

# KIRKISTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Learning together,  
building for the future

## CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN

### **Policy Review**

Date agreed: September 2021

Next Review Date: September 2023

Signed by Chair of Governors:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN**

### **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 completely unexpected 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.
- National disasters/emergencies

## **EXAMPLES OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

### **In school**

- Death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes.
- A road traffic accident involving a staff member or pupils.
- A deliberate act of violence, for example, a stabbing, shooting or bombing.
- An accident such as a fire.

### **Out of school**

- Deaths or injuries on school trips.
- Tragedies involving children from many schools.
- Civil disturbances.
- Refugee children joining a school from a war zone.

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.

- 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.
- Display a Flow chart and contact phone numbers in the staff room and school office.
- Review the Critical Incident Management Plan at a staff meeting in Term 1 each year.

## **ACTION PLAN**

Depending on the severity of the issues, implementation of some or all of the following suggestions may be necessary.

### **Immediate action:**

- Record and verify details – location, nature and time of incident, details of those involved.
- Breaking the news to the rest of the staff and pupils.
- Notify emergency services, informing parents and carers, using next-of-kin lists (Check with Police on responsibilities).
- Informing the Board of Governors and appropriate authorities.
- Dealing with enquiries
  - Manning the telephone
  - Prepare written statement for Office
  - Setting up an enquiry room
- Contacting appropriate agencies for support – for example, Educational Psychology Service, the Educational Welfare Service or Counselling Services.
- Coping with the media.
- Updating information.

### **Short-term action:**

- Making plans for attendance at funerals.
- Providing opportunities for staff and pupil to talk through their experiences.
- Arranging formal debriefing meetings for those involved in order to:
  - Clarify exactly what happened.
  - Encourage sharing of reactions.
  - Reassure pupils that extreme feelings and reactions are normal.
  - Suggest coping strategies for the period that follows.
  - Expressing sympathy to those hurt and/or bereaved; condolence cards and messages from pupils should be delivered; those in hospital should be visited.
  - Restoring normal school routine as soon as possible.
  - During a major trauma, people often feel numbed and detached from reality. Because of their sense of shock, they may need help to make sense of what actually happened. Debriefing is a way of talking about not only what happened, but of sharing the often frightening emotional reactions to the events. By holding a debriefing meeting in the school, usually led by an experienced person from outside, the school is giving the pupils and staff permission to exchange reactions and educate them in how best to cope in the period that follows. A separate debriefing may be necessary for those members of staff directly affected by the crisis.

### **Medium-term action:**

- Arranging a special school assembly or memorial service, allowing the relevant class to make an active role.
- Monitoring pupil reaction, remembering the possibility of PTSD.
- Maintaining strong home-school links and informing parents of carers of their child's progress.
- Helping pupils to return to school:
  - A home visit from a teacher may be the first step
  - Friends could be encouraged to keep in touch
  - Phased return may be required.

### **Longer-term planning:**

Schools should remember that the effects of a crisis can reverberate for years. Painful feelings and reactions can be triggered by seemingly innocuous events. Bearing this in mind, schools are advised to:

- Be on the look-out for signs of delayed stress in staff and pupils.
- Mark anniversaries.
- Consider including grief as a topic in the curriculum.
- Anticipate legal proceedings such as inquest and investigations which can interfere with and impede recovery.
- Take account of the possible renewed interest of media at significant dates.

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM**

PRINCIPAL

Mr Ricky Graham

SLT

Miss Sonya Taggart

DESIGNATED TEACHER

Mrs Anna Harbinson

DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER

Mr Steven Irwin

SCHOOL SECRETARY

Mrs Margaret O'Lone

CHAIRMAN, B. O. Gs

Mrs Kathryn Edgar

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Principal**

The Principal is the first point of contact and is responsible for liaising with all parties concerned and affected. They will also act as Media Spokesperson.

### **SLT**

Will meet as soon as possible following the incident to implement procedures.