

Critical Incident Policy

ARDSTRAW JUBILEE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Date Approved by Board of Governors: 7th March 2018
Review: March 2020

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Introduction

Ardstraw Jubilee Primary School aims to protect the well-being of its pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The Governors and staff of Ardstraw Jubilee Primary School recognise a critical incident to be *"any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which cause trauma within a school community and which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of that school."*

From time to time schools have to handle difficult situations as part of normal school life. Some incidents however, are of a more critical and overwhelming character in which staff, pupils and parents may experience acute, sometimes prolonged, distress. If a critical incident occurs within our school or with in our local community the school will follow the guidance and procedures taken from the Education Authority Northern Ireland and A Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools - Dept. of Education materials.

The Education Authority Office Critical Incident Response Team can be contacted by: Phone - 028 37512515

The role of the Education Authority Critical Incident Response Team is to enhance the school's pastoral care support system by providing advice, support and resources to allow the school staff to successfully manage a critical incident.

The team is multi-disciplinary in nature, comprising of staff from the following services:

- Education Welfare Service.
- Educational Psychology Service.
- Behavioural Support Team.
- The Communication Department; and Staff Welfare Services.

<https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/in-an-emergency-school-information/managing-a-critical-incident>

Aim

The aim of the **Critical Incident Management Strategy** is to:-

- 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.

Types of incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death
- An intrusion into the school
- An accident involving members of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.

Our curriculum and pastoral care arrangements aim to help and support both staff and pupils, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and emotional needs of the school community.

Physical Needs

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Public access doors are locked during school hours
- School doors are security locked during class time
- Rules of the playground are agreed and known by the school community

Emotional Needs

The Governors and staff of Ardstraw Jubilee P.S. aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of pupils, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion. Further details can be found within other relevant policies such as Pastoral Care, Child Protection and Anti-bullying.

Linked Policies

The following policies may be relevant

- Staff and Well being
- Administration of Medicines
- Intimate Care Policy
- Health and Safety
- Complaints

- Risk Assessment
- Online Safety
- PDMU Policy

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team will meet to review post incident, termly and annually. When necessary, update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy, a site plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Roles

The key roles covered are as follows:

- Team Leaders - Mrs Julie Kelly (Principal) and Rev. David Reid (Chair of Board of Governors)
- PSNI Liaison - Mrs Julie Kelly
- Staff Liaison - Mrs Julie Kelly
- Pupil Liaison - Mrs Alison Porter (Teacher)
- Parent/Community Liaison - Mrs Julie Kelly
- Media Liaison - Mrs Julie Kelly
- Administrator - Mrs Judith McCreery (Clerical Officer)

Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.

Mrs Judith McCreery (Clerical Officer) will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

Confidentiality

The management and staff of Ardstraw Jubilee P.S. have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements.

All new and temporary staff (as appropriate) will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal

Appendix 1

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM MEMBERS

Team leaders - Principal, Mrs Julie Kelly and or Chair of Governors, Rev David Reid

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Governors
- Liaises with the bereaved family

In the absence of the team leader, Mrs Debby McGerrigle and Mrs Alison Porter will assume the joint lead.

PSNI Liaison

- Liaises with the PSNI
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared

Staff Liaison

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils
- Refers staff to materials from their critical incident folders
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of Staff Care Services and gives them the contact number.

Pupil Liaison

- Alerts other staff to vulnerable pupils (appropriately)
- Provides materials for pupils (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of pupils seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community Liaison

- Maintains up to date lists of relevant contact numbers such as emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Coordinates the involvement of agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name/visitor badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent Liaison

- Arranges parent meetings, if held

- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media Liaison

- Will draw up a press statement; give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management).
- Will consult with the Communications Officer from the Education Authority.
- Where appropriate, may liaise with the Education Authority Legal Services and relevant teacher unions.

Administrator

- Maintains up to date telephone numbers of Parents or guardians, Teachers and Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records of all correspondence

