DESMOND COLLEGE

CAMPUS SECURITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Limerick & Clare Education &Training Board (LCETB) and Desmond College are fully committed to the provision and maintenance of a school environment within the organisation that is far as is reasonably practicable, safe and secure and where any risk to the security of the school / centre community is deemed unacceptable.

CAMPUS SECURITY

Campus security refers to the provision and maintenance of a school infrastructural environment for staff and students which is as far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to health and well-being from members of the public in the course of the school day.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to the infrastructural context of school and interaction with members of the public. This policy is a core component of the Health and Safety policy and must be read in conjunction with the same.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY ON SECURITY

- To affirm publicly the commitment of LCETB and Desmond College to prevent and endeavour to minimize any risk to the security of the school and the staff personnel and students therein.
- To develop a systematic process which promotes the introduction of safeguards to ensure that the school is as secure as is reasonably practicable and to deal with any breach of school security that may arise subsequently.
- To provide a framework which will delay to ensure consistent and equitable standards of safety and security in the school.
- To promote the inclusion and participation of all partners, which includes student, teacher, parent and other agencies in the community in the ownership and implementation of the policy.
- To ensure that the policy and procedure promote the safety and security of the school / centre environment as a key service priority.

PRINCIPLES

- LCETB and Desmond College are committed to an environment where the safety and security of staff and students is promoted at all times.
- The school promotes the right of all students and staff to be treated with dignity and respect in their dealings with members of the public.
- LCETB and Desmond College actively promote the raising of awareness of all partners on the means by which school security will be promoted and maintained.

- The school is committed to an environment where open communication is promoted, where students and staff are empowered to take up any concerns with regard to their safety and security to the Principal.
- The school is committed to a proactive approach to safety and security where each individual is supported to take responsibility for ensuring his/her behaviour does not unduly infringe on another's security.

SECURITY AWARENESS; PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

To develop a fully effective policy, it is necessary to conduct an audit of the environment and to take measures to introduce strategies to prevent any breach of centre security and safety. These strategies will include consideration of:

- Physical aspects of the premises
- Work practices
- Staff training

1. Physical Aspects

The general design and physical environment of the building will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with the aim of reducing the likelihood of any risk to the security of the school community.

This review will examine the following:

Centre Grounds

- Access to the school is limited by the use of a high wall and confined to designated gate only.
- Car parking is specifically designated and clearly marked for school personnel and visitors.
- A system of monitoring the school grounds including the car park is in place through the use of close circuit TV.
- A coded barrier prevents access to the rear of the school by car.

Reception

Easily identifiable and accessible reception areas, which allow office staff to receive visitors, direct them to a waiting area / destination and answer queries etc. will limit the likelihood of unauthorized visitors on the school premises.

Specific factors with regard to reception accessibility are:

- (a) Reception is located as close to the main entrance as possible
- (b) "Reception" is clearly signposted outside the building and repeated at intervals as necessary.
- (c) Access to the school building is controlled by the use of an intercom system placed on the main entrance and monitored by reception.
- (d) Reception has good lighting, suitable furniture and adequate heating.

- (e) It is important that reception staff can liaise with colleagues readily and speedily with security devices installed such as: intercom, phone etc.

General Access

Access to the school will be confined to the following:

- All visitors and other callers are notified to reception as they are expected
- Reception is clearly signposted outside the school indicating that visitors and others first contact the reception.
- Visitors sign in and out so that it is known who is in the building and when they leave
- All "legitimate" visitors wear a pass or badge or are met by a member of staff and they remain the responsibility of that person until they leave
- "No entry" signs are placed as appropriate in the building
- "Staff only" signs can be posted as appropriate
- There is a reception area on the ground floor at the front of the building only.
- All parents / carers, suppliers, contractors, deliveries etc. to the school have a named contact that is aware of their business and supervises them while on the premises.

  It is imperative that all of the above:

  - o Have an appointment
  - o Is aware of the school practice guidelines which s/he must follow, such as, where s/he can go, what s/he can do, required standards of behaviour as per the contract with the school.

- The following is a procedure for dealing with unexpected callers
  - o They are not admitted unless they have a school contact who validates them
  - o A designated member of staff meets all unexpected visitors
  - o A back-up system of security may be called to ensure people leave if necessary
  - o Access points for visitors other than regular supplier deliveries etc. is through the main entrance. Supplier deliveries should be given a pass at reception and proceed through barrier to back of school. Only delivery vans to park in front of rear steps.
  - o All other doors remain locked from the outside and are self-closing / locking allowing egress only and which comply with fire regulations
  - o Delivery or loading bays should be kept separate from the rest of the school if possible or controlled by security devices.

2. Work Practices

Interviewing and Meeting Rooms

Designated meeting areas are:

- Year Head Rooms
- Parent Meeting Room
- Deputy Principals Office
- Principals Office

Each of the above either are within easy access to Reception or have CCTV camera installed. Three of the rooms have a phone. Two of the rooms have panel on the door.

- Structural considerations for the interview
    - Ensure the interview is not conducted in an isolated location
    - It is important that a designated contact person knows that the meeting / interview is a matter of record
    - Use a room with vision panels but where the interviewee cannot be heard
    - If possible have a phone in the room or otherwise devise a standard checking procedure such as someone popping in or the interviewer popping out at appropriate intervals
    - Make sure the room is well lit
    - Have two chairs close to the exit with the interviewer occupying a chair closest to the door
    - Keep everyday equipment to the absolute essentials as it can provide potential weapons
    - Ensure furniture is comfortable and robust enough not to be thrown
    - At the first sign that a difficulty is developing staff should know who will respond and how
    - Do not arrange to meet anyone alone in the building
    - Obviate waiting time before an interview, if there is waiting time ensure the interviewee is informed and let them know the likely time they will be seen
    - If it is suspected that an interview may present difficulties, conduct it at a time of day when other demands can be kept to a minimum and back-up support is available.

Planning the Interaction

- Introduce yourself by name; explain who you are in terms of your job / responsibility etc.
- When escorting an interviewee to a room walk side by side if on level ground, go in front upstairs, and behind coming downstairs
- If it is known that an interviewee has been aggressive or violent in the past review approach with Principal, plan and manage the interview accordingly
- Consider ones sense of dress which is a matter for the employee and avoid
    - Clothing that could be provocative in a sexual or financial sense
    - Ties, blouses with ties, necklaces that could be used to strangle
    - Earrings that could be pulled out
    - Shoes that mean one cannot run
- Consider the seating position in relation to the interviewee, seats at a 45 degree angle are less confrontational
- A desk may provide a useful barrier but it can also act as a trap if it is located between the interviewer and the exit
- Aggressive people require a wider than normal buffer space and may need more space.

Home Visiting

Episodes of aggression and violent behaviour can sometimes be triggered when a person perceives that there is an intrusion into their personal space and private life which may arise when conducting a home visit. Whatever the reason for being in someone's home it is critical to always remember that it is their home, their territory and you are going into it. When visiting another person's home in the course of your job always consider the following points:

- Do you actually have to go to the other persons home; could transport be arranged so that they can come to the school, particularly if the person concerned has a known history of aggression?
- Consider conducting home visits in pairs.
- Always check with colleagues etc. if the person you are visiting has a history of violence.
- Before leaving your workplace always make sure that colleagues know your itinerary i.e. where you are going, what your plans are and when you expect to finish. Contact the school designated immediately after leaving the home visit.
- Carry a mobile phone with you on all home visits.
- Always visit in daylight. Avoid evening visits wherever possible.
- When you arrive at the house in question always take account of the location, its isolation, lighting and speedy access to your car

Travelling in the Course of Work

As is inevitable that school personnel may have to travel in the course of their work it is essential that the following recording systems are in place:

- Always check that any request to conduct a home visit is genuine.
- In no circumstances are private telephone numbers to be given out.
- A record book is kept at reception; staff must sign in and out if they have to leave the building in the course of their work. When they sign out they note where they are going, with whom or whom they are meeting, when they are expected to return and his/her mobile phone number.
- The receptionist is responsible for raising the alarm if the person does not return within an hour of the time they were expected back.
- The Principal is then responsible for attempting to make contact.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH A POTENTIAL SECURITY RISK

General Procedure: Student

- Staff are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents where security is breached.
- Incidents which involve students at the school are best investigated outside the classroom / staffroom situation to avoid any risk of humiliating any party concerned i.e. the victim or the alleged perpetrator, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights

of all students / staff concerned. Students who are not directly involved but who saw what happened can also provide useful information in this way.

- When analysing any such incidents seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner setting an example in dealing effectively with a potential conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If more than one student is involved each member should be interviewed individually and then met as a group. Each member should be asked for his / her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
- If it is concluded that a breach of security has taken place the following procedures may be invoked:
  - o An incident involving a student of the school / centre – Code of Behaviour
  - o An incident involving a member of staff – Code of Practice and Staff Disciplinary Procedure
  - o An incident involving a member of the public – Contact with local Gardai
- Staff who are investigating any incident must complete an incident report form which will be given to the Principal. This record should include a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate to ask other witnesses to write down their account of the incidents.
- In cases where it has been determined that a breach of the code has occurred the Principal should make contact with the parents/guardians if they consider this necessary. Explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.

Key Steps in the Process

Phase 1 of the procedure describes steps to take when the allegation is considered to be non-threatening. In the event that the alleged incident is threatening and / or serious it is imperative to proceed to Phase 2 as the first step.

Phase 1: Informal Procedure

If an incident is identified which is considered to be an initial complaint e.g. driving on the campus grounds, the following steps can be followed which are aimed at deescalating the matter and dealing with it promptly.

- The Deputy/Principal who has responsibility to investigate the allegation should be informed of the incident in the first place.
- Complete an incident report form.
- In order not to escalate the incident further, it is best to deal with the matter in a non-threatening way, inviting the alleged perpetrator to respond to the allegation that has been made, to facilitate a process to reach common understanding and to agree a mutual plan of action.
- In the event that the allegation is confirmed make a note of approach made, noting time, place, witnesses present, response to meeting.
- Parents / Guardians of each student involved should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and invited to the school to be briefed on the allegation, to be given a right of reply and to inclusion the action plan.
- In the event that the allegation is not confirmed the designated staff member will set up a process to monitor further breaches of the policy.

- In the event that an incident is confirmed and there appears to be an inability on the part of the student to take responsibility for the behaviour a referral to the Guidance Counsellor may be appropriate.

Phase 2: Formal Procedure

- Inform perpetrator that the matter will be raised with the school Principal.
- Inform Principal of the incident and action taken to date.
- Principal will inform parents and set up a meeting with parents in particular when any of the following apply:
  - o student re-offends
  - o does not understand the gravity of the situation
  - o needs support from parents and / or professional support
- Principal will meet with parent/s and student will review all action taken to date and negotiate a plan of action to bring the behaviour to a halt.
- The plan of action will include the following criteria where appropriate:
  - o Principal will take responsibility to coordinate and oversee the plan of action
  - o Designate a contact person, it may be necessary to designate a male and female member of staff to provide a gender balance. This person will take on the role of monitor and be available at regular scheduled intervals to meet with the alleged perpetrator. In addition this person will be available as a contact person to parents and provide feedback regularly and as necessary.
  - o The action plan will clearly define what are considered to acceptable standards of behaviour of the alleged perpetrator.
  - o Counselling will be made available.
  - o Set up interim review dates e.g. four weeks and longer end of term review with all parties.
  - o Develop and publicise a school policy on Campus Security.
  - o In the event that the behaviour continues and/or if the incident is viewed by staff to have an adverse effect on the overall student body the procedures set out in the Code of Behaviour will be invoked which will at all times promote the principles of natural justice.

General Procedure: Staff

- If an incident involving a teacher comes to the attention of a staff member inform Principal of the incident e.g. a staff member conducting a home visit without the authority of the Principal.
- If the alleged perpetrator is the Principal, the matter must then be taken up with the CEO of the LCETB directly.
- Principal / CEO will inform the teacher /staff member that a complaint has been made.
- If the incident has involved students in any way then the Principal / CEO will inform parents that a complaint is being processed.
- The Principal will conduct an investigation into the matter ensuring at all times that principles of procedural justice are adhered to.
- The Principal will review the outcome of the investigation.
- In the event that the outcome is conclusive that an incident occurred, this outcome will be put to the alleged person requesting that the incident is not repeated.

- A record will be made of approach made, noting time, place, witnesses present, response to request and a plan of action to monitor the situation, which may include:
  - Principal will take responsibility to coordinate and oversee the plan of action.
  - Defined expectations of the alleged perpetrator will be set out clearly in terms of their behaviour.
  - Set up interim review dates and longer term end of term review with all parties.
- In the event that the incident / behaviour continues and / or if the incident is viewed by the Principal to have affected the health or well-being of the student body in general the matter will be referred to the CEO of LCETB to investigate the matter further. The investigation will at all times take account of the terms of the Code of Practice for Staff and relevant conditions of employment when processing the allegation.
- The CEO will conduct his/her own investigation and respond in writing within a reasonable timeframe.
- A formal review and appraisal will take place subsequently between the key parties to determine if any further action necessary.

General Procedure: An Incident Involving a Member of the Public

In the event of dealing with a member of the public who becomes angry, it is best to attempt to diffuse a difficult situation and avoid potentially violent confrontation. The following procedures may help:

- Avoid confrontation in front of an audience, particularly groups of students. The fewer people that are involved in the incident the easier it is for an aggressor to back down and save face.
- Involve another senior member of staff to assist in diffusing the situation.
- Stay calm, speaking slowly so as not to be drawn into an escalating argument.
- Be aware of your body language; avoid mirroring the aggressor's stance.
- Use active listening skills.
- Contact the Principal as soon as possible.
- Remember at all times you own safety is paramount, bring the meeting to a close if the situation is escalating. If necessary leave the room hastily to avoid any risk to your own security.
- Call the local Gardai.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Training and Support

Awareness training should be provided to all staff who may face a potential risk to his/her security in the course of the centre day. Training programmes will focus on key Health and Safety matters and should include some of the following elements:

- Signs and indicators of risk
- Communication and personal safety skills
- Policy and procedures

- Techniques to prevent and manage risk
- Support for school personnel who have been subject to an aggressive assault.

Monitoring Incidents and Systems

- Create a security awareness climate within the school ethos
- Assessing risk entails conducting an audit of the environment Being aware of the environment can enable one to recognise potential risks and ways of avoiding them. Environment means the physical environment around the centre, travelling in the course of work and visiting homes.
- It is essential to audit the following areas:
  - Access – who can get into the school grounds, where and how?
  - Egress – how can one get out of this? Exits, escape routes to well lit or populated areas?
  - Isolation – is the location isolated? Can you contact others, see them or are seen?
  - Alarm – how can an alarm be raised or help summoned?
  - Hiding Places – are there places not fully visible or poorly lit?
  - Landscaping – can it act as a screen for potential intruders?
  - Situations – are you likely to be affected by other factors e.g. pub closing times etc. which have been shown to elevate risk?
  - Locations – are you aware of areas of higher risk in the city / town / village / rural area and particularly risky areas such as parks, alleyways etc.
  - Weapons / Missiles – are there items such as staplers, plants, letter openers, scissors, loose paving etc. which could be used by others or present danger?
  - Precautions – are there physical forms of protections available to you?

EVALUATION OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Evaluation and review of the policy is an essential pre-requisite in realising key quality standards in service delivery. An annual evaluation will assess the extent to which the needs at an individual, school and agency level are being met.

The evaluation process will entail the following:

- Clarify, review and where necessary update the aims and objectives
- Identify the level of progress towards the achievement of the objectives
- Assess the effectiveness of methods and approaches use in implementation
- Encourage participation, partnership and empowerment of all parties, which will include needs analysis, participation at focus group, questionnaires and evaluation etc.
- In the light of the evaluation to update the policy and implementation process accordingly.