of the incident on staff and students.

We acknowledge the complex nature of traumatic events/ bereavement which may have far reaching consequences, and can affect attitude, performance, and the ability to cope. It is, therefore, important for the college to have clear supportive strategies in place for our students and staff.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have put systems in place to help 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 and of the school community.

Physical safety:

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Supervision of the building before and during school

Psychological safety:

The management and staff of Lucan Community 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 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; 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 and wellbeing is an integral part of this provision.
- 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
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies – Pieta house, CAMHS and Jigsaw.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- 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)

Lucan Community College has a Critical Incident Management Team that includes the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellors, DDLETB Psychological Support Service and other staff members that are directly associated with the student(s).

Role of Crisis Response Team Members

The Crisis Response Team will establish a staff chain of communication to disseminate relevant information.

- The Critical Incident Management Team will ensure that new staff are made aware of the Critical Incident Plan.
- To brief and advise staff members.
- In case of bereavement, to clarify funeral arrangements.
- To liaise with other relevant support agencies, e.g. Psychological Support Service, Counsellors, etc.
- Alert staff to vulnerable students.
- Facilitate group and one-to-one question and answer meetings with staff and parents.

Team leader role: This will be the Principal and in the absence of the Principal it will be one of the Deputy Principals.

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DES; ETB; DDLETB Psychological Service, SEC
- Liaises with the bereaved family

Garda liaison role:

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

Staff liaison 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
- 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 EAS and gives them the contact number.

Student liaison role:

- Co-ordinates information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned with.
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
- Provides materials for students
- Maintains student contact records.
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

Community/agency liaison role:

- Provides access of 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 role:

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if appropriate
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- 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

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 school management)

Administrator role:

- Provide 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 school's system in advance and ready for adaptation

- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and texts
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records

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.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

Management and staff of Lucan Community 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 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.

Action Plan

Short Term action – Day 1

- Contact the family/families and gather accurate information. Clarify wishes of the family regarding the college's involvement.
- Convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team
- Contact appropriate agencies, e.g. emergency services, medical services, E.T.B., H.S.E., Psychological Support Service, BOM, DES / college Inspectorate.
- Set up a quiet room for staff/students e.g. A Critical incident room with counselling available.
- Hold a Staff meeting of all staff with a briefing of up-to-date information gathered so far.
- Organise a schedule/timetable for the day (Adhering to the normal college routine is important if this is possible).
- Inform students – close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately.
- Take note of any absentees who might need to be contacted i.e. list of friends or any other relevant information and report to the college office.
- Prepare a media statement, ensuring that all information is accurate and up to date.
- Have a staff briefing again at the end of day.

Medium Term Actions – 24 – 72 hours

- Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of Day 1.
- Refer any students who are a cause of concern to the relevant agencies.
- Attendance and participation at the funeral to be decided - in accordance with parents' wishes and college management decisions.
- Preparation of students / staff attending the funeral.
- Facilitation of student / staff responses, e.g. sympathy cards, flowers, book of condolences, etc in the context of the religious beliefs of the bereaved family.
- Possible memorial within the college – as guided by advice from psychological support service and religious leaders.
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary.
- Plan for the reintegration of students and staff, e.g. siblings, close relatives, etc. In particular, planning for the reintegration of students should take place as soon as possible following a critical incident.

Long Term – beyond 72 hours

- Class teachers and staff monitor students for signs of continuing distress e.g. uncharacteristic behaviour, deterioration in academic performance, increased absenteeism, physical symptoms such as weight loss etc.
- Where necessary, make referrals to relevant agencies.

- Decide on memorials and anniversaries and be aware that some staff / students may be particularly sensitive at these times.
- Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident Policy appropriately:
 1. What went well?
 2. Where were the gaps?
 3. What was most/least helpful?
 4. Have all necessary onward referrals to support services been made?
 5. Is there any unfinished business?

Appendix 1 - Emergency Telephone Numbers

General

Ambulance Emergency	999
D.D.L.E.T.B.	01 45239600
D.D.L.E.T.B. Psychological Support Service	01 4598446
Lucan Garda Station	01 6667300
Clondalkin Drugs Task Force	01 4579445
Bawnogue Youth and Family Support Centre	01 4572938
Lucan Youth Services	01 6217640
Dochas Family Centre	01 6234531
Beacon of Light Counselling Centre	01 4578700
Pieta House	01 6010000
Parent line	1890 927277
Irish Association of Suicidology	01 6674900
Rainbows	01 4734175
Barnardos	01 4530355
Samaritans	1850 609090
Childline	1800 666666
Aware	1890 303302

Medical

Tallaght Hospital	01 4142000
James Connolly Memorial Hospital	01 8213844
Our Lady's Hospital Crumlin	01 4558111
St James Hospital	01 4537941
Ballyowen Health Centre	01 6214388
Lucan Health Centre Sarsfield Park	01 6281395
Lucan Pharmacy	01 6280652

Undertakers

Cunninghams Undertakers	01 8202266
Massey Bros, Clondalkin	01 4574455

General Practise

Mary Boyd, Hillcrest	01 6244300
Denise Collins, Esker Lawns	01 6280654
Feeney/Walsh, Dodsboro	01 6241181
Teresa Golden, Finnstown	01 6212288
Panos Harris, Lucan Village	01 6280652
James Lee, Ballyowen	01 6214224
David Lombard, Esker Lawns	01 6280654
Paul Stewart, Ballyowen	01 6214224

Schools/Colleges

Adamstown Community College	01 6540348
Colaiste Cois Life, Gleann an Grifin	01 6211825
Colaiste Phadraig Roselawn CBS	01 6282299
Lucan Ed Together	01 6281298
Griffioen Ed Together	01 6240160
Gaelscoil Naomh Pdraig Lucan	01 6241355
Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada Lucan	01 6210342
Lucan East Educate Together	01 6212690
St Andrews NS	01 6280975
St. Annes NS	01 6281972
St. Josephs Presentation College	01 6281160
St. Marys Boys Chapel Hill NS	01 6281857
St. Thomas NS	01 6282691
Scoil Aine Naofa	01 6281972
Scoil Mhuire Lucan Road NS	01 6280056
Scoil Mhuire Woodview NS	01 6240203
Archbishop Ryan Senior college	01 4670689
Archbishop Ryan Junior college	01 4573095
Lucan Youthreach, Esker Hill	01 6282840

Parish Info

Esker St. Patricks CC	01 6280948/6283205
Lucan Methodist Church	01 6280666
Lucan Presbyterian Church	01 6281233/6280217
St. Andrews Church of Ireland	01 6249147/6245412
St. Marys Church CC	01 6217041