

St. Mary's PS Rathlin



Critical Incident and Response Policy

Rational

As a Catholic School, the staff of St. Mary's P.S. believes that our Critical Incident Policy should reflect our concern for all with whom we have contact. In the event of a critical incident occurring, of paramount consideration will be the welfare and safety of our pupils, staff and others on the school premises. Consideration will also be given to providing assistance to those affected by any critical incident in the aftermath of its occurrence.

These guidelines establish basic procedures and reporting systems to cover preventative measures, immediate responses, and follow-up actions to deal both with the immediate consequences and the longer term implications of a critical incident.

Definition

A Critical Incident is an event which causes disruption to a school, creates significant danger or risk and traumatically affects individuals within the school and its community.

Some examples of critical incidents:

In School

- Threats of violence to staff/pupils
- A deliberate act of violence, such as the use of a knife or firearm
- A school fire, explosion or bomb threat
- A pupil or teacher being taken hostage
- Physical or sexual assault of a member of the school community
- Major theft or the destruction or serious vandalising of part of the school
- Natural disasters
- Chemical, radiation or bio-hazard spillage

Outside School

- The death of a pupil or member of staff or their families through natural causes, suicide or accident

- A transport-related accident involving pupils and/or members of staff
- Death or injuries on school journeys or excursions
- A more widespread disaster in the community
- Civil disturbances and terrorism

In respect of school trips and visits please see our Trips Policy based on : 'Educational Visits; Policy, Practice and Procedures' (2004), (EAs, NICIE, & CCMS and guidance from the DfES 'Good practice guide Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits')

This Critical Incident Response Policy and Plan is designed to cover a range of incidents and realistically the 'worst case' scenario. The degree of response activated will vary and be dependent on the type on the type of incident.

Aims

- Create an awareness of the need for planned arrangements to be made based on an assessment of risks
- To respond to a critical incident in an informed manner
- To promote active coping skills within the PSHE curriculum
- To clearly identify a set of procedures to follow, relevant to specific forms of critical incidents as identified by staff
- To provide support to all on site affected by the incident.
- To maintain the normal running of any parts of the school not affected.
- To return the whole school to normal as soon as possible.
- To ensure an accurate log of all information received, decisions made and actions taken
- Provide re-assurance of the practical help that is available from the EA, CIRT and other agencies, at short notice.
- To establish links with outside agencies, so there can be effective collaboration in the event of a critical incident.
- To monitor and review this policy as necessary and/or after a critical incident has occurred.

Preventative measures

- Risk assessments and response - **all staff**
- Opportunities for pupils to discuss issues such as bereavement during PD and MU curriculum - audit of SOW
- Training for staff on dealing with critical incidents, gathering/recording accurate information, evacuation procedures, and dealing with pupils after the

event in the short and longer term.

- Staff and pupils are familiar with the schools fire and emergency routine and they are practiced once a term and with no prior warning
- All visitors are directed to reception and required to sign in and out
- Staff and pupils are familiar with school security arrangements and unknown will be challenged and escorted to reception
- Lists containing pupils brief medical needs are updated annually and circulated to all staff
- Emergency medical plans for individual pupils (where necessary) are with pupils and relevant staff receive training.
- When a pupil's medical condition requires emergency treatment an ambulance is called. The Principal should be informed when an ambulance has been requested, once it is practicably possible.
- A list of First Aiders is forwarded to all staff annually and displayed in prominent areas in the school
- Accident report forms and serious incidence forms are kept by individual class teachers and the office. These are retained by the principal at the end of each school year.
- Risk assessments are carried out for all activities taking place off site
- Child Protection policies and procedures are in place and all staff made aware of them
- Complaints procedures are in place and all staff are aware of them

Planning for an Emergency

It is important that the school knows which people can be contacted immediately following an incident, what information is available and where this stored. Therefore, the Critical Incident Team will:

- Issue all staff with a Critical Incident Management Plan flow chart (Appendix 1)
- Display a flow chart and contact telephone numbers in the Office Room.

In Addition:

1. Names, addresses and phone numbers of all staff and pupils will be regularly updated by the school secretary and a copy for school and home kept.
2. The schools own accurate and updated contact list is located near to the phone in case it becomes necessary to activate the plan.

Implementation

Personnel:

Critical Incident Management Team -All staff, Governor Rep. and the Building Supervisor, Patricia.

Role of the CIMT

The function of the Critical Incident Management Team is to manage the school's response to a critical incident. It is the responsibility of the Lead Person on the scene to determine whether or not the incident is a critical incident as defined above and put into operation the Critical Incident Management Guidelines.

The functions of the Critical Incident Management Team during a critical incident will include co-ordination, implementation, supervision and liaison. The team will also debrief all staff on a regular basis both during and after the critical incident to enable two way communications.

During the debriefing the CIMT will:

- Update all staff on what is happening
- Ask all staff about how they and the pupils are coping
- Detail what exactly we are going to do next

The Team will co-ordinate the review and update of the Critical Incident Management Policy and Guidelines and arrange annual training and any debriefing as required.

Procedures:

Every critical incident will have its own significant features, the response and procedures to be followed will be largely determined by the incident itself and the needs of the people affected.

A flowchart of the general steps to take in all critical incidents can be found in Appendix 1.

Guidelines for managing and responding to specific emergencies are contained in 'School Emergency Guidelines' (SELB, Jan.2004). Each member of the CIMT will receive a copy of this document; a copy will also be available in the staffroom and general office.

Dealing with the Media

In the first instance and in liaison with CCMS and the EA CIRT a statement will be drawn up for the media. This statement will be updated as and when needed and when additional accurate relevant information becomes available.

Links with other school policies

Pastoral Care policies
Child Protection Policy
Educational Trips Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Monitoring and review of policy

After a Critical Incident, a series of meetings will be held, to evaluate the effectiveness of the management plan and procedures followed and to make necessary modifications if required. These will take place after daily routines have fully returned to normal at least 3-4 weeks after the incident.

- of staff- during a dedicated staff meeting
- pupils - a body of pupil representatives, e.g. student council, with members of senior management or during form classes
- a meeting of CIMT representatives and representatives of any outside support agency, e.g. PSNI, ambulance service, etc. involved in the incident and local community representatives

This policy will be initially evaluated after 12 months of its implementation, and thereafter every three years as the need arises. The evaluation process will involve the Critical Incident Management Team, teaching and ancillary staff, pupils and parents.

Adopted on: November 2024

Signed  (COG)

Next Reviewal on: November 2028

Appendices

	Appendix
• Critical Incident Management Plan Flow Chart	1
• Response Planning Advice	2
• Evacuation Procedures	3
• Emergency Contact Numbers	4
• Critical Incident Report Form	5
• Critical Incident Log	6

Appendix 1:

Critical Incident Management Plan: Key actions

- *No two incidents are alike.*
- *Always assess needs first.*
- *Use the guidelines flexibly and in relation to the information available.*

Step 1: Immediate Action

Assess the danger, gather factual information and take appropriate action

- Initiate agreed school evacuation procedures if necessary, arrange for first aid -Principal/Senior Manager
- Establish a 'command' centre, identify who is in charge and set regular briefing times: School Office/Staffroom
- Notify the emergency services/other relevant authorities -
- Maintain structures and routines where possible
- Liaise with Chairperson of Board of Governors /EA/CCMS

Step 2:

Co-ordinate school's response, meet with staff

- Liaise and delegate, discuss intervention plan, agree how and what other pupils will be told
- Collect, record, verify and update details (time, place, those involved etc)
- Liaise with Chairperson of Board of Governors/EA/CCMS

Step 3:

Organise contact with pupils and parents

- Give the facts of the critical incident, keeping in mind legal implications and respecting aspects of privacy
- Inform parents by 'phone or in person if their child is involved, as soon as the initial information is confirmed.

NB the media and/or children with mobile phones may have reached them first with inaccurate information.

- Continue to liaise with Chairperson of Board of Governors/EA/CCMS
- Ensure a correct and consistent message is given
- Provide sources of help for pupils and families and encourage communication between parents and school
- Suggest possible reaction of pupils
- Confirm the school's response plans

Step 4:

Restore the school to regular routine as soon as practicable

- Plan visits to injured and bereaved -CIMT, Chaplain
- Continue to liaise with Chairperson of Board of Governors/EA/CCMS

Step 5:

Obtain updated factual information

- Continue to inform staff, pupils and parents
- Principal consults with the families affected to determine their wishes concerning public announcements and information for school staff and pupils.

Continue to liaise with Chairperson of Board of Governors /EA/CCMS

Appendix 2

ST. MARY'S PS

Response Planning

1. Receiving the Alert

Whoever receives the alert should be prepared to ask for as much information as possible (Fill in Incident Information Form Appendix 5):

- what has happened?
- have the emergency services been informed/are they attending?
- exact location (and any access problems if not on site)
- casualties
- actions taken so far
- name/contact at the scene (if not on site)
- what assistance is needed?

2. The Principal must initially decide on the level of response needed:

- can the school cope alone?
- if not, alert the Emergencies/CCMS/EA Designated Officers
- inform staff on site.

3. Call-out list for out of hours incident

- 1 Principal calls members of **team**.
- 2 Repeat back to the person giving the information and details to ensure that they have been accurately recorded.
- 3 The call out details needs to be checked regularly for accuracy.

4. Identify locations for:

- staff-
- informing children -
- receiving and informing parents-
- the media, if they are to be allowed on site-

- a quiet area for children/adults-
- possible relocation site,

5. Administrative arrangements

- 1 remind all staff to keep a log of all contacts, decisions and actions (**see Appendix 6 Critical Incident Log Sheet**).
- 2 keep at least one phone free for outgoing calls (eg fax line)

6. Arrange to inform (and keep informed):

- staff
- pupils
- parents
- the police
- the media (via the CCMS PRO)
- the Lead Officer, EA, CIRT and of the CCMS

every 30 minutes initially for duration of actual incident, then as deemed necessary by the Principal/Lead Officer.

7. School Support Team

If the EA., CIRT is asked to help, officers from service areas identified will be sent to the school to form an Education Support Team. Plan to receive them, provide a briefing and decide on any further plan of action/changes to current plan.

8. Longer Term Plans

A serious incident may have repercussions over many months. Consider arrangements for days two and three, when children may know more about what happened, and when staff may be exhausted and may need additional support.

9. Operational Debriefing

- Debrief all staff involved at the end of each working day. Ensure that information is recorded and shared.
- At the end of the incident Occupational Health Staff can provide a personal debriefing for staff.

Appendix 3

3a. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Aims

1. To clearly identify a set of procedures to be adopted for an evacuation.
2. To establish a checklist of responsibilities for staff members to ensure a swift, safe evacuation procedure.

Implementation

1. Personnel - school staff, pupils, and visiting personnel.
2. Responsibilities for staff members - contained in Appendix: 1 , 2 & 3c.
3. Procedures - contained in Appendix 1-3.

Evaluation

Procedures to be practised and revised once a term.

In the event of a critical incident occurring, a meeting of staff, pupils and local community representatives should be held to evaluate the effectiveness of the evacuation procedure followed, and suggest any modifications that should be made.

PROCEDURES TO BE ADOPTED FOR AN EVACUATION

1. The principal is to be informed. In the absence of the Principal, the other teacher will assume responsibility.
2. The Principal will direct the School Secretary to inform the Police/ Fire Brigade/ relevant emergency personnel.

3. The principal will sound the emergency evacuation signal and complete designated responsibilities.
4. Pupils will cease work immediately on the teacher's direction.
5. Teachers will direct classes to move quickly and in an orderly fashion from the classroom to the specified assembly areas, via clearly labelled exit points.

NOTE; THE SPEED AND THE EFFICIENCY OF THE OPERATION SHOULD NOT BE HINDERED BY PUPILS COLLECTING PERSONAL ITEMS (BAG, LUNCH, COATS) THESE SHOULD BE LEFT WHERE THEY ARE.

6. Pupils to proceed to the Evacuation Area pertinent to the emergency that is occurring, (See Appendices) and assemble in class lines.
7. Class rolls to be taken by Teachers.
8. Designated Staff are to ensure that all their extra responsibilities have been carried out.

3b. On arrival at the Evacuation Area:

1. Class rolls should be checked to ensure all pupils are assembled.
2. Absentees and their last known location are to be reported to the Principal/ Vice- Principal who will inform emergency authorities of missing pupils and possible location.
3. Pupils to remain under the supervision of their teacher.
4. Under the direction of the Senior Leadership and class teachers, the pupils will move to either the far end of playground at the side of the school or into the Parochial Hall car park at the front of the school.

NOTE; THIS ACTION WILL ONLY BE UNDERTAKEN IF THE EVACUATION AREA IS DEEMED TO BE UNSAFE.

5. When the buildings are considered safe, the Principal, after consultation with the appropriate authorities, will determine the practicability of returning to

the classrooms where NORMAL school routine is to be re-established where-ever possible.

If there is no alternative other than to close the school and send the pupils home, the following dismissal procedure will be carried out by the Principal or designated senior management member.

- a) Ascertain, with the help of teachers, those pupils whose parents should be at home. Phone contact should be made, and parents instructed to pick up their children.
- b) Pupils for whom no transport is available, and those whose parents are working or suspected of not being at home will be retained at the school or specific Evacuation point until normal school closing time.
- c) If necessary, contact will be made with the bus companies advising them of the alternative arrangements, and arranging for the pupils to be picked up at those areas.
- d) The principal will inform the C.S.O. of the circumstances and the action taken.

APPENDIX 3c.

CHECKLIST of RESPONSIBILITIES EVACUATION PROCEDURES

PRINCIPAL

1. Contact School secretary to ring 999 or Emergency Service.
2. Activates warning system.
3. Informs Critical Incident Team of the problem.
4. Check the Administration Block closing all doors and windows.
5. Gather First Aid box.
6. Monitors evacuation, checking on any missing persons.
7. Check with senior Emergency Personnel that buildings are safe for return of pupils and staff.

VICE-PRINCIPAL

1. Evacuates class (if relevant) and hands class over to designated member of staff
2. Check the dining hall and toilet blocks- closing all doors.
3. Inform Principal that area is clear.

SECRETARY

1. **Collect class rolls**
2. **Contact Emergency Personnel**
3. Overview evacuation of the pupils and check on any missing persons
4. Inform Principal that area is clear.

CLASS TEACHERS

1. Turn off power if possible.
2. Close all windows, evacuate room quickly and in an orderly manner to assigned meeting area. Close doors as you leave room.
3. Collect class roll.
4. Check rolls- inform relevant senior manager if there are any pupils not accounted for. If roll unavailable, a head count will suffice.
5. Remain with class until the all clear has been given to return to room.

ANCILLARY STAFF

1. Check each room, toilets and resource areas .
2. Close all windows, switch off lights, close door and evacuate to designated area.
3. **Contact Emergency Personnel (out of school hours if appropriate)**

NOTE

No person may re-enter the buildings until authorized by the Principal.

Should a prevailing circumstance make any of these instructions impracticable, teachers may adopt alternatives that they deem to be in the best interests of their pupil's safety. e.g. if doors are blocked, windows may be used as exits.

Pupils should be made familiar with the procedures and as a result be able to move independently of their teachers to the assigned areas, if the need arises.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EA Emergency Officer/CIRT: 028 37512515,

CCMS:

- HQ: 028 90 426972
Health & Safety Unit: 028 90 426972

Appendix 4__

See member of SLT

Appendix 5

ST. MARY'S PS : CRITICAL INCIDENT INFORMATION FORM

INFORMATION REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH SCHOOL NEEDS

Initial contact to the EA Emergency Officer: Critical Incident Line: 028 3751 2515

The following information may be asked for dependant on the nature of the incident.

- SITE OF INCIDENT
- CONTACT NAME
- CONTACT NUMBER
- MOBILE NUMBER
- TIME OF INCIDENT
- NATURE OF INCIDENT

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.....

- NUMBERS INVOLVED - ages

- ARE ANY PEOPLE INJURED
- EXTENT OF INJURIES - low; serious
- WHAT ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN SO FAR?

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1 HAVE EMERGENCY SERVICES BEEN INFORMED?

Y N

- are they on site Y N

1 WHAT HELP DO YOU NEED?

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1 ARE THERE ANY ACCESS DIFFICULTIES?

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Date and Time received: Date: Time:

Officer receiving information :

Appendix 6

ST. MARY'S P.S , RATHLIN : CRITICAL INCIDENT LOG SHEET
LOG SHEETS MUST BE COMPLETED BY ALL STAFF INVOLVED IN AN INCIDENT.
COMPLETED LOG SHEETS WILL: -

- Assist in maintaining a true picture of the unfolding events
- Assist in providing information for any inquiry which may follow an incident

Your Name Your Job Title

Name of your worksite Date

Time	From/To (Name, Position, Organisation)	<u>Message Details</u>	Action - Decision/Reason

Time	From/To (Name, Position, Organisation)	<u>Message Details</u>	Action - Decision/Reason

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