



# Critical Incident Policy

<b>Date of next policy review</b>	<b>September 2021</b>
<b>Name of person responsible for this policy</b>	<b>Chris Fulton - Principal</b>
<b>Other related policies</b>	<b>Behaviour and Citizenship, SEN, Pastoral Care, Safeguarding, Reasonable Force</b>
<b>Issued to</b>	<b>Staff, governors, parents</b>
<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>September 2019</b>

# Critical Incident Policy

## 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 of a critical incident

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 from the school grounds or whilst on a school trip.

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

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

In Victoria Primary 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. In Victoria Primary the team and school as a whole have planned ahead as a necessary precaution.

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 our 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, Vice-Principal, Chair of Board of Governors, Head of Foundation & Key-Stage 1, Head of Key Stage 2 and the Head of the Nursery Unit.

Others may be co-opted as necessary in light of the nature of the emergency and the availability of people. In Victoria Primary we will involve the school secretary and building supervisor as necessary.

The Incident manager will be the school Principal Mr Chris Fulton or the Vice-Principal in his absence unless circumstances prevent that from being possible or appropriate.

The Incident Manager/Principal is 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. The Critical Incident Team will assess that all children, teaching and non-teaching staff and any visitors are safe – during a major incident the safety of all is the priority.
4. The Critical Incident Team will check whether individuals or groups require immediate attention.
5. The team will assess who is most affected by the incident.

## **Communication during an incident**

Whatever information is deemed appropriate and necessary will be communicated to all staff.

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 will be provided with an agreed factual statement by the Incident. All details communicated will be agreed and the team will exercise caution at all times about what is said, giving the facts only.

Office staff will be given clear instructions by the team. 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. See Appendix 1.

## **Contacting families directly affected**

The Incident Manager or other designated person will contact families directly involved as quickly as possible and with sensitivity. The team will work to ensure that there is consistency of information during any incident.

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 is kept as part of the record keeping (Appendix 1)

### **Responding to calls from relatives or other parents/guardians**

The team will designate which of their members will be delegated/permitted to talk with relatives or parents. This will be recorded.

These team members will try to anticipate the questions which at that stage really require an answer. An agreed level of disclosure will be agreed beforehand.

The team will make every effort to only use language which alleviates anxiety.

### **Keeping the staff informed**

All staff be kept well informed. Staff will be cautioned against talking to the media or responding to questions from reporters or parents.

### **Informing the pupils**

Staff will be given advice and guidance by the Critical Incident team 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 will 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 that has been given to other children in the school/class.

## **Media**

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

## **Preparing for a critical incident**

1. Victoria Primary keep an up-to date Critical Incident Contingency Plan (Appendix 2) which includes 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. The school will update contact numbers once a year.
3. The school will ensure there is a hard copy of contacts in addition to computer data.
4. The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the existence of a Critical Contingency Plan and know where it is kept.
5. The school will keep this check-list of issues for the Critical Incident Team to organise in the contingency plan.

## **Appendix 2 – Critical Incident contingency plan**

### **Members of Victoria Primary Critical Incident Team**

Mr Chris Fulton ( Principal DDTCP)  
Mrs Leigh Kernaghan (Vice Principal)  
Mrs Jayne Orr (Head of KS1)  
Mrs Rebecca Miskelly (Head of KS2)  
Miss Jill Minnis (SENCo/ Pastoral Care/DTCP)  
Mrs Pamela Addis (Head of Nursery DDTCP)  
Mrs Joanne Rodgers (Chair of Board of Governors/ DPCP)

- \* DT – Designated Teacher
- \* DDT – Deputy Designated Teacher
- \* DP – Designated Person
- \* CP – Child Protection

### **Victoria Primary contact details**

School 02893351781  
Mr Chris Fulton - Principal DDTCP  
Mrs Leigh Kernaghan – Vice Principal  
Mrs Jayne Orr Head of KS1  
Mrs Rebecca Miskelly – Head of KS2  
Miss Jill Minnis Senior DTCP  
Mrs Pamela Addis DDTCP  
Mrs Irene Moffett Secretary  
Mr William Tweedy Building Supervisor  
Mrs Joanne Rodgers Chairperson BOG

### **Support Agencies**

Contact EA on 02825653333, asking for:

- EA Teacher's Branch
- EA Press Officer
- EA Psychology Service

### **Victoria Primary staff with current first-aid training**

Mrs B McIlwrath  
Mrs C Montgomery  
Mrs B Evans  
Mrs P Dempsey  
Mrs H Galbraith  
Miss J Minnis

### **Victoria Primary School Critical Incident action plan check-list**

- Verify who communicated the news/incident report
- Set-up Critical Incident Team
- Confirm/verify with parent/guardian
- Inform EANI Teacher's Branch and EANI Press Officer
- Inform Chair/Vice Chair of Board of Governors
- Inform teaching and support staff
- Critical Incident Manager to act as Press Officer in liaison with EANI
- 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
- ❑ PTA Facebook Page may be used to relay information



**Appendix 1**

**Critical incident Team**

**Record of Information kept during incident**

Meetings					
Date	Members Present	Details of Incident Discussed	Action Required	Key Responsibilities	Outcome

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**Critical incident Team**

**Record of Information kept during incident**

**Information shared with parents/relatives/staff/pupils/media**

Information Shared					
Date	Agreed Information to be shared	Who is sharing the Information	Who the information is to be shared with	Matters arising/ action required after information is shared	Outcome

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