



Critical Incident Policy

Review Date

Chairman of Board of Governors

Next Review Date

Purpose:

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 effects on the individuals involved.

These may include:

- Incidents that involve staff/student, staff/staff, or other person/staff/student.
- People-made disasters/emergencies
- Natural disasters/emergencies

Crisis management and recovery processes involve personal support, crisis intervention and a whole range of practical assistance.

The Principal has responsibility for emergency management, which involves bringing together the arrangements for identifying, minimising, preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from an emergency.

Related Documents:

- Critical Incident Planning for Schools – <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/guide-to-managing-critical-incidents-in-schools.pdf>

Preparation:

- Identify Critical Incident Team - comprising Principal, Vice Principal, and SLT
The names of the team are

Mr Brian Treacy, Mr John Reihill, Mrs Katrina Cathcart, Mrs Majella Jones, Miss Lisa Coyle, Ms Una Williams. Other members may be co-opted as necessary.
- The Critical Incident Team has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are properly addressed at times of high emotion and that if the Principal is 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.
- Issue all staff with a Critical Incident Management Plan. (Appendix 1)
- Display a Communication line and contact phone numbers in the staff room and unit offices. (Appendix 2)
- Review the Critical Incident Management Plan at a staff meeting in Term 1 each year.

Initial Responses:

- Assess that all students are safe. Take all necessary action to establish safety.
- Contact the Principal.
- Ensure Vice Principal and/or Senior teachers are released from class to work with the Principal on Critical Incident Team.
- Build a profile of what happened. Who was most affected by the incident? How might it have affected them? Check for other information to see if any individuals or groups might need immediate attention. Decide on a range of supportive action that can be offered to those affected by the incident.
- Assess immediate practical needs.

- Evaluate what individuals/organisations need to be involved and what potential roles they may play. Take into account the importance of linking students to parents/carers and significant others to re-establish a sense of personal control.
- Contact the Chair of the School Board Rev. Martin Donnelly 02866322075
- Contact the EA Critical Incident Response Team Phone - 028 82 411287
- Contact the CCMS (phone 028 92013014), and relevant emergency services.
- Decide how/what/when to communicate with the school community regarding the incident.

Some further support responses:

- The Critical Incident Team should meet with support personnel to finalise a plan of action.
- Establish an active Crisis Intervention Team including school personnel and outside agencies if necessary.
- Inform staff at a full staff meeting to ensure consistent information.
- Inform students in smallest groups possible, depending on decision of management team and nature of incident.
- Inform parents/carers of students involved in the incident
- Prepare a letter to school community, if appropriate.
- Identify 'at risk' students and staff for counselling.
- Provide closure.
- Debrief staff.
- Contact CCMS Communication & Liaison Section if media contact involved.
- If necessary contact EA Industrial & Legal Section for advice.

Immediate Actions for Schools Following a Critical Incident

Initiate use of the DE Critical Incident Management Guide

<https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/guide-to-managing-critical-incidents-in-schools.pdf>

Assess the risk

Contact Emergency Services

Mobilise the School's Critical Incident Management Team

Contact other relevant services/authorities
Maintain structures and routines with flexibility as required
Collate accurate information
Brief staff
Arrange for appropriate information to be shared with pupils.
Set up recovery room. Provide opportunities for listening and support
Prepare for media interest
Identify vulnerable pupils and staff
Communicate with parents and organise debriefing for staff

Holy Trinity Critical Incident Management Plan (Appendix 1)

Immediate Actions for Schools Following a Critical Incident

1. Assess the risk and take necessary action (e.g. school evacuation/first aid/contact emergency services)

2. Gather factual information regarding the incident

- a. Details of person/people involved
- b. Confirmation of facts from the source -family, Police, hospital

3. Initiate the use of the DE Critical Incident Management Guide Records

<https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/guide-to-managing-critical-incidents-in-schools.pdf>

4. Mobilise the School's Critical Incident Management Team or the Senior Leadership Team

5. Allocate tasks to School's Critical Incident Management Team/SLT

- a. Identify a school Critical Incident Coordinator
- b. Contact the parents of pupils directly involved in the incident (see example below)
http://www.welbni.org/uploads/file/pdf/Liaison%20with%20parents_122107.pdf
- c. Inform relevant key people and seek support as appropriate e.g. staff, BOG, ELB Critical Incident Team, CCMS, Local Clergy etc. (see example of telephone tree below)
http://www.welbni.org/uploads/File/Sample_Telephone_Tree_115943.pdf
- d. Establish a central information point
- e. Set up dedicated phone line
- f. Calls and enquiries logged (see example of telephone log below)
http://www.welbni.org/uploads/File/Telephone_Log_115706.pdf

g. School visitors logged (see example of visitor log below)

http://www.welbni.org/uploads/file/pdf/Visitor%20Record_115121.pdf

h. Contact impacted family/s to determine their wishes regarding public announcements and staff/pupil briefings

i. Contact with the media (support available from EA Communications Officer)

6. Arrange staff briefing (when incident is confirmed)

a. Provide clear factual information and agree pupil briefing content

b. Advise staff on how to inform and support pupils (in form groups/classes/small groups)

c. Team working and practical arrangements e.g. cover, flexible timetabling, recovery rooms etc.

d. Identify vulnerable staff

e. Remind staff regarding confidentiality - media contact and guidelines

f. Critical Incident Staff Leaflet:

http://www.welbni.org/uploads/file/pdf/Teachers'%20draft%20leaflet_022752.pdf

7. Inform pupils (when incident is confirmed) with accurate and agreed statement;

a. Use clear language

b. Provide age appropriate factual information

c. Dispel rumours

d. Offer support

e. Identify vulnerable pupils

f. Announcement to the pupils (see example below):

http://www.welbni.org/uploads/file/pdf/Announcement%20to%20the%20Student%20Body_054739.pdf

g. Critical Incident Pupil Leaflet :

<http://www.welbni.org/index.cfm/go/publications/key/1AB8E968-09E8-0845-A04BE61A6179B277:1>

8. Maintain normal structures and routines with flexibility

9. Set up a warm, quiet and equipped recovery rooms with drinks, tissues, comfortable chairs etc.

Appendix 2

Telephone Cascade for Critical Incident outside school time

Principal – Contacts Chairman of Board of Governors, SMT and Year Heads



Year Heads contact teachers in their year group



Teachers contact Classroom assistants in year group



SENCO – Contacts teachers from the Units who contact C/A's



Principal contacts Caretaker/secretary head of catering in Mill Street site



Vice Principal contacts Caretaker, secretary and head of catering in Cornagrade

In the event of a critical incident information should be kept factual and confidential.

No member of staff should speak to the media unless authorised to do so