

Policy Identifier: Marino Institute of Education Critical Incident Care Plan

Policy Title:	Marino Institute of Education Critical Incident Care Plan
Description:	Policy outlining the procedure to be followed with a view to managing the wellbeing of all MIE students and staff in the event of a critical incident occurring.
Author (Position):	The President/Vice Presidents/Delegated Person in consultation with the Initial Response Team
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Approved By:	MIE Governing Body
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Marino institute of Education Critical Incident Care Plan

1. Introduction

This document sets out the procedures to be followed with a view to managing the wellbeing of all Marino Institute of Education (MIE) students and staff in the event of a critical incident occurring. The President/Vice Presidents (VPs)/Delegated Person (DP) in consultation with the Initial Response Team, is responsible for taking decisions around the implementation of this Plan and has a co-ordinating role throughout. If a critical incident occurs The President/VPs/DP will convene the Initial Response Team as soon as possible in order to decide the details of the response and carry them out. This Plan aims to cover most aspects of an effective response to a critical incident. The extent to which it is implemented in any instance is a matter of judgement by the President/VPs/DP and Team and will depend on the gravity and circumstances of the incident ([Appendix 1](#): Tier 1-4 Emergency Distinctions as per Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin (hereafter referred to as Trinity) [Emergency Response Plan](#) for guidance)

2. Critical Incident

A 'critical incident' (often termed 'a traumatic event') is a sudden, unanticipated incident or circumstance that produces a high degree of distress causing an immediate or delayed emotional reaction that surpasses the normal coping mechanisms of the people affected. Examples include: serious injury or sudden death, especially on campus; serious assault or rape; robbery, bomb threat, or similar. Traumatic incidents may affect just one person. Incidents may also be of a larger, more public traumatic nature which affect the whole campus community¹.

3. Initial Response

This involves helping those affected by a critical incident to cope with the immediate effects, and also seeks to ameliorate long term emotional difficulties. Since lack of information and isolation add to stress, the initial response will involve the provision of:

- Accurate information about what happened

¹ This Plan should be read in conjunction with the [Safety Statement Policy](#)

- Practical supports such as a place to rest, talk and recover, and some sustenance
- Advice about how to cope with the immediate stress
- Various forms of emotional support
- Accommodation for affected families
- Attention to phone enquiries/media interest with a view to minimising the possible extra stress caused by publicity. The media should be provided with a written statement giving the facts about the incident, stressing that it is a difficult time for all concerned and outlining what has been done already by MIE in order to support all concerned, and what is going to be done. Any interviews should be carefully prepared for and may be declined if it is thought appropriate to do so. There should be a request to respect the privacy of the family. A prompt statement to the media may help to avoid misinformation ([Appendix 4](#)).

4. Initial Response Team

This team consists of a number of staff members who have agreed to be at the heart of MIE's response to a critical incident (Figure 1). The team must have raised their awareness of the possibility of crises occurring and must have engaged in forward planning for such eventualities. They will have prepared themselves by studying, discussing and approving this Critical Incident Care Plan of MIE, and the Initial Response Team Handout ([Appendix 2](#)).

There will be three designated roles on the team. These will be decided on the day:

- Student & Staff Liaison Person
- Bereaved Family Liaison Person
- Media Liaison Person.

In order to ensure general readiness and a clear understanding of, and ease with their role and duties, response team members will meet at the commencement of each academic year. This meeting will provide for review of the Plan, an updating of contact numbers and for integrating new team members.

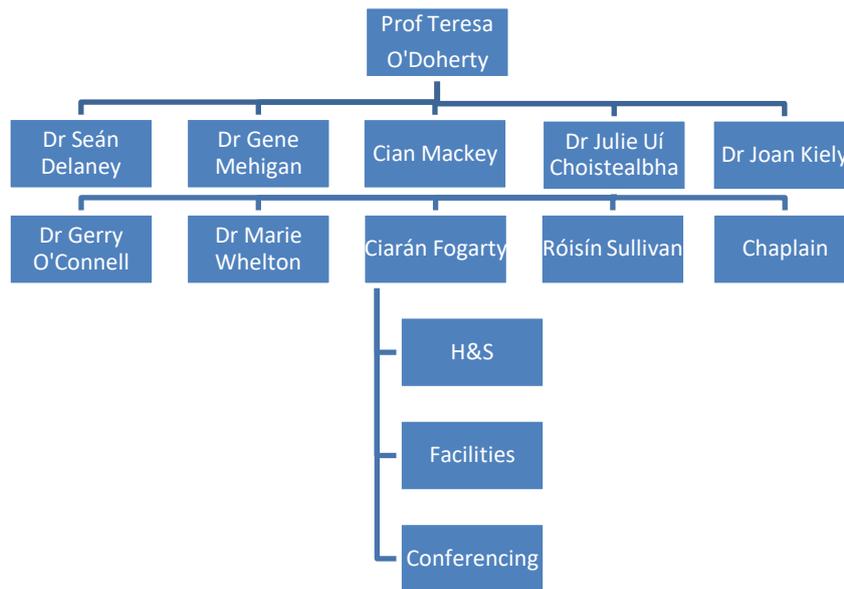


Figure 1: Initial Response Team

5. Critical Incident Involving the Whole Campus Community

The Initial Response Team is assembled as soon as possible after the event. The President/VPs/DP gets accurate information about the incident. A check is made that Emergency Services and Gardaí are at the scene, if relevant. Decisions are made around implementing all or part of the Critical Incident Care Plan.

- The team assesses the significance and probable impact of what has happened.
- The designated Student/Staff Liaison Person supplies each member of the team with a written version of what has happened ([Appendix 3](#)) and with the Initial Response Team Handout ([Appendix 2](#)).
- Arrangements are made for informing next of kin, if relevant.
- Students and staff are assembled and addressed by the Initial Response Team.
- A decision is made about continuing or temporary suspension of the work of MIE.
- A method of informing and supporting students on School/Work Placement or otherwise off-campus is devised.

6. Critical Incident/Death Occurring Off-Campus

Should a staff member become aware of a sudden death (or other traumatic incident) involving [an MIE student](#) or staff member, this news should be communicated as soon as possible to the President. Whoever receives the news in the first instance should obtain as much accurate information as possible. It is important to verify the original source of the information and in so far as this may be possible, to confirm this information. If the original source of the information is not the family, then they should be contacted and their wishes should be ascertained as to how the incident/death will be described.

- The President/VPs/DP will inform the Critical Incident Response Team and decide who else needs to be informed and how this will be done.
- The President/VPs/DP will decide on the details of MIE's response.
- In the case of a death, MIE will be represented at the funeral. In some cases it may be appropriate for MIE to arrange or fund bus transport to a funeral for fellow classmates of a [deceased student](#). A wreath or a Mass card will be sent by the President. Other staff may contact the family and offer condolences as appropriate.
- Classes may be suspended for the duration of the funeral. Deadlines for projects may need to be extended; assessments may need to be deferred.
- It may be appropriate to hold a memorial service in MIE.
- Care must be taken by the Registrar's Office to ensure that class lists are amended, and that no documentation is sent to a [deceased student](#).
- The student's absence should be acknowledged by each lecturer at their first lecture after the death.

7. Death by Suicide

7.1 There is need for great sensitivity when dealing with death by suicide. Great care should be taken in labelling how the death occurred. It is suggested that when telling the bereaved about the cause of death, the word 'suicide' not be used, nor the phrase, 'they took their own life'. Instead, explain where the deceased person was found, and that the Gardaí have finished their enquiries, have ruled out foul play and

that it was not an accident. The [bereaved](#) are now aware of the situation and so can begin to use the word 'suicide' should they feel ready to do so.

7.2 A similar approach is recommended when communicating news of a suicide to [students](#). The facts should be stated, without providing details as to how the death occurred. It should be referred to as a 'tragedy,' a 'tragic event', or one might speak about the 'mystery' of why things like this happen. Students should be reminded that it is important to talk about our problems with people who will provide support. They should be told that sadly, people's thinking can become so distorted that they forget that support is always available and see no way out. In view of the guilt often felt by those close to the deceased person, it is important to emphasise that those grieving are not responsible in any way for this occurrence, and that there is nothing they could have done to prevent it.

7.3 Follow-up

i. Debriefing for the Initial Response Team

A day or two after the event the President/VPs/DP will assemble the Initial Response Team to afford an opportunity to all to express their views and feelings. The team and President will be aware of the need for mutual support in the face of tragedy; they may be given professional support as appropriate.

After a traumatic incident an evaluation of the MIE response will take place at a suitable time. This may result in modification of the Critical Incident Care Plan.

ii. [Support for Students](#) & Staff After the Event

The way in which people are supported in the immediate period after a traumatic event is critical to their psychological recovery, their relationships and their continued good performance at their work/study. This is particularly the case if feelings associated with prior trauma were not satisfactorily worked through and become attached to the present incident, causing a person/persons to feel overwhelmed. The intervention of specifically trained and experienced professionals may well be needed in some instances. In the case of students, in consultation with student representatives, the President/VPs/DP will decide on appropriate follow-up procedures. Depending on the identified needs, such procedures may range from work with the totality of students, to work with

identified groups, to work with affected individuals. The [Counselling Service in Trinity](#) may be used in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between MIE and the service in Trinity. Supports may also include home visits and special religious services. Voluntary support groups may be set up. In the longer term deceased persons may be commemorated in some way. Practical issues such as insurance may also have to be dealt with.

8. Responsibility

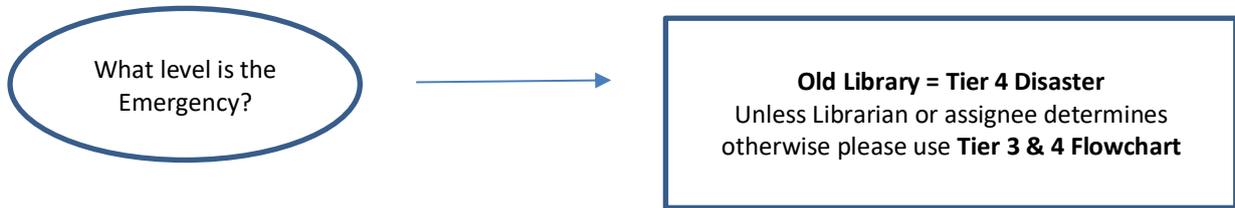
The President/VPs/DP in consultation with the Initial Response Team, is responsible for taking decisions around the implementation of this Plan and has a co-ordinating role throughout.

9. Related Documents

- 9.1 [Bereavement Support Procedure – on the Death of a Student](#)
- 9.2 [Tutor System Policy](#)
- 9.3 [Tutor System Procedure](#)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Tier 1-4 Emergency Distinctions; Emergency Response Plan



Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
<p>Minor, localised or building emergency, unlikely to result in personal injury or extensive damage, can be resolved by College personnel and resources. If outside of regular working hours department where problem occurred may need to be notified, personnel may need to be called to attend to emergency. Activation of the Emergency Response Plan may be required. Example: broken water pipe</p>	<p>An emergency in a functional area and/or building may result in personal injury or some physical damage, can likely be resolved by College personnel, internal resources or limited external assistance. Limited duration and little impact beyond those using space/building. Activation of Emergency Response Plan may be required. Also, incidents involving risks to any student or members of College community requiring co-ordination of institutional/support. Examples: temporary electrical outage, minor fire confined to a room, minor chemical spill, minor radiation release. Also assault, sexual assault, bomb threat, suicide on campus, hate crime</p>	<p>An emergency, which cannot be managed internally, has potential to generate serious harm for members of College and/or external community. Immediate activation of the Emergency Response Plan is required. College's response will be coordinated through the Emergency Control Room. Examples: extended electrical outage, major fire, bomb incident, outbreak of high-risk infectious disease, water contamination.</p>	<p>A disaster, which cannot be managed internally, which constitutes a danger to major proportion to life or property, for members of College and/or external community. Immediate activation of the Emergency Response Plan is required. College's response is coordinated through the Emergency Control Room. May be single or multiple hazards, requires extensive coordination within and outside College. Examples: major national disaster, major explosion. Organised/prolonged hostage taking, active shooter.</p>
<p>This is a Tier 1 level emergency – please process using Tier 1 & 2 flowchart</p>	<p>This is a Tier 2 level emergency – please process using Tier 1 & 2 flowchart</p>	<p>This is a Tier 3 level emergency – please process using Tier 3 & 4 flowchart</p>	<p>This is a Tier 4 level emergency – please process using Tier 3 & 4 flowchart</p>

Appendix 2: Initial Response Team Handout

Aim to pitch your intervention at a level appropriate to the proximity of your group to the traumatic event. Levels of exposure will naturally vary.

Prepare students and staff by telling them that you have very sad news to communicate, and how it is affecting you. Give as full an account as possible of the event.

Communicate a sense of caring for the victim(s) and for the whole MIE community. Stress that the MIE leadership team wishes to support the whole community throughout the present crisis. Encourage students to support each other as best they can.

Describe normal reactions that can be expected: shock, withdrawal, confusion and fear, sleep disturbance, feelings of loss and emptiness, for instance. Stress that these reactions are normal.

Describe some coping strategies: seeking support, talking about what happened and how you feel, caring for yourself (sufficient sleep and nourishment), for example.

While stressing that primary support is available from friends, fellow students and family, mention also that the Pastoral Care Team is also available. Some students might like to speak to their tutor². Others might like to avail of the [Trinity Counselling Services](#). While acknowledging that some people may wish to be left alone, advise people to seek support from each other and to talk about the incident.

Try to identify those closest to the event. Try to assess what extra support might be needed for these. Take questions; Listen as students/staff speak about how they are. Stay around and mingle with them. Be proactive in approaching those obviously affected.

Before you leave the group, if you judge it appropriate, have some minute's silence, with perhaps a brief reading.

Advise students and staff of the arrangements for the suspension of the normal work of the Institute and for re-assembly.

Initial Response Team members should be aware of their own reactions and stress levels and seek appropriate care for themselves if needed.

² See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

Appendix 3: Accurate Information Checklist

What happened?

Where?

When?

Who is involved – names? Year group / class, if students?

Extent of impact – Injuries? Deaths?

Where are injured now?

Appendix 4: Media Checklist

One person only (President/VPs/DP) deals with the media.

A carefully written media statement is prepared, stating the facts and describing the distress and sorrow caused to the whole school community, and the Institute's response, and expressing sympathy to the family.

If interviews are provided they should be short, factual and to the point. It is acceptable to decline to be interviewed. If you agree to be interviewed:

- a. Remember that an unguarded remark may be broadcast many times and cause further distress to the bereaved.
- b. Use careful and sensitive language, erring on the side of brevity and caution.
- c. Ask in advance for an outline of the questions you will be asked.
- d. Avoid sweeping statements and generalisations.
- e. Avoid being drawn into speculation or rambling discussion.
- f. Don't go into personal details of those involved. Ask that their privacy be respected at this time.
- g. Don't make 'off the record' comments.
- h. Don't use the overly defensive 'no comment.'

Appendix 5: External Contact Details

Student Counselling Service, Trinity College Dublin,

3rd floor, 7-9 South Leinster Street

Trinity College

Dublin 2

Phone: +353 1 896 1407

Fax: +353 1 896 3464

Email: student-counselling@tcd.ie

Confidential Student Helpline – Niteline

Thursday to Sunday, 9.00pm – 2.30am during term time only.

Freephone: 1800 793 793

Samaritans National Helpline

1850 60 90 90 or 116123

Samaritans Dublin Branch

Tel.: (01) 872 7700