



Institúid Bhreisoideachais  
na Carraige Duibhe

Blackrock Further  
Education Institute

# **Critical Incident Management Policy**

**September 2024**

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## **Introduction**

Blackrock Further Education Institute (BFEI) aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment. BFEI is dedicated to the development of the full potential of learners, intellectually, emotionally and vocationally, while also enhancing their independence, constructive criticism, co-operation and care for others, in a supportive, inclusive environment. BFEI places students and their well-being at the centre of all activities and is committed to ongoing improvement in the services offered to students.

Most incidents are managed on a day-to-day basis with a natural informed response. However, situations may arise of an overwhelming nature which require an exceptional, planned and coordinated response.

## **Definition of a Critical Incident**

A critical incident is defined as: any incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the College. A critical incident may involve one or more learners or staff members, or members of the College community or the wider community.

The following are examples of a critical incident:

- The death of a member or members of the College community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death.
- A serious accident involving a member or members of the College community.
- A major accident or tragedy in the wider community.
- The disappearance or abduction of a member or members of the College community.
- Serious damage to the College building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- A situation with excessive media interest.
- An unplanned disruption or degradation of IT services or systems that impacts the information being processed, stored, or transmitted by these systems.

## **Creation of a Coping Supportive and Caring Ethos**

BFEI has systems in place to build resilience in both staff and learners, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the College community.

**Physical Safety**: measures taken by BFEI to ensure the physical safety of the College community include:

- Evacuation plan formulated and clearly visible in each room
- Regular evacuation drills
- Fully functional and regularly serviced Fire and Security Alarm Systems
- Emergency exits and fire extinguishers regularly checked
- Access controls at main door(s)
- Induction for all new learners and staff.

**Psychological Safety:** measures in place to ensure the psychological safety of the College community include:

- The operation of a care system comprising **Course Coordinators, Department Heads and Guidance Counsellors**. Course Co-ordinators monitor and assist each student within a class group. CCs take a direct personal interest in each student and are available for advice, guidance and help as required. They focus special attention on each student and monitor all aspects of their progress. Students should consult CCs about overall performance, special arrangements and difficulties. Department Heads have overall responsibility for the running of their department, and are available for advice, guidance and help as required. They take an interest in the performance of each class group and individual students. They are available, by arrangement, to consult with students. BFEI has a full-time Guidance & Counselling Service which is available to all full-time students and is free and confidential.
- Referral of at risk learners to the Guidance Team who will explore concerns and provide the appropriate level of assistance and support. Where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.
- The implementation of an Anti-Bullying Policy for learners and staff.
- Staff familiarity with Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures.
- Staff familiarity with supports available through the Employee Assistance Service.
- Access to the Psychological Support Service in Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB).

### **Critical Incident Management Planning**

The key to managing a critical incident is planning. Research suggests that an effective response during the first 48 hours is crucial.

The aim of BFEI's Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) is to:

- enable the College community to react quickly and effectively in the event of a crucial incident and thus maintain control.
- ensure that appropriate supports are offered to learners and staff.
- maintain the normal routine as much as possible.
- ensure that the effects on the learners and staff will be minimised.
- enable the College return to normal as soon as possible, while being aware of the phased needs of those affected.

The CIMP will vary depending on the nature of the critical incident.

### **Critical Incident Management Team**

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) are the members of College staff who will steer the development and implementation of the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) in response to a critical incident. They will advise and support all members of the College Community.

## Key Roles of the Critical Incident Management Team

The key roles which need to be assigned to members of the CIMT are:

- Team Leader
- Garda Liaison
- Staff Liaison
- Learner Liaison
- Community/Agency Liaison
- Parent/Guardian Liaison
- Media Liaison
- Administrator

The responsibilities of each role are outlined below:

<b>Team Leader</b>	<b>Garda Liaison</b>	<b>Staff Liaison</b>
Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting.	Liaises with the Gardaí.	Briefs staff on the facts as known. Outlines the routine for the day. Provides regular updates.
Coordinates the tasks of the team.	Ensures that information is accurate before being shared.	Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable learners.
Liaises with the Board of Management; Director of FET, DDLETB, NEPS.		Provides materials and supports to staff (Employees Assistance Scheme (EAS)/other support).
Liaises with the bereaved family/families.		Contacts vulnerable learners individually.

<b>Learner Liaison</b>	<b>Community/Agency Liaison</b>
May co-ordinate information from teachers about learners they are concerned about.	Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of emergency support services and other external contacts and resources.
Alerts other staff to vulnerable learners (appropriately).	Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral.
Provides materials for learners.	Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support.
Keeps records of learners seen by external agency staff.	Co-ordinates the involvement of these agencies.
Looks after setting up and supervision of “quiet” room where agreed.	Reminds agency staff to wear name badges.
	Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies.

**Family Liaison**

Visits the concerned family/families with the team leader if deemed appropriate at the time.

Arranges meetings, if necessary. May facilitate such meetings and manage “questions and answers”.

Manages the “consent” issues in consultation with the family.

Ensures that sample letters are typed up and ready for adaptation.

Sets up room for meetings with families.

Maintains a record of meetings with families.

Meets with individual’s parents/guardians.

**Media Liaison**

Media queries are managed by DDLETB Head Office and will be directed to [media@ddletb.ie](mailto:media@ddletb.ie).

**Administrator**

Maintenance of telephone numbers of staff, learners and emergency services.

Takes telephone calls and notes those that need a response.

Ensures that templates are on college system in advance and ready for adaptation.

Prepares and send out letters, emails and texts.

Photocopies materials needed.

Maintains records.

**Critical Incident Management Team Members**

<b>Staff Member</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Critical Incident Role</b>
Principal	Tina Reddin	Team Lead/Garda Liaison/Media Liaison
Deputy Principals	Sheelah Biggs Breda Lillis Lucy Tierney	Staff Liaison
Assistant Principals I Post Holders	Frank Griffin Joan Gallagher Marian Mulvey Flood Ed Jennings Emer Tubridy Gillian Byrne Michelle Lynch	Student and Family Liaison

<b>Staff Member</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Critical Incident Role</b>
Guidance Counsellors	Liz Swords Catherine Smith Sheila O Hara Karl Murray	Student & Community/Agency Liaison
College Administrators	Cathy Cassidy Patricia Fitzgerald Gwen Moran	Administration
Caretakers	Michael Brennan Stephen Butler Sean Cullen	Caretaker

### **Record Keeping**

Each member of the CIMT will keep records, in accordance with GDPR requirements, of phone calls made and received, letters, emails and texts sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used and material used, etc.

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

The management and staff of BFEI have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of those involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements.

Media calls/enquiries should be directed immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal. Staff should not comment or engage on the matter. All media queries are managed by DDLETB Head Office and will be directed by the College to [media@ddletb.ie](mailto:media@ddletb.ie).

In the event of unexpected death of a member or members of the College community, guidance provided by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) advises staff and students to use the phrase “tragic death or sudden death”. The words “suicide” or “murder” should not be used.

### **Critical Incident Rooms**

In the event of a critical incident, the following locations will be used for meetings:

<b>Meetings with</b>	<b>Designated Room</b>
Staff	206
Parents/Guardians	G07
Learners	Cafeteria/208/209/G08/211
Individual learners	Guidance Counsellor Offices
Other visitors	Boardroom

### **Consultation and Communication**

All staff were consulted, and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy.

Learner representatives were also consulted. BFEI's plan for responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff. Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

The plan will be reviewed and updated annually.



## Critical Incident Management Plan

BFEI's response will be sensitive to learners with additional needs, those who are vulnerable and those with different religious beliefs and different traditions.

<b>Short Term Actions – Day 1</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Gather accurate information – Who, What, Where, When	Principal
Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place clearly	Principal
Contact External Agencies	Guidance Counsellors
Make appropriate arrangements for classes	Deputy Principal
Hold staff meeting	Principal
Agree schedule for the day	All staff
Inform learners	Staff member who knows the learner/s best
Compile list of vulnerable learners	Course Coordinators & Guidance Counsellors
Inform parents/guardians where appropriate	Principal/Deputy Principal/Guidance
Hold end of day staff briefing	Principal

<b>Medium Term Actions – Day 2 and following days</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Convene a CIMT meeting to review the events of day 1	Principal
Meet external agencies	Principal/Deputy Principal/ Guidance
Meet whole staff	Principal
Arrange support for learners and staff including referral procedures	Principal/Deputy Principal/ Guidance
Visit the injured	Principal
Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements	Principal
Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service	Principal/Deputy Principal
Make decisions about college closure where appropriate	Principal/BOM

<b>Follow up – beyond 72 hours</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Name</b>
Monitor learners for signs of continuing distress	Class teachers and Course Coordinators
Liaise with agencies regarding referrals	Principal/Deputy Principal/Guidance
Plan for return of bereaved learner/s	Department Head and Course Coordinators
Plan for giving of 'memory box' to bereaved family	Class teachers
Decide on memorials and anniversaries	BOM/Staff, parents and learners
Review response to incident and amend plan	Principal & Staff/BOM