

Critical Incident Policy 2018



Ashgrove Primary School

Learning, Caring, Growing Stronger Together



Article 1

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights of the Convention

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a top priority

A PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
2018	2020	Principal

CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM

Mr Robert Smith-	Principal
Mrs Karen Flaherty-	Vice Principal
Mrs Valerie Luney-	Designated Teacher for Child Protection
Mrs Lisa Torrie -	Head of Key Stage 1
Miss Carolyn Morrison-	Head of Foundation Stage
	Chair of Board of Governors

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed to ensure the safety and protection of the whole school community in the event of a critical incident.

DEFINITION

A critical incident can be a physical incident or psychological trauma that has a severe, immediate impact and likely long-term effect on pupils, staff, governors or parents. An incident will be deemed critical where the result is likely to cause serious disruption to the normal running of the school, or where there is likely to be significant public and/or media attention on the school.

This may include:

- Death or serious injury caused as a result of violence, accident, self-harm and/or sudden/traumatic illness
- Major fire
- Building collapse
- Riot or civil disorder
- Natural disaster
- Terrorism
- Missing person/abduction
- A student or students absconding

A Critical Incident may happen in school or out of school, but both types will have a major impact on staff and students.

This Policy names the people who will assume key roles (*Critical Incident Team*), the information and procedures that will need to be in place. The communication framework required to handle any contingency and the support structures for staff.

The Critical Incident Team has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are properly addressed at times of high emotion and should the Principal be the subject of the incident then the response

mechanism should proceed effectively. If the incident subsequently involves legal action, a precise response to the incident should be known and be able to be verified by more than one person.

MAJOR INCIDENTS FOCUSED ON PEOPLE

Whilst critical incidents are difficult for all concerned, those that involve serious injury or death are inevitably traumatic.

By their very nature and definition, critical incidents tend to disorientate and may even overwhelm those involved. Planning ahead is a necessary precaution and can be crucial.

Communication during and following an incident is of paramount importance.

CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM

A central component of this policy is the identification of the composition, roles and responsibilities of the Critical Incident Team.

The role of the team is to review and direct the handling of the incident, including the response and recovery process.

The Critical Incident Team will comprise of the Principal, Senior Teacher, Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Chair of board of Governors.

Others may be co-opted as necessary in light of the nature of the emergency and the availability of people.

An Incident Manager will be appointed by the Principal (or Vice-Principal in his absence) in response to the type of incident being faced. In most cases the Incident Manager will be the Principal, unless circumstances prevent that from being possible or appropriate.

The Incident Manager will be responsible for communication with the media.

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

1. The Principal or Vice-Principal must be informed of any critical incident as soon as possible.
2. As soon as an incident is confirmed, all, or as many as possible of the Critical Incident Team will meet to decide strategies.
3. Assess that all children, teaching and non-teaching staff are safe - during a major incident the safety of all is the priority.
4. Check whether individuals or groups require immediate attention.
5. Assess who is most affected by the incident.

COMMUNICATION DURING AN INCIDENT

Whatever information is deemed appropriate and necessary should be communicated to all staff. Heads of Key Stage will inform teaching & non-teaching staff in their Key Stages.

If necessary, pupils will be told information simply and sensitively, without fabrication.

The School will endeavour, as far as is possible, to resume/maintain a normal routine.

OUTSIDE COMMUNICATIONS

Those designated to deal with in-coming calls should provide an agreed factual statement together with re-assurance of appropriate action being taken.

It is important that details should be agreed and caution be exercised at all times about what is said. Give the facts only.

Office staff need to be given clear instructions. The situation may be such that in-coming calls are dealt with by a designated person other than office staff.

A careful record of communication should be kept.

CONTACTING FAMILIES DIRECTLY AFFECTED

Speed should be a priority together with sensitivity. Consistency of information is vital.

Should it prove difficult to contact those directly affected, other means of contact should be considered, e.g. contacting a friend or relative.

A careful list of those contacted should be kept.

RESPONDING TO CALLS FROM RELATIVES OR OTHER PARENTS

Again designate which members of staff will be delegated/permitted to talk with relatives or parents.

Try to anticipate the questions which at that stage really require an answer. An agreed level of disclosure should be agreed beforehand.

Use language which alleviates anxiety.

KEEPING THE STAFF INFORMED

It is important that all staff be kept well informed. Staff should be cautioned against talking to the media or responding to questions from reporters or parents.

ASHGROVE NURSERY SCHOOL

During a critical incident (particularly if this impacts on the Nursery) we will communicate with and inform the Nursery at the earliest opportunity. Both schools will seek to support each other and their pupils. The Principal - Mr Robert Smith, will liaise with the Principal in the Nursery - Mrs Joanne Barr.

INFORMING THE PUPILS

Staff should be given advice and guidance on what the pupils should be told.

Some information may be given in whole school settings and discussed in individual classes. Other types may be best relayed in smaller groups.

Some pupils may not be able to fully appreciate a critical incident, therefore information should be tailored to the cognitive and emotional levels of the children.

Time should be given to allow pupils to ask questions and talk about the incident to allay their worries.

Families may need to be informed regarding the amount of information given to the children.

MEDIA

The Incident Manager or the Chair of Board of Governors is the nominated person to liaise with the media in an event of an emergency. Other staff and governors should be instructed not to give interviews, make comments or hand any information to the media.

PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL INCIDENT

1. Keep an up-to date Critical Incident Contingency Plan which should include the following:
 - a. Members of the Critical Incident Team
 - b. A folder of up-to date contact numbers
 - c. Contact details of support agencies
 - d. List of staff with up-to date first aid training
 - e. Planning for school evacuation
2. Update contact numbers once a year.
3. Ensure there is a hard copy of contacts in addition to computer data.
4. All staff should be aware of the existence of a Critical Contingency Plan and know where it is kept.
5. Check-list of issues for the Critical Incident Team to organise.

APPENDIX – CRITICAL INCIDENT CONTINGENCY PLAN

MEMBERS OF CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM

Mr Robert Smith-	Principal
Mrs Karen Flaherty-	Vice Principal
Mrs Valerie Luney-	Designated Teacher for Child Protection
Mrs Lisa Torrie -	Head of Key Stage 1
Miss Carolyn Morrison-	Head of Foundation Stage
Chair of Board of Governors	

SUPPORT AGENCIES & CONTACTS

- EA, Critical Incident Line: 028 3751 2515 (BOTH SCHOOL HOURS AND OUT OF HOURS)
- EA NE Region Schools Branch: Nigel Freeburn, 07766387122
- EA NE Region Schools Branch: 028 2566 2391
- Education Authority Press Officer: Frances Byrne, 028 9041 3162
- Education Authority HR County Hall: 028 2566 12119
- Ashgrove Nursery: 028 9084 3178
- Property Services: 028 2566 1333
- Social Services, Gateway Team: 0300 1234 333
- PSNI: 028 9065 0222 or 999 or 101

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

- Victoria Poole; (Communications and Engagement Officer, Chief Executive's Office, Education Authority Belfast Office: 028 9041 3181 / 07976 752 083 victoria.poole@eani.org.uk
- Richard Bullick; Communications Officer Southern Landline: 028 3741 5356 Mobile: 078 1806 8782 Email: richard.bullick@eani.org.uk
- Family Works Counselling: 02891821721
- INSPIRE 24/7 Confidential Telephone Counselling Service for staff: 0808 800 0002

Staff with Current First-Aid Training

All members of staff have been trained in Emergency First Aid in August 2017.

Critical Incident Action Plan Check-List

- ☐ Verify who communicated the news/incident report
- ☐ Set-up Critical Incident Team

- ❑ Confirm/verify with parent/guardian
- ❑ Inform EA School's Branch and EA Press Officer
- ❑ Inform Chair/Vice Chair of Board of Governors
- ❑ Inform teaching and support staff
- ❑ Critical Incident Manager (Usually the Principal) to act as Press Officer in liaison with EA
- ❑ Draw up Press Release - copy to school office for faxing if required. AVOID GIVING VERBAL REPORTS TO PRESS
- ❑ All Governors informed
- ❑ Hold assembly if deemed necessary
- ❑ Offer support to family
- ❑ Arrange beforehand amount of information parents/guardians not directly involved need to know. Ensure supportive and reassuring language is used when dealing with anxious parents/guardians
- ❑ Visit with family if appropriate
- ❑ Cards/letters to family from the Principal representing staff, pupils and Board of Governors
- ❑ Card/letter from Chair of Board of Governors
- ❑ Period of silence in school assembly if deemed appropriate
- ❑ Regular staff updates
- ❑ Inform School Officer to remove pupils records/file
- ❑ Respond to cards/condolences as appropriate
- ❑ Book of memories/condolences as appropriate

EA ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE AND PROFORMAS

- <http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/managing-a-critical-incident/>

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT INFORMATION

- www.winstonswish.org.uk
- www.childhoodbereavementwork.org.uk
- www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk
- www.barnardos.org.uk/bereavementservice

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy