



Critical Incident Management Policy

Definition of a Critical Incident

A critical incident may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within a school community and which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of that school.

Critical Incident Management Strategy – Aims

- Recognise which incidents may be critical for the school community.
- Respond to a critical incident in an informed manner.
- Create a positive, open, communicative climate where the needs of staff and pupils are met in critical incident situations.
- Create a safe school environment whereby the physical, social and psychological health of pupils and staff is prioritised.
- Outline, monitor and review the management plans for dealing with different emergencies.
- Promote active coping skills within the curriculum.
- Establish positive working relationships and dialogue with outside agencies, thus enabling full and effective collaboration in the event of a critical incident.

What types of critical incident could affect our school?

(This is not an exhaustive list but outlines some possible critical incidents)

- Sudden death of pupil or member of staff;
- Disappearance of a pupil or member of staff;
- Death or injury of a pupil or staff member on a school outing;
- Severe injury to pupil or staff member as a result of road traffic accident;
- Serious assault on pupil or staff member in school;
- Violent/disturbed intruder on school premises during school day;
- Serious damage to school building or property through fire, flood or vandalism;
- Civil disturbance in local community;
- Pupil with contagious illness;
- Immediate evacuation of the school with no certainty over return timescale;

Roles and responsibilities of staff

Critical Incident Management Team

Management of any critical incident is integral to Health and Safety, Child Protection and Pastoral Care. The school's response to any critical incident should be a joined up approach that includes staff, governors, parents and other relevant authorities.

Name	Role	Supported by	Deputised by
Neville Watson	Principal – Overall Incident Management	All Staff & Relevant Agencies	Grainne Kerr Denise Mahon Palma McAleer David Thompson
Denise Mahon	Child Protection & Pastoral Care Senior Staff (SMT)	CP Team EA(BELFAST REGION) CPO EA(BELFAST REGION) Ed Psych EA(BELFAST REGION) EWO Social Services Gateway PSNI	Grainne Kerr Neville Watson Michael Prendergast Palma McAleer David Thompson
Grainne Kerr	Vice Principal Deputy CP Pastoral Care Senior Staff (SMT)	CP Team EA(BELFAST REGION) CPO EA(BELFAST REGION) Ed Psych Social Services Gateway PSNI	Neville Watson Denise Mahon Palma McAleer David Thompson
Palma McAleer David Thompson	Senior Staff (SMT) Deputies for any of the roles above.	Senior Management Team	
Michael Prendergast	Chair of Governors	All staff & Governors EA(BELFAST REGION) CEO	Catherine Seawright
Catherine Seawright	Vice Chair of Governors	All staff & Governors EA(BELFAST REGION) CEO	Grainne Kerr
Lisa Kerr	Senior Clerical Officer – Distribution of Communications	Neville Watson EA(BELFAST REGION) C2k	Neville Watson
Robert Meehan	Buildings Supervisor – Security	Neville Watson	

Support Agencies/Personnel for Critical Incident Management Team.

Issue	Poss. Support Agency	Named Key Individual (if applicable)	Contact No.
Sudden Death of Staff	EA(BELFAST REGION) Staff Welfare	Bernadette Dougherty	02890 56400
Sudden Death of Pupil	EA(BELFAST REGION) Educational Welfare/Educational Psychology	Sharon Slevin Deborah Doran	
Assault/Aggressive Incident on School Grounds	PSNI NIAS Social Services Gateway EA(BELFAST REGION) CPO ELB Solicitors Services	N/A N/A N/A N/A Lorraine O'Neill/Therese Moran Linda Aitcheson/ Nessa Agnew	90507000 90564289 90566200
Major Accident/Injury to Pupil/Staff/ Parent on school grounds	PSNI NIAS EA(BELFAST REGION) Solicitors Services	999/112 Linda Aitcheson/ Nessa Agnew	90566200
Major Incident/Accident off School Grounds (on trips etc.)	PSNI NIAS EA(BELFAST REGION) Solicitors Services	999/112 Linda Aitcheson/ Nessa Agnew	90566200
Emergency Evacuation Situation	PSNI NIAS EA(BELFAST REGION) Solicitors Services	999/112 Linda Aitcheson/ Nessa Agnew	90566200
Emergency Lockdown Situation	PSNI NIAS EA(BELFAST REGION) Solicitors Services	999/112 Linda Aitcheson/ Nessa Agnew	90566200
Discovery of outbreak of major contagious illness or similar	School Health, Inver villa EA(BELFAST REGION) Health & Safety	Brendan O'Reilly	95046773 90564000

Procedural Guide for dealing with different Critical Incidents.

Issue	Initial Action	Inform/Involve ASAP	Management Approval Req.
Sudden Death of Staff	Initiate Emergency Service Response – Red Card System - 999 Arrange appropriate care & safe relocation of any pupils in immediate vicinity	Principal/ Deputy Next of Kin Chair of Governors EA(BELFAST REGION) Staff Welfare	Press/Media Release School Closure
Sudden Death of Pupil	Initiate Emergency Service Response – Red Card System - 999 Arrange appropriate care & safe relocation of any pupils in immediate vicinity	Principal/ Deputy Next of Kin Chair of Governors EA(BELFAST REGION) Educational Welfare/Educational Psychology	Press/Media Release School Closure
Assault/Aggressive Incident on School Grounds	Initiate Emergency Service Response – Red Card System - 999 Arrange appropriate care & safe relocation of any pupils in immediate vicinity	Principal/ Deputy CP Teacher	Further Intervention beyond emergency intervention with involved parties Press/Media Release School Closure
Major Accident/Injury to Pupil/Staff/ Parent on school grounds	Initiate Emergency Service Response – Red Card System - 999 Arrange appropriate care & safe relocation of any pupils in immediate vicinity	Principal/ Deputy CP Teacher Next of Kin	Whole School Communication Press/Media Release School Closure
Major Incident/Accident off School Grounds (on trips etc.)	Initiate Emergency Service Response – Red Card System - 999 Arrange appropriate care & safe relocation of any pupils in immediate vicinity	Principal/ Deputy CP Teacher Next of Kin	Whole School Communication Press/Media Release School Closure
Emergency Evacuation Situation	Instigate Emergency Evacuation Plan Initiate Emergency Service Response	Evacuation Wardens	Whole School Communication Press/Media Release School Closure
Discovery of outbreak of major contagious illness or similar	Immediate Advice from School Health, Inver villa & EA(BELFAST REGION) Health &	Principal/ Deputy CP Teacher	Whole School Communication Press/Media Release School Closure

	Safety		
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Media Management

In a critical incident that draws media attention the following points should be considered.

1. The needs of children or staff at the centre of a critical incident should take precedence and next of kin should be informed first and kept up to date. A media 'blackout' may be appropriate at times (see 3).
2. Child Protection, Data protection and other confidentiality issues or legal issues should be considered before releasing info. The Principal or person deputising should authorise any releases.
3. In the age of mobile communications and social media it is not realistic, nor is it always best practice to attempt to sustain a media 'blackout' beyond the necessary period as information from other sources can spread very quickly and it is often better for all involved to have reliable information put into the public domain to quell speculation.

Press Releases/Statements

In putting information out to the media the school should try to:

Inform: Provide the facts as they stand while being sensitive to the issues outlined in .2 above.

Reassure: Give reassurance that the school is using all of resources at its disposal in dealing with the incident and that the public can be confident that the school will act swiftly towards resolving the issue.

Appeal: Appeal to parents/public to take on board any message or action that may be useful in helping the school to deal with the situation – this may be an appeal for privacy to be respected or an appeal for parents to seek medical advice or contact a particular agency.

Links with School Policies

The following school policies may be integral to some critical incident situation and action should be in keeping with policy on these issues where possible:

- Critical Incident Guidance Folder – This is located in the office and has comprehensive reference and contact info to be used in the event of a critical incident/emergency
- Emergency Plans – The Emergency Plans Guidance is located in the Office and along with this policy and related guidance is a first point of reference in managing evacuations and other emergency scenarios
- Pastoral Care
- Child Protection
- Internet/mobile phone use
- Health and Safety
- Special Needs

Curricular Links/Support

In the aftermath of a critical incident the school may seek to help resolve the issue through the following educative means:

- PDMU
- Circle Time
- Assemblies

Professional Development

The school will seek to identify and secure relevant training needs for staff.

Monitoring/Review of Strategy

This Policy will be reviewed following an incident we determine to be critical, or as deemed necessary in light of developments or changes.