



## **Critical Incident Policy**

**2020-2021**

<b>School Name:</b>	Greenhills Community College
<b>School Address:</b>	Limekiln Avenue, Walkinstown, Dublin 12.
<b>School Details:</b>	Greenhills Community College is an all boy's Secondary School under the Trusteeship of the Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB).
<b>School Management:</b>	The Board of Management of Greenhills Community College is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the DDLETB.

## **Mission Statement**

Greenhills Community College endeavours to be a caring community seeking to stimulate and foster the physical, intellectual, moral, emotional and spiritual growth of our students. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all the school community can achieve their full potential.

### **Note:**

This policy document is divided into 3 parts:

1. Critical Incident Policy
2. Procedures in the event of a Critical Incident
3. Appendices

## **Part 1 – Critical Incident Policy**

### **Introduction**

Greenhills Community College aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. In accordance with our Mission Statement “we work together to create a positive and affirming teaching and learning environment in which our pupils are encouraged to reach their full potential in all aspects of their lives. An awareness of the needs of everyone in our community is recognised and respected.”

Accordingly, the school has formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students during the normal course of the school day.

In the event of a Critical incident the following Critical Incident Management policy is in place.

### **Aim**

The aim of the Critical Incident Management policy is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of critical incident, to enable us to maintain good management and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. Having this policy in place will help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited and effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all students and staff in the school. While the procedures outlined focus primarily on the care and support of students, these procedures can be easily adapted to be used in the event of a Critical Incident involving a member of staff.

### **Definition of Critical Incident**

Greenhills Community College recognises a Critical Incident to be “a traumatic incident or sequence of events that severely challenges the normal coping mechanisms of the school, and disrupts the normal running of the school”.

Critical incidents may involve students, staff, the school or the local community.

Examples of a critical incident may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- The death of a member of the school community, through sudden death, accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide
- A serious accident involving members of the school community
- Serious damage to the school through fire, flooding vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- A fatal or near-fatal physical attack on a student or staff member

### **Creation of a Supportive and Caring Ethos in the School**

Systems are 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**

To ensure the physical safety of all who attend and visit the school a number of systems are in place which are detailed in our Health and Safety policy. These include:

- Formulation of an Evacuation plan
- Regular fire drills
- Fire exits and extinguishers regularly checked
- Corridor and door duty
- A number of staff trained in First Aid
- CCTV

#### **Psychological safety**

The school aims 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.

Examples include:

- 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 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
- 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 support agencies

- 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.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy
- There is an effective Student Care programme in place in the school
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. Counsellor), 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. Each member of the team has a dedicated Critical Incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident. For this year, the school's Care Team will be the CIMT.

The Critical Incident Management Team consists of the following personnel:

- The Principal: Ms Ann Bray
- The Deputy Principal: Ms Noirin Lannon
- The School Guidance Counsellor(s): Ms Caroline Golden Brady & Ms Brid Brennan
- The DDLETB Psychological Support Services
- The Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator:
- The School Policy Co-ordinator (Administrative Role): Ms Ann Bray & Ms Noirin Lannon
- Other personnel relevant to the management of the incident  
Year Heads: Mr Ciaran Stone & Mr Tadhg Farrelly

Tutors: Ms Katie Galvin, Mr Barry Egan, Ms Louise Scully, Ms Karen Sewell, Mr Sean Ennis, Ms Lisa Albuquerque, Ms Aisling O'Brien, Ms Deborah Middleton, Mr David Waters.

- SEN Department: Ms Angela Crowley (SEN Coordinator), Ms Maria Murtagh, Ms Josephine Healy, Ms Bernie Healy, Mr Damien Lee, Ms Iona Brady, Ms Sile Comiskey, Mr Paul Barnes, Ms Deirdre O'Dwyer
- Caretaker: Mr William McArdle

Should a critical incident occur, the Principal/Deputy Principal will act as Team Leader and members of the CIMT will be assigned various roles and responsibilities in accordance with their training and expertise.

Should a member of the team feel they are not in a position to fulfil their role they have a professional obligation to absent themselves from the team at the time.

Outlined below are some of the key responsibilities of members of the CIMT should a Critical Incident occur. These responsibilities are grouped under the headings of specific roles but may be carried out by one or more members of the CIMT as designated by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

**Team leader: Ms Ann Bray/Ms Noirin Lannon**

- Alerts the team members to the critical incident and convenes a meeting.
- Coordinates the tasks of the team.
- Liaises with the Board of Management; DDLETB; Psychological Support Service.
- Liaises with the Gardaí.
- Ensures that information to be shared is factual and accurate.
- Leads briefing meetings for staff and outlines the routine for the day.
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses.
- Media liaison, if required.

**Staff Liaison: Ms Ann Bray/ Ms Noirin Lannon**

- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students.
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder).
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.
- Advises staff of the availability of the EAS and gives them the contact number.

**Student Liaison personnel: Ms Noirin Lannon**

- Co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about.
- Alert other staff to vulnerable students.
- Provide materials for students (from their critical incident folder).
- Keep records of students seen by external agency staff.
- Look after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed.

**Community/Agency Liaison: Ms Ann Bray/ Ms Noirin Lannon**

- 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: HSCL**

- Visits the bereaved family.
- Arranges parent meetings.
- Sets up room for meetings with parents.
- Maintains a record of parents seen.
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder).

### **Administration: Ms Ann Bray & Ms Noirin Lannon**

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers.
- Ensures that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation.
- Prepares draft letters, emails.
- Assists in organisational arrangements.

### **Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations**

The school accepts its responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, 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' will not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

### **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.

### **Consultation and Communication of the Policy**

Staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Students and parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Each member of the CIMT will keep a hard copy of the policy at home and in their office. The policy is accessible to all staff in the Policy Folder on the shared drive. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan.

All members of the CIMT and the Teacher in Charge (in the absence of both the Principal and Deputy Principal) will ensure they have the contact details of the school caretakers and all members of the CIMT.

This policy will be updated annually by the CIMT and the Guidance and Counselling departments.

### Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident, the following rooms are designated for the indicated purposes

<b>Room Name:</b>	<b>Designated Purpose:</b>
<i>Staff Rooms</i>	Main room for meeting staff
<i>Room 7</i>	Meetings with students
<i>Board Room</i>	Meetings with parents
<i>Board Room, Junior School</i>	Meetings with media
<i>HSCL Office</i> <i>Year Heads Office</i>	Individual sessions with students
<i>Board Room, Junior School</i>	Meetings with other visitors

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Team leader:</b>	<i>Ann Bray</i>
<b>Garda liaison</b>	<i>Ann Bray</i>
<b>Staff liaison</b>	<i>Noirin Lannon</i>
<b>Student liaison</b>	<i>Angela Crowley, Ciaran Stone, Tadhg Farrelly</i>
<b>Community liaison</b>	<i>HSCL</i>
<b>Parent liaison</b>	<i>HSCL</i>
<b>Media liaison</b>	<i>Ann Bray</i>
<b>Administrator</b>	<i>Ann Bray &amp; Noirin Lannon</i>

## **Part 2 - Procedures to be followed in the event of a Critical Incident:**

### **Short term actions – Day 1**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Gather accurate information</b>	<b>Ann Bray &amp; Noirin Lannon</b>
<b>Who, what, when, where?</b>	<b>Ann Bray &amp; Noirin Lannon</b>
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly</b>	<b>Ann Bray</b>
<b>Contact external agencies</b>	<b>Ann Bray</b>
<b>Arrange supervision for students</b>	<b>Noirin Lannon</b>
<b>Hold staff meeting</b>	<b>All staff</b>
<b>Agree schedule for the day</b>	<b>CIMT</b>
<b>Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)</b>	<b>Angela Crowley, Ciaran Stone, Tadhg Farrelly</b>
<b>Compile a list of vulnerable students</b>	<b>SEN Department</b>
<b>Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media</b>	<b>Ann Bray</b>
<b>Inform parents</b>	<b>Noirin Lannon</b>
<b>Hold end of day staff briefing</b>	<b>Ann Bray &amp; Noirin Lannon</b>

### **Day 1: Immediate Actions – before School commences**

On notification of a critical incident the Principal will convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team to:

- Establish accurate information
- Assign roles and responsibilities
- Agree schedule for the day
- Contact external agencies, as appropriate
- Arrange for supervision of students
- Hold staff meeting – with a briefing to staff from a counsellor on how to manage classes, if required (See Appendix A17)
- Inform students – (close friends and students with learning difficulties may need to be told separately)
- Compile a list of vulnerable students
- Contact/visit the bereaved family
- Inform parents
- Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media, if required
- Hold end of day staff briefing

### Medium term actions - (Day 2)

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1</b>	<b>Ann Bray</b>
<b>Meet external agencies</b>	<b>Ann Bray</b>
<b>Meet whole staff</b>	<b>Ann Bray &amp; Noirin Lannon</b>
<b>Arrange support for students, staff, parents</b>	<b>Noirin Lannon</b>
<b>Visit the injured</b>	<b>HSCL</b>
<b>Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements</b>	<b>HSCL</b>
<b>Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service</b>	<b>Ann Bray &amp; Noirin Lannon</b>
<b>Make decisions about school closure</b>	<b>BOM</b>

### Medium-Term Actions (24 - 72 Hours)

- Review the events of the first 24 hours:
- Reconvene the Critical Incident Management Team
- Decide arrangements for support meetings for parents/students/staff
- Meet with external agencies, if required
- Ensure all staff are kept up to date on any developments
- Be sensitive to how all staff are coping on a personal and professional level
- Update media, if necessary
- Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out
- Plan for reintegration of students and staff (absentees, injured, siblings, etc.)
- Plan visits to injured
- Liaise with the family regarding funeral arrangements
- Decide attendance and participation at funeral in accordance with parents' wishes and school management decisions and in consultation with close friends
- Request a decision on school closure from the DDLETB, if appropriate

### **Follow-up – beyond 72 hours**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Monitor students for signs of continuing distress</b>	<b>Class Tutors &amp; Class teachers</b>
<b>Liaise with agencies regarding referrals</b>	<b>Guidance Department</b>
<b>Plan for return of bereaved student(s)</b>	<b>Noirin Lannon, Year Heads</b>
<b>Decide on memorials and anniversaries</b>	<b>BOM/Staff, parents and students</b>
<b>Review response to incident and amend plan</b>	<b>Management Team, Staff, BOM</b>

### **Long-Term Tasks**

In the aftermath of a critical incident:

- Keep in contact with the family/families concerned
- Monitor students for signs of stress
- Liaise with agencies, if required
- Be sensitive to occasions such as birthdays, Christmas, anniversaries etc.
- Organise school services/memorial as appropriate
- Provide appropriate support
- Evaluate response to incident and amend critical incident plan accordingly
- Inform new staff and students if appropriate