

BLIGH'S LANE NURSERY SCHOOL

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY



Signed: _____ (BOG Chair)

_____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Review Due: _____

Definition of a Critical Incident

The nature of critical incident makes it imperative that every school has a plan in place; when something happens it is too late to try and define arrangements. An incident becomes critical when it constitutes a sudden, serious disruption on a scale beyond the ability of the school to cope under normal conditions. Assistance is usually required from the emergency services and/or other appropriate bodies.

What is a Critical Incident?

It is a single incident or series of incidents that are:

- Sudden and unexpected
- Contain real or imagined threats to a person
- Overwhelming of usual coping mechanisms
- Cause severe disruption
- Are traumatic to anyone

Examples of such incidents include :

- Death or serious injury as the result of violence, accident, self-harm and/or sudden/traumatic illness
- Major fire
- Building collapse
- Riot and/or civil disorder
- Natural and/or man-made disaster
- Terrorism
- Missing person(s)/abductions

These incidents might occur:

- On the school site during school hours
- On school transport
- Whilst the pupils are taking part in activities away from the school site
- On school premises as part of after school activities
- Within the local community involving pupils from the school

For an incident to be declared 'critical' consultations must first take place between the person at the school handling the incident (usually the Principal) and a EA/DENI representative. In responding to an incident, the aim should always be to ensure that rapid and appropriate action is taken; accurate information is provided; normal school routines are maintained as far as possible and immediate, sensitive and non-intrusive support is offered.

An emergency is difficult to define and the procedures will not apply to all emergencies.

The two most frequent on-site emergencies are likely to be the need to evacuate the building or a serious/fatal accident.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS MANAGEMENT TEAM:

Leadership role:	Mrs Linda Woods (Principal) Mrs Deirdre Doherty (Principal)
Communication Role:	Mrs Linda Woods (Principal) Mrs Deirdre Doherty (Principal) Mrs Mary McCready (Secretary)
Counselling Role/ Student liaison	Mrs Margaret O'Doherty (Teacher) Miss Martina McGilloway (Nursery Assistant) Mrs Michelle Meehan (Nursery Assistant)
Board of Governors.	Mr Charles O'Donnell (Chairperson) Mrs Patricia Logue (Vice-Chair)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership Role:

Intervention

- Confirm the event
- Activate the Critical Incident Response Team
- Contact EA and DENI
- Contact Chair of Board of Governors
- Liaise with emergency services and maintain control until they arrive
- Express sympathy to family
- Clarify facts surrounding event
- Make contact with other relevant agencies
- Decide how news will be communicated to different groups(staff, pupils, outside school)

Postvention

- Ensure provision of ongoing support to staff and students
- Facilitate any appropriate memorial events
- Review plan

Communication Role:

Intervention

- Inform staff
- Inform pupils, as appropriate
- Receive parents coming to school

- Liaise with emergency services as directed by principal
- Keep a log of events
- With Principal, prepare a public statement
- Ensure telephone lines are free for outgoing and important incoming calls
- Liaise with relevant outside support agencies
- Coordinate contact with families(following first contact by principal)
- Consult with family around involvement of school in e.g. funeral service
- Assist with all communication dealing with parents of any student affected by critical incident

Postvention

- Review and evaluate effectiveness of communication response
- Offer to link family with community support groups
- Involve as appropriate, the family in in-school liturgies/memorial services

Counselling Role/Student Liaison:

Intervention

- Outline specific services available in school
- Put in place clear referral procedures
- Address immediate needs of staff
- Provide information
- Provide counselling

Postvention

- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable pupils
- Monitor class most affected
- Refer on, as appropriate
- Review and evaluate plan

Action Plan for Dealing With a Critical Incident

Very often the EA's senior Education officer and his/her team will take over much of the management of the incident, leaving the principal free to deal with pupils, parents and colleagues. In any event, as soon as an incident is declared 'critical', the following plan of action, in order of priority, should be put in place.

Short Term Actions (Day One)

- Take whatever action necessary to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and any other persons
- Contact appropriate emergency services
- Call a meeting of CIRT
- Contact relevant families, in very serious circumstances it may be more appropriate for the police to make the initial contact
- Keep a log of who has been contacted and when
- Ensure parents are not left alone in distress
- Protect the family's privacy
- Gather accurate information

- Brief all school staff and governors
- **Limit comments to the known facts**
- Brief pupils, where appropriate
- Brief media after consulting with EA press officer
- Principal to designate a spokesperson
- Prepare general information for parents, staff and governors
- Establish name and contact details of officer delegated by EA to manage the incident

Medium-Term Actions (24-72 Hours)

- Preparation of students/staff attending funeral
- Involvement of pupils/staff in liturgy if agreed by bereaved family
- Facilitation of pupils'/staffs' responses, e.g. flowers, Mass Cards, Book of Condolences, etc.
- Review the events of the first 24 hours
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students, and parents, if necessary
- Plan visits to injured
- Arrange school closure (if appropriate)

Monitoring and Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually and more frequently if the need arises by the Principal, the assistant teacher and other staff members.

